ZIMBABWEAN TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Cosmas Musandu, hereby declare that I have not previously submitted the thesis entitled: **ZIMBABWEAN TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP** at this university or other universities in part or in its entirety and it is my own work in design and execution.

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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my wife, Blessing, and children, Ropafadzo, Mufaro and Rukudzo, who gave me unwavering support throughout the entire duration of my studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS USED IN THE STUDY

HODs	Heads of Department
IL	Instructional Leadership
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
LCK	Leadership Content Knowledge
LEP	Leadership in Education Programme
MLS	Management and Leadership Studies
PIMRS	Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale
PLCs	Professional Learning Communities
SLA	School Leadership Academy
TL	Transformational Leadership
USA	United States of America

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

While there is overwhelming evidence regarding the impact of instructional leadership on student learning and outcomes (Leithwood *et al.,* 2014; Mendels, 2012), there is far less knowledge and little systematic research on how teachers respond to the practice of instructional leadership (Bellibas, 2014; Isaiah & Isaiah, 2014). This study arises out of the concerns that instructional leadership has not received sustained attention from educational researchers in Zimbabwe. Much of the research work in Zimbabwe has tended to focus on separate aspects of leadership without looking particularly at the phenomenon of instructional leadership per se. This is evidenced by recent studies on leadership conducted by Mapolisa and Tshabalala, (2013); Samkange, (2013); Sibanda and Mutopa, (2011) and Zikhali and Perumal, (2014). The idea of teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership remains largely unexplored (Bellibas 2014). Therefore, little is known about how teachers perceive and experience instructional leadership.

The study drew on the mixed-methods research inquiry with the explanatory sequential design as the guiding framework. The researcher collected quantitative and qualitative data sequentially. Three data gathering instruments namely, the questionnaire, the focus group discussion and observation were used to tap History teachers' perceptions and experiences of the central phenomenon.

Overall, the key findings of the study reveal that the majority of the teachers perceive instructional leadership as of great benefit as it enhances school effectiveness and improves student attainment. As such, the school head should provide leadership aimed at improving teaching and learning. The school head should share this type of leadership with other formal school leaders such as the deputy head, senior master/senior lady and heads of department. The idea of taking informal leaders on board also enjoys widespread support. However, results on the ground showed that informal leaders are not recognised in the Zimbabwean school system. The study has established that contrary to the popular position in instructional leadership literature, the

majority of the respondents are of the perception that the school head should concentrate more on administration and managerial roles.

History teachers prefer to be supervised by school leaders who share the same area of specialisation with them and who possess formal training in the area of school leadership. However, these expectations by the teachers are not met by the reality on the ground as History teachers are at times supervised by leaders who are the opposite of what they expect.

The majority of teachers support the idea of a school having a vision on student learning and mission statement created by the school head in consultation with other staff members. Teachers expect formal and informal channels of communication to be utilised in communicating the school vision, mission statement and goals. However, available evidence showed that only formal channels of communication were utilised.

The study has noted that although History teachers expect school leaders to play a part in ensuring that the syllabus is interpreted appropriately and is adequately covered, the school leaders are not committed to this. Furthermore, results confirm that although teachers expect their school leaders to play a part in motivating and staff developing them, the majority of the school leaders show non-commitment to these activities.

These findings call for consideration of subject-specific leadership in the teaching and learning of History, since most of the History teachers expressed their desire to be supervised by school leaders who share the same area of specialisation with them because they are content knowledge specialists. Since most of the teachers prefer to be supervised by school leaders with formal training in instructional leadership, it is necessary to have school leaders with formal qualifications in school leadership. Professional development should be harnessed as a tool for improving teachers' classroom practice. Finally, since the current study was from the teachers' perspective, similar studies should be carried out focusing on what the school leaders say about teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership.

Keywords: Instructional leadership; perceptions; classroom practice; influence; transformational leadership; distributed leadership.

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CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides anchorage to the entire study on teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership. The study was motivated by the mantra that "school leaders matter for school success," (Horng & Loeb, 2010: 66). Heaven and Bourne, (2016) reiterate the same line of thinking as they regard leaders as anchors, who are in charge of the success and achievement of their schools and learners respectively. Research has found a positive empirical correlation linking school leadership to student attainment. This popular finding is consolidated by the claim that leadership is second only to classroom teaching as a factor that influences learners' performance and achievement at school (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2014; Mendels, 2012). Thus, it could be argued that the practice of leadership, particularly instructional leadership, is the cornerstone of any education system as it is pivotal to the enhancement of school effectiveness and student attainment.

Instructional leadership is a useful instrument in creating a conducive and effective teaching and learning environment (Manaseh, 2016). Hallinger *et al.* (2017: 222) have reiterated that, "instructional leadership makes a difference for the quality of teaching and learning". Based on this assertion, it could be strongly argued that instructional leadership is an indispensable tool in aiding schools to achieve high quality instruction that has a ripple effect of influencing student attainment. The significance of instructional leadership in the teaching and learning matrix has also been observed by Taole (2013) who considers this type of leadership as a vital cog in the motivation of teachers and establishment of a positive culture of teaching and learning at school level. This is done through the facilitation of best practices that help the school to stay focused on three key areas of education; namely, curriculum, instruction and assessment. Therefore, school leaders should take instructional leadership seriously.

As a consequence of its indispensable utilitarian value, instructional leadership is practiced in various countries across the globe. For instance, in the USA, it has been instrumental in the creation of the standards of educational leadership and in England; it has informed the National College of School Leadership's work. It has also influenced

the enactment of a leadership guiding framework for principals in New Zealand (Robinson, 2010). Bellibas (2014) has also noted that in Turkey, the principals are compelled by statutory requirements to carry out various instructional leadership activities and functions. It is critical to note that instructional leadership is not confined to the developed nations only. Even developing countries have realised that "good instructional leadership is the path to good teaching and learning and instructional leaders ensure a sound culture of teaching and learning in their schools at all times" (Kruger, 2003: 206). This is why instructional leadership has also been embraced by countries such as Jamaica and Vietnam (Hallinger *et al.*, 2017).

Isaiah and Isaiah (2014) report that in Botswana principals are mandated by the provisions of the educational act of the country to execute a multiplicity of instructional leadership functions such as lesson observation, resource provision and class visits. Similarly, the work of Manaseh (2016) has clearly indicated that instructional leadership is also practiced on the African continent by nations such as South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. It seems as if the perpetual emphasis on educational reform and the need for accountability at school level has resulted in an increasing global interest in instructional leadership. This explains why this type of leadership has proved to be of great appeal not only in developed countries, but also in developing countries.

Zimbabwe has also joined the bandwagon of instructional leadership. The Ministry of Education and Culture (1993) acknowledges that the hierarchy of formal school leadership, which encompasses the School head, deputy head and the heads of department (HODs), has administrative and professional duties to execute. The professional duties dwell on instructional leadership roles such as class visits, exercise book inspections, staff meetings and staff development (The Ministry of Education and Culture 1993: 20-22). This is a clear indication that the education regulatory authority in Zimbabwe recognises the significance of instructional leadership in curriculum implementation.

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe (2015) has enunciated teacher professional standards to guide the operations of teachers. The teacher professional standards clarify the teachers' duties and make explicit features of

optimum quality and effective classroom instruction in the new millennium schools that foster improved academic outcomes for school pupils. The potential for this to be realised will depend, to some extent, on the leadership for teaching and learning functions executed by the school leaders. Furthermore, the success of instructional leadership depends on teachers' perceptions of it. Teachers may have mixed perceptions of various aspects of instructional leadership such as class visits, lesson observations, communication, resource provision and staff development (Isaiah & Isaiah, 2014).

The constitution of Zimbabwe stipulates that every citizen or permanent resident of Zimbabwe has a right to education (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Zimbabwe, 2015). While improving access to education is critical, the quality of education that the system is providing is of paramount importance. The low pass rates in public examinations have further brought into focus the issues of teaching and learning in the schools. The crux of the matter is that teacher effectiveness has a powerful impact on learners and influences their learning and academic attainment at school. It should be noted that the notion of teacher effectiveness is closely correlated to instructional leadership.

However, irrespective of the significance of instructional leadership in promoting positive teachers' instructional practices and school effectiveness, most school leaders in Africa rarely engage in it (Manaseh, 2016). As noted by Stanley, Ronoh and Maithya (2016: 32), "despite the fact that instructional leadership is a critical issue in the realisation of educational goals, it is seldom practiced". Most of the school heads tend to focus on administrative and management duties at the expense of instructional leadership, as they tend to regard themselves as more of managers than instructional leaders. This misconception tends to cascade down to other formal leaders below the school head. Zimbabwe has not been an exception to this misconception. According to Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013) the majority of school heads focus on administrative and management issues instead of instructional leadership. Samkange (2013) concurs that the role of the school head has been seriously compromised and crippled by the management and administrative related assignments that the head of the school

executes. Thus, instructional leadership in terms of monitoring and evaluating classroom teaching and learners' learning does not receive the attention of most of the school leaders.

This lack of emphasis on instructional leadership possibly explains why primary and secondary school institutions in developing countries such as Zimbabwe are bedevilled by numerous problems linked to poor classroom instructional practices and disappointing low student academic attainment (Mapolisa & Tshabalala, 2013). Isaiah and Isaiah (2014) also echo this, as they; conjecture that problems such as high failure rate and absenteeism may be attributed to ineffective instructional leadership in schools. Focusing on the South African context, Kruger (2003) has attributed poor matric results, lack of pupils' discipline, teacher demotivation and other educational problems to the absence of effective instructional leadership. This is so, because school leaders who pride themselves as school administrators and managers are usually focused on dealing with strictly managerial duties instead of involving themselves in instructional leadership matters. These matters include pronouncing clearly spelt out academic goals and objectives, resource allocation to promote meaningful instruction, management of the curriculum as well as monitoring and evaluating the delivery of lessons (Jenkins, 2009).

Given the above scenario, the area of instructional leadership would have been expected to attract a lot of attention from education researchers, but sadly that has not been the case in Africa (Jita 2010; Manaseh, 2016). As such, "an urgent challenge in educational management lies in expanding the range of national settings for investigations on instructional leadership" (Hallinger *et al.,* 2017: 222). Besides the challenge of increasing national settings for investigating instructional leadership, another challenge lies in that far less is known about teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership and the linkages between that and classroom practice remains largely unexplored (Bellibas, 2014; Isaiah & Isaiah, 2014). Thus, these considerations necessitate a study in countries such as Zimbabwe on teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership.

This current study is unique in the sense that it illustrates a marked departure from previous research studies on school leadership in Zimbabwe. Much of the research work in Zimbabwe has tended to focus on separate aspects of leadership without looking particularly at the phenomenon of instructional leadership per se. This is evidenced by research conducted by Mapolisa and Tshabalala, (2013), Samkange, (2013), Sibanda, Mutopa, and Maphosa (2011) and Zikhali and Perumal, (2014). Against this background, this proposed study seeks to close this identified gap by exploring and establishing how Zimbabwean teachers understand and experience the practice of instructional leadership.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The continued emphasis on instructional leadership is an offshoot of the "effective schools movement" that gripped the USA in the 1970s and 1980s (Bas, 2012; Hallinger, 2009; Horng & Loeb, 2010). Research in that era noted that effective schools had principals who were particularly concerned with and spent ample time on ensuring improvement in teaching and learning aspects of the school (Bellibas, 2014, Hallinger, 2009; Goddard, Neumerski, Goddard & Salloum, 2010). According to Grisson and Loeb (2011) the effective schools movement uncovered a multitude of broad descriptors that seemed to characterise successful principals. Commonalities among these descriptors gave birth to the notion of instructional leadership. Since then, instructional leadership has become a prominent school leadership management paradigm in the USA (Hallinger, 2009). Therefore, a notable and enduring consequence of the effective schools movement was the popularisation of instructional leadership as an alternative educational leadership and management paradigm.

The emphasis on instructional leadership has of late been accentuated by increasing focus on academic standards and the requirement that the school leadership should be accountable for school effectiveness and pupils' performance (Horng & Loeb, 2010; Robinson, 2010). Hence, instructional leadership has become a global phenomenon as typified by the enactment of educational leadership standards in Australia and New Zealand, the setting up in the United Kingdom of the National College of School Leadership and the Turkish government enactment of an act that compelled all school

principals to exhibit multifaceted instructional leadership behaviours. These include developing their schools' vision and mission, observing teaching and learning activities and providing feedback to teachers regarding their performance, which is all aimed at ensuring quality teaching and learning (Bellibas, 2014). Reviewed literature has also shown that instructional leadership is also practiced in other African countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Uganda and Tanzania.

While research suggests that instructional leadership plays second fiddle only to classroom teaching in influencing what students learn at school and is pivotal in the realisation of effective teaching and learning, it is not always as highly prioritised in some countries (Jenkins, 2009; Leithwood *et al.,* 2014; Prytula, Noonan & Hellsten, 2013). Jita (2010) argues that in African countries there has been a lack of sustained research exploring the linkages that exist between leadership, instruction and learning. Manaseh (2016) concurs that despite the fact that research has shown that instructional leadership is of paramount significance in spearheading best instructional practices and students' learning, school leadership literature clearly reveal that on the African continent little has been devoted to studies relating to it. Zimbabwean research has similarly been silent on the broader topic of instructional leadership, particularly the way teachers perceive and experience it.

From my experience as a former teacher and acting deputy head, I observed that instructional leadership is not given the emphasis it deserves in Zimbabwean secondary schools. Most school leaders tend to focus on administrative duties at the expense of instructional leadership. I also noted that at times some heads of department actually complete lesson observation instruments for teachers without observing the concerned teachers delivering lessons. This shows lack of understanding and appreciation of the value of instructional leadership by some teachers. Thus, it appears as if at times instructional leadership is just carried out because it is a Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education policy requirement but not because it is considered as a vital cog in the process of teaching and learning.

Some of the teachers in Zimbabwe are not familiar with the concept of instructional leadership. This state of affairs arises out of the fact that most of the teacher

preparation and development programmes at diploma and even degree levels does not include modules on instructional leadership. In most cases, instructional leadership is only a component in educational management degrees (Samkange, 2013). Under such circumstances, it is difficult for the majority of school leaders and classroom practitioners to adequately understand and appreciate the significance of instructional leadership in promoting best teachers' instructional practices and improved students' performance and achievement. According to Jenkins (2009), the lack of emphasis on instructional leadership in schools is partly attributed to a lack of instructional leadership knowledge. This underscores the need for a research study to ascertain Zimbabwean teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership.

Much of the educational research in Zimbabwe has tended to shun the phenomenon of instructional leadership. Furthermore, the idea of teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership remains largely unexplored. According to Bellibas (2014), there are hypotheses of what instructional leadership is and how it is associated with student learning, yet there is not much knowledge on how the teachers interpret and react to instructional leadership. Isaiah and Isaiah (2014) echo these sentiments, as they argue that teachers' perceptions of instructional leadership have not been given adequate attention, yet say a lot and influence the relationship between the school leaders and the teaching staff. To date, I have not been able to locate any studies in the Zimbabwean context that explore the relationship between instructional leadership and teachers' perceptions and experiences, especially from the teachers' perspectives.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The link that characterises instructional leadership and student learning and educational attainment has proved to be the subject of numerous education researches and has been noticed by policymakers (Robinson, 2010). According to Bellibas (2014), contemporary research on instructional leadership has largely concerned itself with developing leadership models and investigating the association of such leadership models with teaching and learning, yet there is little research on how the teachers react to the phenomenon of instructional leadership. The increased state emphasis on teacher professional standards and students' achievement, as shown by the Handbook

on Teacher Professional Standards in Zimbabwe (2015) warrants a comprehensive study of instructional leadership in all schools as they strive to meet politically driven mandates. Therefore, the primary goal of this research study is to inquire how Zimbabwean secondary school History teachers perceive, conceptualise and experience instructional leadership.

The practice of supporting classroom practitioners and learners for improved teaching and learning is not new in Zimbabwe, as evidenced by the professional duties of school leaders outlined in the Handbook on School Administration for Heads (1993). However, to date, there has been no sustained research to understand the systematic practice of providing leadership support for instruction to the teachers (and/or learners). Not much is known about the process of support and guidance or what is called instructional leadership in general. Furthermore, we know less about how the teachers, as the intended beneficiaries of such support, perceive and experience the instructional guidance and support they receive from their subject and/or school leaders. This is a gap in scholarship, which the present study seeks to address.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is of great importance in numerous ways. Firstly, at a personal level, the research is going to benefit and enrich my knowledge of instructional leadership. It is hoped that as a teacher educator, such knowledge and insights from this present study will go a long way in assisting me in influencing the relevant authorities in teacher education to include instructional leadership modules or courses in teacher preparation and development programmes since instructional leadership should be part of every teacher's knowledge. It should be noted that it is today's student teachers who are going to be tomorrow's instructional leaders. For them to execute their future duties diligently as instructional leaders they need formal training and preparation in the area of instructional leadership. As a case in point, Leithwood *et al.* (2014) has noted that in the USA, there is the School Leadership Academy (SLA) in every state and in England, there is also the National College of School Leadership set for the same purpose.

Very few studies have attempted to link instructional leadership to teachers' perceptions of the same concept and even fewer make a connection between teachers' perceptions

and experiences of instructional leadership. Therefore, this current research study is of paramount importance as it is motivated by the need to address an identified gap in scholarship.

It is also envisaged that the research study would contribute meaningfully to an improved understanding and positive perception of instructional leadership by Zimbabwean teachers thereby profoundly helping school leaders in turning around the instructional leadership exercise to be a more fruitful one. In essence, the merit associated with well-executed instructional leadership is the enhancement of the learners' academic achievement.

My study is set to contribute to a body of knowledge that will help in shedding light on various understandings and perceptions that teachers might have on instructional leadership. I hope to provide a theoretical framework that will provide insights on how to nurture positive and favourable perceptions and eliminate negative ones for improved classroom practice. This is anticipated to ultimately solve a host of problems besetting the Zimbabwean education system linked to unconvincing classroom instruction and unsatisfactory learners' academic attainment (Mapolisa & Tshabalala, 2013).

It is hoped that the research study will promote the use of instructional leadership and the related concepts of teacher leadership and distributed leadership to address the challenge of declining performance in the schools.

It is also envisaged that the study will play a part in the expansion of the borders of knowledge on instructional leadership and contribute significantly to the current knowledge on educational leadership, which may be harnessed for the purposes of staff development.

Finally, the outcome of this study is also likely to inspire and stimulate further inquiry into the teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership.

1.5 RESEACH QUESTIONS

Research questions help the researcher to explore the research problem in depth (Creswell, 2012). Numerous research questions have been put forward to examine the

research problem, which is the focus of this study.

The primary and central question guiding this research is: How is instructional leadership perceived and experienced by Zimbabwean teachers?

In order to explore and address the concerns of the study adequately, a number of sub-questions have been put forward to unpack the primary question.

Secondary questions related to the main question are:

1. What are the teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understandings of instructional leadership in Zimbabwe?

2. How do the teachers experience the practice of instructional leadership in a selected subject within the schools?

3. How can the teachers' perceptions and practices be understood and/or explained?

4. What recommendations can be made from the study of teachers' perceptions and experiences to improve the practice of instructional leadership in Zimbabwe in general?

1.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary aim of this study is to explore and establish how instructional leadership is perceived and experienced by Zimbabwean teachers.

A number of objectives have been derived from the primary aim of the study. The specific objectives to be addressed by this study are:

1. Establish the teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understandings of instructional leadership in Zimbabwe;

2. Explain the teachers' experience of the practice of instructional leadership in a selected subject within the schools;

3. Examine how the teachers' perceptions and practices can be understood and/or explained;

4. Assess the recommendations that can be made from the study of teachers' perceptions and experiences to improve the practice of instructional leadership in Zimbabwe in general.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored in a theoretical framework emanating from an inductive integration of previous literature, theories and pertinent information on the notion of instructional leadership. The related concepts of distributed leadership, transformational leadership and teacher professional learning communities will also be explored in this study since they have considerable implications for teachers' perceptions of instructional leadership.

The study is rooted in the leadership model proposed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), popularly known as the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS).The model is based on three dimensions for the instructional leadership role of the principal, namely, defining the school's mission, managing the instructional programme and promoting a conducive school learning climate. The three dimensions are further divided into ten instructional leadership roles (Goddard, *et al.,* 2010; Hallinger, 2009). Teachers may have perceptions towards various items of the proposed instructional leadership dimensions and functions. The classroom practitioners' perceptions and experiences of the various dimensions and functions of instructional leadership constitute the core phenomenon of this study.

This study is also guided by the social constructivism theory whose main tenet is that individuals reside in a world of their own personal and subjective experiences and they create meaning through social interaction (Starman, 2013). The assumption is that diversity within a group results in multiple meanings, interpretations and perceptions of the same phenomenon. The use of this framework helps the researcher to consider the organisational context. Hallinger and Wang (2015) support this practice, as they assert that research studies on school leadership consequences should consider contextual factors and address the issues of causation with scepticism.

A detailed examination of the theoretical framework is going to be done in chapter two of this study.

1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODLOGY

The research study drew on the mixed-methods research inquiry with the explanatory sequential design as the guiding framework. I collected quantitative and qualitative data sequentially (Creswell, 2012; Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2011). In this two-phase study, I first collected quantitative data through the survey instrument to explore research question 1 on the teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understandings of instructional leadership. The second phase was a qualitative study that utilised observations and focus group discussions to help explain or elaborate on teachers' experiences as proposed in question 2. Questions 3 and 4 were answered by mixing quantitative and qualitative data. The rationale for using the mixed methods design was to build on the advantages of each approach to grasp the phenomenon under consideration more adequately than what was possible using either paradigm alone (Chen, 2005; Yin, 2012). Therefore, the mixed-methods approach had the greatest merit of providing a broader and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study that was not practically feasible using either design by itself.

I desired to answer the stated research questions by using a blend of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. Three data gathering instruments, namely, the questionnaire, the focus group discussion and the observation technique were used to tap teachers' perceptions and experiences of the central phenomenon. The chosen research design afforded me the opportunity to explore the research problem in context employing a variety of data sources. This promoted triangulation of findings. Through triangulating data and/or perspectives, it was possible to gain an adequate and more robust picture of the phenomenon, enhancing claims to quality and validity (Hamilton, 2011).

In this research study, the population comprised all secondary school History teachers in Zimbabwe's educational province of Mashonaland Central. The sample included rural and urban schools to facilitate exploration into whether the central phenomenon was context specific.

For the quantitative phase of the study, a survey questionnaire was circulated to a sample of 200 secondary school History teachers. For the qualitative phase, three secondary schools were selected. One subject group per school, namely History teachers, was subjected to focus group discussions about their experiences and observation of some of their instructional leadership activities. A total of three focus group interviews and two observations per school, choosing a representative activity such as a departmental meeting were conducted.

The research participants were selected through what Onwuegbuzi and Collins (2007), term multi-stage purposeful random sampling. This entails selecting research participants representing a sample in at least two phases. In the first phase, participants were randomly selected and in the following phase, participants were purposively selected. A purposive sample is usually chosen for a clearly identified specific purpose (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) .Purposive sampling targets information rich sites (Patton, 1990), and selects the participants most able to provide information for the study's key questions.

The collected data were analysed by subjecting it to a blend of quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis as per tradition of the mixed-methods research design. Phase 1 was characterised by quantitative analysis of data collected through the survey instrument using the computer package of SPSS to explore descriptive and inferential statistics. For the qualitative phase, the data was analysed through thematic analysis. The data was organised, coded and analysed for themes, patterns and trends. Later, the data were presented as summaries and narratives, and were illustrated with examples and quotations, capturing respondents' personal perspectives and experiences.

An adequate examination of the research methodology has been done in chapter three of the study.

1.9 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Delimitations are "self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study" (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008: 134). This helps the researcher to set

parameters for the study. The study was confined to secondary schools in Zimbabwe's educational province of Mashonaland Central. I settled for secondary schools in order to move away from the tradition of early research studies on instructional leadership that tended to focus on primary or elementary schools (Hallinger, 2009). Therefore, there was a strong need to look at the phenomenon from the secondary school perspective. In order to address the different contextual cultures and variations, the sample included urban and rural schools. The study encompassed secondary school History teachers and focused on collecting instructional leadership related data. The data were essential in establishing secondary school teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership. The data that informed the study were gathered between January and December 2017.

1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research study has its own potential shortcomings. Firstly, it was based on the mixed-methods research design. The approach demands a thorough understanding of quantitative and qualitative research. According to Gay *et al.* (2011), there are few researchers gifted with the knowledge and skills necessary to utilise quantitative and qualitative research approaches fully and meaningfully in a single study. Since I am from the humanities and social science world, inferential statistics posed a few challenges. However, to minimise on this limitation, the assistance of colleagues with a strong mathematical and statistical background was sought during the data analysis process.

Secondly, the mixed-methods study demands considerable time and resources. The procedures associated with the mixed-methods research design used for the research study are time-consuming and financially demanding, requiring extensive data collection and analysis. I partly dealt with the challenge associated with transport costs by administering some of the questionnaires during teaching practice supervision errands at my institution. To save time, data analysis was run concurrently with the data gathering process.

Thirdly, the process of analysing quantitative and qualitative data sequentially and attempting to establish similarities and differences requires a high level of skill (Gay *et al.,* 2011).The same line of thinking is supported by Creswell, (2012), who contends that mixed methods research is not simply a question of collecting two different types of data. It consists of merging, linking or embedding the two types. I overcame this limitation by familiarising myself with quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis through reading the relevant literature.

Finally, the validity of the data could have been affected by issues related to the clarity of questions, honesty of respondents and response rates. I conducted pilot studies in an attempt to validate the questionnaire and focus group discussion instruments. This was aimed at assisting the researcher to make sure that the focus group discussion and questionnaire items made sense to respondents, they produced, the sort of information required and they were unambiguous. To reduce cheating on the part of the respondents and to increase the response rate, I asked the respondents to fill in the questionnaires individually in my presence.

1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY WORDS

For the purpose of this study, certain terms assume meanings specific to their use in the study. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to define them for the benefit of the reader.

Instructional leadership: refers to an educational leadership theory that focuses on the school's primary responsibilities, that is teaching and learning. The concept can be traced to the effective schools movement of the1980s (Manaseh, 2016)

Teacher: This professional person has a qualification in teaching or education and delivers an educational programme, assesses students' performance in an educational programme, and/or administers or provides consistent and substantial leadership to an educational programme in a school (Ministry of Education and Culture Zimbabwe, 1993).

Perceptions: These are views of people about the world around them that are translated from sensory impressions. Perceptions involve awareness, comprehension or an understanding of something (Bellibas, 2015).

Influence: refers to the power or capacity to be a compelling force or produce effects on the behaviours, opinions and actions of others. It may also be taken to mean, having the power to have an important effect on a person, programme, or course of events (Isaiah & Isaiah, 2015).

Secondary school: is an intermediate institution that provides secondary education after primary school and before higher education (Ministry of Education and Culture Zimbabwe, 1993).

Leadership model: refers to a guide that suggests specific leadership behaviours to employ in a specific context or situation. In addition, it often uses a graphic representation to show the required leadership behaviours (Hallinger & Wang, 2015).

Formal leaders: These school leaders are formally mandated to execute leadership functions and encompass school heads, deputy heads and heads of department. Formal leadership positions have authority attached to them (Sun *et al.,* 2013).

Informal leaders: These are leaders who were not formally appointed into leadership positions in the organisation but have the capacity to influence other members of the organisation (Sun, *et al.,* 2013).

School leaders: These are formal and informal leaders who are responsible for the overall operation of a school (Sun, *et al.,* 2013).

Principal/School head: This is the high ranking leader in a primary, middle or high school whose work combines elements of teaching with some administrative and managerial functions (Mestry, 2013).

1.12 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Orientation and background to the study

Chapter 1 focuses on the background to the study, problem statement, significance of the study, research questions, aims and objectives of the study, summary of the theoretical framework and methodology, delimitations, and limitations of the study as well as the definition of terms.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to the concept of teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership. The literature was interrogated with the deliberate intention of providing a theoretical base for the research study. In the same chapter, the theoretical framework underpinning the study was explored and explicated at greater length.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

The motive of chapter 3 is to discuss and describe the research design and methodology used for the study. The chapter includes the research approach adopted, the design employed, target population, sampling designs and procedures, the research instruments and data collection procedures as well as ethical considerations. A justification for choosing the research design, sampling designs and research instruments was given in relation to the research objectives.

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Chapter 4: Data presentation, analysis and interpretation

Chapter 4 focuses on presenting and analysing the data collected from the study using questionnaires, focus group discussions and observations. The collected data were analysed by subjecting it to a blend of quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis as per tradition of the mixed-methods research design. Quantitative data collected through the survey instrument was analysed using the computer package of SPSS to explore descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data was analysed through thematic analysis. The data was organised, coded and analysed for themes, patterns and trends.

Chapter 5: Findings, conclusions and recommendations

Lastly, chapter 5 summarises the entire study, provides a discussion of the findings, implications of the findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations with respect to the findings of the study.

1.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In summary, this chapter presented a strong case for the need to carry out an enquiry on teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership. It has been noted that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe appreciates the role of instructional leadership in the process of teaching and learning. Of late, teacher professional standards have been emphasised and are aimed at ensuring high quality and effective teaching that will improve educational outcomes for learners. For this cherished dream to be realised, there is a need to give serious attention to instructional leadership as a leadership paradigm. However, the facts on the ground reveal that instructional leadership has not received the sustained attention of educational researchers in Zimbabwe. Not much is known about instructional leadership in general. Furthermore, little is known about how teachers perceive and experience instructional leadership; hence, the need for this current study. In addition to the background to the

study, the chapter has discussed the problem statement, value of the study, research questions, aims and objectives of the study, summary of the theoretical framework and methodology, delimitations, shortcomings of the study and definition of key words in detail. The next chapter interrogates literature related to the concept of instructional leadership and the teachers' perceptions and experiences of it with the deliberate intention of providing a theoretical base for the research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The main thrust of this chapter is to review the literature on teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership. The motive behind this is to unearth and make information about the work already done on the topic available so that it can be meaningfully extended (Machi & McEvoy, 2009; Ridley, 2008). In other words, this literature review is intended to ensure that this study is not a mere replication study. Through reviewing literature related to the study, I am poised to learn from previous theories and to identify gaps in the previous research (Boote & Beilie, 2005; Hart, 2010). By so doing, a strong justification for the study is mounted. In addition to reviewing the literature on the teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership, this chapter also critically examines the theoretical framework undergirding the study. It is of paramount importance to note that this chapter will be guided by the research questions and objectives of the study as stated in chapter 1.

2.2 DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPT INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

There is no one size fits all definition for the term instructional leadership. The concept is generally defined in various ways by different authors and scholars in educational leadership and management across the globe. The concept of instructional leadership has been defined narrowly and broadly in the literature (Al-Mahdy & Al-Kiyumi, 2015; Marks & Printy, 2003). This has led Thi Hao (2016) to conclude that there are two basic perspectives of instructional leadership: narrow and broad perspectives. The definition of instructional leadership has been further categorised into the traditional or conventional definition and the new expanded definition (Horng & Loeb, 2010). Thus, it is worth pursuing this issue of different conceptualisations of instructional leadership in detail as this has a bearing on how teachers perceive instructional leadership in schools.

The parochial view of instructional leadership conceptualises instructional leadership as a separate entity from organisational management. It considers this type of leadership as those actions with a direct bearing on teaching and learning such as observable behaviours including lesson observation, curriculum supervision, teacher instruction and

learning appraisal (Al-Mahdy & Al-Kiyumi, 2015). This categorisation fits quite well the definition given by Manaseh (2016: 32), who defines instructional leadership as "an educational leadership that focuses on the core responsibility of a school, namely teaching and learning…." Instructional leadership is considered as those actions or functions undertaken by heads of schools with the deliberate intention of promoting the growth of student learning (Isaiah & Isaiah, 2014). From these given definitions, it could be noted that the narrow definition of instructional leadership is associated with the practices of school leaders. This includes setting high expectations and clear goals for teacher and student performance, procurement and allocation of teaching and learning resources, monitoring lessons, evaluating teachers' performance, providing and promoting professional development of all the members of staff and assisting in creating and maintaining a school climate that cherishes academic excellence.

DeMatthews (2014: 193) has also defined instructional leadership narrowly as "the leadership functions associated with teaching and learning, more specifically as duties and responsibilities principals need to perform each day to support teachers and learners towards educational excellence". This narrow and traditional conceptualisation of instructional leadership emphasises much on the teaching and learning elements of the leadership of the school. Thus, as far as the narrow view of instructional leadership is concerned, the school leaders should focus their attention on behaviours that improve teaching and learning. In the words of Jita and Mokhele (2013), the focus of such a conceptualisation of instructional leadership revolves around the activities of teachers aimed at influencing student learning.

The broader purview of instructional leadership encompasses all the tasks or functions undertaken by the school leaders to enhance student learning, including managerial behaviours (Horng & Loeb, 2010). In broader terms, instructional leadership is defined as all the leadership functions and behaviours that include managerial behaviours that are geared towards promoting the growth of students' learning in schools (Al-Mahdy & Al-Kiyumi, 2015). Instructional leadership might also involve what has traditionally been considered as managerial tasks, if such tasks have the capacity to provide an environment of support for instructional improvement and student progress (Bellibas,

2016). The broader view of instructional leadership advocates for the inclusion of organisational management in the definition of the concept of instructional leadership. The same view also encompasses efforts to influence the culture of an institution or the teaching and learning culture (Jita & Mokhele, 2013; Kruger, 2003). The long and short of it is that in its broad view, instructional leadership is taken to mean all activities that have a bearing on student learning (Thi Hao, 2016) and everything principals and other instructional leaders do during working hours to assist classroom practitioners to teach and enhance the achievement of learners (Marks & Printy, 2003). Therefore, it could be argued that the broader view of instructional leadership is superior to the narrow one as it is all encompassing.

Horng and Loeb (2010) are of the view that it is advantageous to conceptualise instructional leadership broadly to include organisational management. The duo's argument is that the development in prioritised school outcomes stems more from organisational management for instructional improvement than it does from the time spent on classroom observations or direct coaching of teachers by principals. The researchers at Stanford University have also established that school heads who are strong organisational managers (Horng & Loeb, 2010) usually staff schools showing positive progression in student attainment. Thus, it can be argued that if instructional leadership is defined narrowly in terms of curriculum and classroom instruction only, it may not culminate in enhanced student learning and other desirable consequences.

A close analysis of the narrow and broad views of instructional leadership shows that the two views have plenty in common, as they both focus on the improvement of teaching and learning for better student attainment. In essence, instructional leadership is about those actions taken by school leaders to promote growth in student learning (Mestry, 2013). Southworth (2009) prefers to call instructional leadership, learner-centred leadership. His argument is that school leadership should prioritise teaching and learning as the two represent the core business of any educational institution. Leadership is considered, "more potent when it focuses on developing students' learning and strengthening teaching" (Southworth, 2009: 93). Thus, Goddard *et al.* (2010: 337), consider instructional leadership to be "the management and improvement

of teaching and learning, including the nature of work principals engage in to support such improvement".

Having explored the narrow and broad views of the concept instructional leadership, and having established that there is no single universally accepted definition of instructional leadership (Kursunoglu & Tanriogen, 2009); it suffices at this stage to say that this is critical in the sense that the way someone defines a particular phenomenon influences the way the person perceives that phenomenon. Therefore, in light of this, it is critical for this study to determine the conception of instructional leadership held by the teachers in Zimbabwe.

Having highlighted that instructional leadership has been defined narrowly and broadly in the literature, it also suffices at this stage to note that this type of leadership can also be conceptualised as direct or indirect instructional leadership (Bendikson, Robinson & Hattie, 2012; Siskin, 1994). The former is that type of instructional leadership whose focus is the calibre of teacher practice itself, including the quality of the curriculum, teaching and assessment, and the quality of teacher inquiry and teacher learning. The direct effect model of instructional leadership is premised on the notion that leadership effects can directly emanate from the actions of the principal (Hallinger & Wang, 2015; Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008). On the contrary, indirect instructional leadership is aimed at ensuring that conditions for good teaching and learning are created by making sure that policies of the academic institution, resource allocation and other related management decisions assist and demand high-quality teaching and teacher learning (Bellibas, 2016). However, it is critical to note that direct and indirect instructional leadership practices are usually inseparable as they work hand in glove. In most cases, the school leaders practise both versions of instructional leadership. Thus, it is also within the framework of the current study to establish how teachers in Zimbabwe perceive and experience instructional leadership in relation to the twin concepts of direct and indirect instructional leadership.

Research findings in the literature have shown that many educational practitioners in Africa are not familiar with the concept of instructional leadership. In research undertaken in Tanzania, Manaseh (2016) observed that teachers were not familiar with

the concept of instructional leadership. This observation did not mark any departure from the previous research findings. The research done by World Bank (2010), has established that most of the school heads and teachers are not familiar with the educational leadership paradigm of instructional leadership. Bellibas (2016) supports this line of thinking, noting that most of the principals and teachers in Turkey were not familiar with the formalised concept of instructional leadership but understood most of the leadership functions associated with this educational leadership paradigm. Thus, it is noteworthy for this study to ascertain Zimbabwean teachers' level of familiarity with the concept of instructional leadership. The assumption is that the teachers' level of understanding and familiarity with the concept of instructional leadership partly influences how they perceive the practice of instructional leadership in the schools.

2.3 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Having attempted to define the concept instructional leadership, attention is now turned to the historical antecedents of the concept. Everything in this world is best understood in light of its history and instructional leadership is no exception. Similar to formal education, instructional leadership did not originate from Africa. The roots of instructional leadership can be traced to the effective schools movement that gripped the United States of America between the 1970s and 1980s (Bas, 2012; Hallinger, 2009; Horng & Loeb, 2010). The concept of instructional leadership can be traced to the original work of Ronald Edmonds who noted that the so-called effective schools had leaders who always focused on instructional leadership (Edmonds, 1979; Marks, 2008). Edmonds studied the relationship between leadership and effective schools in America's urban elementary schools (Neurmerski, 2012). The effective schools movement noted that effective schools had principals who prioritised instructional leadership (Jenkins, 2009). According to Joyner (2005) principals who prioritised teaching and learning experienced phenomenal growth in student achievement. These principals spent most of their time on improving the technical core of schooling, teaching and learning (Bellibas, 2016).Thus, from the findings of the effective schools movement, principals who operated as instructional leaders as opposed to administrators or managers (Goddard *et al.,*2010) managed effective schools. Unlike school leaders who concentrated much of their attention on managerial issues such as paperwork, budgets

and maintenance of discipline, principals in charge of the so-called effective schools tended to focus their energies on the various academic elements of their institutions. This included goal setting, curriculum development, assessment of classroom practitioners' instructional practices and creating conditions for optimum instructional improvement (Bellibas, 2016).

In the words of Grisson and Loeb (2011), the effective schools movement uncovered a plethora of descriptors that characterised effective principals such as; protects instructional time, promotes staff development, develops an atmosphere conducive to learning as well as monitors and observes lessons. Commonalities among these various descriptors culminated in the birth of the term instructional leadership. This term became a means of grouping together "everything a principal does during the day to support the achievement of students and the ability of teachers to teach" (Marks & Printy, 2003: 373). Therefore, a legacy of the effective schools movement was the birth and institutionalisation of the term instructional leadership into the educational leadership and management vocabulary.

Instructional leadership started as a North American phenomenon but the scenario has since changed. Instructional leadership has acquired global appeal. This can be attributed to increased global interest in educational reform and school level accountability (Hallinger, 2009). There is phenomenal growth in the thinking that school leaders should be accountable for learners' performance (Horng & Loeb, 2010). As a result of this, instructional leadership has gained momentum and is now practised across the world.

As has been noted earlier on, the increased recognition of instructional leadership as a key educational leadership and management paradigm started in the USA. As a consequence of the publication of the effective schools research findings, the American government took a bold step of setting up a School Leadership Academy (SLA) in every state (Hallinger, 2009). The policymakers had recognised that there is definite link between instructional leadership and learners' attainment. This recognition has duly informed the enactment of educational leadership standards in the USA. These principalship standards in the USA, which differ from state to state, emphasise the

involvement of school leaders in the designing and implementing of high quality instructional practices geared towards improving student academic success. A case in point is the Colorado principal-quality standards that stipulate that principals should enact high standards for curriculum and instruction; play a part in supporting teachers through unending feedback and professional development and, assist teachers in maximising effective use of instructional time. They also have to capacitate teachers to identify the best instructional practices that aid students' learning and academic achievement (Bellibas, 2016). Thus, the growth of instructional leadership as a leadership paradigm is also closely linked to the development of principalship standards.

Instructional leadership has been embraced by many other countries. It has influenced the activities of the National College of School Leadership in England and in New Zealand; it has led to the development of a leadership framework for principals (Robinson, 2010). The winds of instructional leadership have also blown across Turkey. In 2010, the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MONE) put in place a piece of legislation that makes it mandatory for all the principals in the country to engage in instructional leadership activities such as formulating vision and mission statements for their schools, conducting lesson observations and promoting staff development activities (Bellibas, 2016). Therefore, the motive behind all these initiatives is to guarantee that quality teaching and learning prevail in the schools.

Instructional leadership has also proved to be of great appeal to various African countries. In Botswana, school heads are empowered by the educational laws of the country to execute numerous instructional leadership functions such as holding staff meetings, conducting lesson observations, checking schemes of work and records of work and spearheading staff development workshops (Isaiah & Isaiah, 2014). In Tanzania, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training expects school heads to execute a multiplicity of instructional leadership duties such as the supervision of the teaching programme, guaranteeing high quality teaching and learning, protection of instructional time and the creation of a conducive teaching and learning environment. Countries such as Uganda and South Africa are examples of other African nations that

have joined the bandwagon of instructional leadership (Manaseh, 2016). Therefore, instructional leadership has acquired a global outlook as evidenced by the adoption of this educational leadership paradigm by various countries from different continents across the world. The big question for this current study is, has Zimbabwe also adopted instructional leadership in its school system.

Evidence on the ground point to the fact that similar to many other African countries, Zimbabwe has also taken on instructional leadership. The Ministry of Education and Culture Zimbabwe (1993), contends that an array of formal leaders such as the school head, deputy head and heads of department (HODs) have a combination of administrative and professional functions to conduct. The professional duties focus on instructional leadership functions such as class visits, exercise book inspections, staff meetings and staff development. Thus, it could be argued that instructional leadership is practised in Zimbabwe's education system. However, the key question is how is it perceived and experienced by the Zimbabwean secondary school History teachers.

2.4 SOURCES OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Hallinger (2009) encourages discussions of school leadership not to focus on the practices and effects of leadership only, but to take cognisance of the sources of leadership. In light of this, the current study endeavours to establish what the vast body of literature says on sources of instructional leadership.

The emerging body of research linked to the effective schools movement created the impression that the principal was the sole instructional leader in any given school and his instructional leadership role was critical to school effectiveness. The effective schools movement established that the so-called effective schools had principals who operated as instructional leaders (Goddard *et al.,* 2010; Joyner, 2005). The principal was regarded as the main person behind quality instruction (Ghavifekr *et al.,* 2015). Numerous studies have shown that the principal's effective execution of leadership is the main determinant for school improvement and learners achievement. In fact, the studies associated with the effective schools movement have shown that there was "no evidence of effective schools with weak leaders" (Neumerski, 2012: 8). Based on a longitudinal study conducted in Chicago, Al-Mahdy and Al-Kiyumi (2015) concluded that

the school head is instrumental in the school's bid to attain high quality instruction and enhanced learner achievement.

"During the 1980s relatively little reference was made to teachers, department heads, or even assistant principals as instructional leaders as there was no discussion of instructional leadership as a distributed or shared function" (Hallinger, 2009: 2). This was so because early studies of instructional leadership considered the principal as the sole source of leadership. According to Goddard *et al.* (2010: 339), "these studies viewed the principal as the sole source of instructional leadership, reinforcing a romantic idea of the heroic school leader." Suffice it to say, that instructional leadership emerged as the key role of the principal or school head. Neurmerski (2012) has shown that the conceptualisation of instructional leadership has largely been characterised by the thinking that principals are the only instructional leaders. Therefore, it is pertinent for this current study to establish whether Zimbabwean teachers are still holding onto the traditional belief that perceives instructional leadership as the sole mandate of school heads.

The belief that only school heads should execute instructional leadership functions has since been overtaken by events. School leadership "need not be located only in the position of the principal but can be stretched over a range of people who work at different levels in a school" (Grant *et al.,* 2010: 401). "The term school leadership does not refer to the leadership of the principal alone. …schools cannot rely on the power of one" (Ng, 2015: 8). Instructional leadership should not be conceived as individual or positional but as a group activity that encompasses numerous people. In support of this Chen and Cheng (2017), as well as Marks and Printy (2003), argue that instructional leaders have been broadened to encompass others besides the school head. Some of these people or subordinates are formal leaders who are appointed by the school formal structure and involve deputy heads, senior teachers and heads of department. The formal leaders influence the behaviours and beliefs of other teachers using formal authority attached to their positions. Thus, it is also within the parameters of this study to find out the extent to which Zimbabwean teachers perceive and experience

instructional leadership as a function that is also performed by other formal leaders besides the school head.

Instructional leadership also involves informal leaders such as teacher leaders, mentioned earlier on. Informal leaders do not have any formal leadership positions in the institution but have the capacity to influence the classroom practice of their colleagues (Sun *et al.,* 2013). In the past, many players in the educational fraternity regarded informal leaders as people with no mandate to execute instructional leadership functions. The trend was to examine instructional leadership as mainly the principals' duty as well as others in formal positions, with very little focus on informal leaders within the school system (Jita & Mokhele, 2013). This kind of thinking should be discarded because formal and informal leaders have instructional duties to perform. As noted by Sun *et al.* (2013), formal leaders are instrumental in making numerous opportunities available to teachers to learn about newly introduced practices, whereas informal leaders are instrumental in assisting their colleagues in the implementation of these newly introduced practices. Therefore, the success of instructional leadership rests on the work of formal and informal leaders. As such, it is pertinent for this current study to ascertain whether Zimbabwean teachers perceive instructional leadership as an exercise that should be performed by informal leaders too.

Teachers have a role to play in instructional leadership as shown by research that has challenged the thinking that principals are the primary school leaders in a school and demonstrated the distributed nature of IL to include teachers (Jita & Mokhele, 2013). During the 1990s there was a growing emphasis on teacher professionalism that condemned the view that regarded teachers as technicians, who were supposed to uncritically swallow other people's ideas. The advocates of teachers' professionalism called for strong recognition of the role of teacher leaders as well as other leadership sources (Hallinger, 2009). This has resulted in the reconceptualisation of instructional leadership as a shared or distributed function. The philosophy behind distributed leadership is that the business of enhancing teaching quality and learning should not be vested in the office of the school head only but also shared by a host of leaders including an array of formal and informal leaders (Spillane & Diamond, 2007).

According to Neumerski (2012), the notion of distributed or shared leadership is best understood by referring to Spillane's distributed leadership perspective. This leadership perspective has two main aspects, the leader-plus aspect and the leadership practice aspect. The former is an acknowledgement that school leadership is the responsibility of multiple individuals who include formal and informal leaders. The leadership-plus aspect does not downplay the role of school heads but emphasises the point that "all individuals who have a hand in leadership" (Spillane & Diamond, 2007: 7) are worth considering. What it entails is that when it comes to school leadership, one should consider principals, assistant principals, heads of department, teacher leaders and coaches. The second aspect of Spillane's distributed leadership concept dwells on the interactions among leaders, subordinates, and their contexts. According to this aspect, leadership is best conceptualised as a social relationship between leaders and their followers. This social relationship cannot be removed from its context. The leadership practice unfolds as school leaders interact with their followers in given contexts around given tasks. The concerned tasks are related to the core business of the school, which is teaching and learning. Thus, Spillane's distributed leadership perspective helps in aiding our understanding of the workings of instructional leadership as a distributed function.

It has been noted that school heads cannot go it alone and as such; they should encourage other members of staff to step into leadership roles and take on responsibilities (Mendels, 2012). The Minnesota/Toronto researchers found that distributed or shared leadership has the effect of resulting in better student learning and achievement. In particular, the Minnesota/Toronto research team noted that where the school leadership emanated from different sources, principals, assistant principals, HODs and teachers, students performed better in math and reading tests (Mendels, 2012). The findings of the Minnesota/Toronto research team emphasise the need for principals or school heads to share leadership with others. Jita (2010) made the same observations, noting that schools that were able to provide effective instructional leadership for the improvement of science and mathematics were characterised by distributed leadership. Such schools did not rely on a single leader. Several leaders played a part in leadership within a given subject area. For instance, one successful

institution had numerous leadership posts such as departmental heads, heads of subjects, grade leaders and curriculum leaders. Leithwood *et al.* (2006) also subscribe to the opinion that school leadership has a significant impact on schools and pupils when it is distributed widely. "Research has shown that schools were less productive with a school principal who demonstrated more dominant leadership behaviours. In contrast shared decision making behaviours led to teachers' higher job involvement" (Chen & Cheng, 2017: 11). Thus, distributed leadership has the positive effect of promoting high leadership density, which entails that numerous people actively participate "in the work of others, are trusted with information, are involved in decision making, are exposed to new ideas and participate in knowledge creation and transfer" (Frost & Harris, 2003: 487). In such a scenario, several people have a role to play in the success of the organisation. This study partly endeavours to find out if Zimbabwean teachers perceive instructional leadership as a distributed function. A function shared amongst school heads, deputy heads, senior teachers and teachers themselves.

From the ongoing discussion, it can be noted that instructional leadership should be considered as a shared or distributed function. Distributed leadership represents that kind of collaborative leadership exercised by the school head, deputy heads, heads of department and other informal leaders (Hallinger, 2009). Instructional leadership requires substantial amounts of time and expertise (Bellibas, 2016). Therefore, what it entails is that instructional leadership cannot be a solo effort on the part of school heads. "Leadership cannot be embodied in just one individual" (Frost & Harris, 2003: 486). In schools, teachers who possess more expertise in a particular subject matter should be allowed to take formal and informal responsibility in contributing to each other's professional development (Bellibas, 2016: 6). The rationale for distributed instructional leadership is that the school heads cannot effectively carry out instructional leadership alone as they have numerous other administrative and managerial functions to execute. The gist of the matter is that principals who take it upon themselves to attempt the complexities and challenges of instructional leadership on their own are likely to burnout compared to their counterparts who recognise that instructional leadership responsibilities should be shared (Marks & Printy, 2003). This is so because"…school management, which is a complicated and hard task, cannot be left to

a single leader… school structures are not easy to be managed effectively with the leadership of a single person" (Goksoy, 2015: 110). From this, it could be argued that instructional leadership calls for the involvement of all key players in a school.

In situations where instructional leadership is shared, teachers feel empowered. Empowerment has the effect of resulting in a sense of ownership and commitment, as teachers are involved in identifying problems and designing solutions themselves (Joyner, 2005). In turn, this has the ripple effect of spearheading sustainable change. The crux of the matter is that sustainable school improvement is a consequence of school leadership that is shared by different stakeholders. As noted by Hallinger (2009), instructional leadership that is shared with the teachers has the potential to change teachers' attitudes towards leadership and result in changes that are sustainable and have the capacity to be embraced by teachers who have the mandate for ensuring that they are implemented at classroom level. Thus, it is crucial for this research study to find out if Zimbabwean teachers are experiencing instructional leadership as a distributed function or as the sole responsibility of the school head. As noted by Hallinger (2009) this has implications on how the practice of instructional leadership is perceived by the classroom practitioners.

It has to be noted that the idea of encouraging teachers to step into leadership roles and responsibilities has not gone unchallenged. Frost and Harris (2003) have referenced the work of Eric Hoyle who identified two types of teachers, namely restricted and extended professionals. Unlike extended professionals, who do not consider their work to be confined to the four walls of the classroom, the restricted professionals believe that their sole duty is to teach. They consider anything outside classroom work as not their responsibility. Such teachers do not have the capacity to step into leadership positions and responsibilities. Furthermore, Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) are of the opinion that teachers have a lot on their shoulders and as such, the addition of leadership responsibilities to their teaching duties is not a disservice to them only but to the leaders as well. This argument has been dismissed by Marks and Printy (2003), whose findings have actually revealed that the involvement of teachers in instructional leadership has the positive effect of improving school effectiveness and student

achievement. However, it seems as if the argument by Leithwood *et al.* (2014) is partly valid in contexts such as the Zimbabwean one where teachers have large classes to deal with.

2.5 PRIORITY GIVEN TO INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS

Research has shown that although instructional leadership has a strong bearing on improving teachers' instructional practices and student learning (Leithwood *et al.,* 2014), it is seldom prioritised (Jenkins, 2009). Stanley *et al.* (2016: 32) echo the same sentiments as they contend that, "despite the fact instructional leadership is a critical issue in the realisation of educational goals, it is seldom practiced". Literature has shown that principals in Africa do not give adequate attention to the practice of instructional leadership (Manaseh, 2016). This argument stems from the fact that instructional leadership is not consuming most of the time of the majority of school heads. Literature surveyed by Manaseh (2016), suggests that this problem is not only confined to the African continent. In Australia, it was noted that most of the school heads prioritised financial administration at the expense of instructional leadership. Most of the school heads in that country focused more on managerial issues and because of that they were far removed from their teachers and students. The same problem is also happening in Canada. In Canada, most of the school heads do not have the time or the expertise to engage in instructional leadership. Thus, this problem is widespread as it is affecting countries in the developed and developing world.

South Africa has not been spared from this problem. According to Taole (2013), most South African heads of schools consider themselves as managers and not as learning leaders. Mestry (2013: 119) echoes this, saying that, "research revealed that South African principals are mainly concerned with financial and human resources management and policy issues". In a survey that was conducted with over 500 principals in Gauteng, instructional leadership was ranked seventh out of ten leadership activities. However, principals should take heed of the call made by Jenkins (2009), who encourages school principals to focus more on improving teaching and learning at the expense of bureaucratic tasks.

It has been discovered that most of the school heads spend only about one-tenth of their time on instructional leadership (Jenkins, 2009; Taole, 2013). Most of their time is unfortunately spent on managerial and administrative activities. A study conducted by Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013), in Zimbabwe also revealed that most of the school heads engage in issues such as financial management, sporting and ground development at the expense of instructional leadership. The dominant position in the literature is that the practice of instructional leadership is not being accorded the place it deserves in the school system. This is in sharp contrast with the argument that instructional leadership should constitute the principal responsibility of the school head as it makes a difference in improving teaching and learning (Heaven & Bourne, 2016). In the face of such overwhelming evidence well documented in the literature, I felt obliged to ascertain from the History teachers' perspective whether the same scenario is occurring in Zimbabwe.

The vast body of literature seems to peddle the idea that most of the school heads do not recognise instructional leadership as the core of their responsibilities. In his study, Taole (2013) noted that most of the principals were of the opinion that the principal's role of instructional leadership should be delegated to heads of department. This is more or less similar to the observation made by Marishane (2011) that most of the principals tend to focus more on tasks related to administration and management, while they delegate instructional leadership to other players in the administration hierarchy. The Zimbabwean school administration hierarchy includes deputy heads, senior masters, senior women and heads of department (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993). Things being equal, these officials are expected to share instructional leadership functions with the school heads.

The most popular view in the literature reviewed is that instructional leadership should be at the top of the school heads' priority list. However, the school heads cannot afford to ignore their other duties; although teaching and learning should be the area that consumes most of their allotted time (Joyner, 2005). What it implies is that the school heads should make a spirited attempt to strike a balance between different leadership functions. Jenkins (2009) supports this standpoint, asserting that these days the

majority of school leaders are seeking to maintain a balance in their functions as manager, administrator and instructional leader. "The principal is expected to wear many hats; he/she must be a manager, administrator, instructional and curriculum leader" (Taole, 2013: 76). In the words of Mestry (2013), the functions that should be performed by the principal go beyond instructional leadership to include administrative and managerial tasks. Kruger (2003:206) preaches the same gospel:

> Principals have to divide their time between issues of curriculum and instruction and a large number of non-education matters such as labour relations, financial management and empowering governing bodies. The effective execution of all the functions of a principal will undoubtedly ensure the establishment of a positive culture of teaching and learning and by so doing contribute to the effectiveness of the school.

Therefore, at times the school head should juggle around different and conflicting roles. This is so because in the words of Joyner (2005), effective school leadership should make an effort to blend the traditional school leadership functions such as teacher evaluation, budgeting and maintenance of facilities with a deep involvement with specific aspects of teaching and learning. However, the argument is that while traditional responsibilities have to be met, priorities should be placed on instructional issues that are instrumental in creating positive learning environments and student achievement (Jenkins, 2009). It is within the confines of this study to establish how the teachers perceive the ability of their school leaders to maintain a balance between instructional leadership and other competing areas of attention such as administration and management.

One school of thought argues that it is a mammoth task for school heads or principals to perform a balancing act on their conflicting roles (Blasé, Blasé & Phillips, 2010).This is a result of the fact that many of the activities and responsibilities have been included in the job description of the school head without eliminating the old activities and responsibilities (Mestry, 2013). Thus, the role of the school head is made up of a number of conflicting duties that make it almost impossible for them to balance their instructional leadership role with administrative and managerial functions. It is important for this study to ascertain teachers' perceptions on this issue.

2.6 INSTRUCTIONAL BEHAVIOURS OR PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

There is no consensus in the literature regarding the duties that should be executed by instructional leaders. Various scholars have postulated different practices associated with instructional leadership. Based on the effective schools movement, there was "no consensus as to precisely what an instructional leader was, what he or she would do to make the school effective, how he or she would do his work and whether the work would vary by context" (Neurmerski, 2012: 8). Robinson *et al.,* (2008), believe that the instructional leadership role of school leaders, particularly school principals, is characterised by five leadership dimensions. The first dimension focuses on the provision of leadership to the school through the promotion and participation in teacher learning and development activities. School leaders are encouraged to mount staff development programmes for their teachers with the intention of improving their pedagogical practices and instructional quality in the schools.

> Students' success relies on teachers' competency and teachers' success relies on the principal's competency. Hence, a leader should always motivate staff's professional growth for the sake of school improvement and at the same time ensure that instructional practices go well (Ghavifekr *et al.,* 2015: 64).

Therefore, staff development plays a part in ensuring effective schools characterised by quality instructional practices and high academic achievement.

Robinson *et al.* (2008) are also of the opinion that instructional leaders should take it upon themselves to establish goals and expectations for their schools. For these goals and expectations to be genuinely meaningful, they should focus on the academic progress of the learners. These goals should represent the central rallying point of the whole school. Goals represent the most significant path through which the principal and the other school leaders exert their influence on students' learning (Hallinger & Heck, 2009). The third proposed leadership dimension deals with the planning, coordination and evaluation of teaching. If the school goals and expectations are to be met, it is imperative for the educational process to be planned and coordinated. The education process is not a hit or miss affair that can be left to chance. It is vital to evaluate the educational process to ascertain the extent to which set goals and expectations are

being achieved. If there are any drawbacks, correct measures can always be taken to rectify any anomalies. Robinson *et al.* (2008) also expect effective instructional leaders to play a part in strategic resourcing. For the teachers to conduct their core business of teaching smoothly, it is imperative for the instructional leaders to make the required teaching and learning resources available, even under difficult circumstances. Last but not least, the school leaders should ensure that an orderly and supportive environment prevails in the school. Without a conducive environment, no meaningful teaching and learning can be realised and the goal of improving instructional quality will remain a dream that will never come to fruition.

The Wallace Foundation (2013) has identified five principal practices underlying the concept of instructional leadership. Firstly, the instructional leaders are mandated to shape a vision for academic success for all the learners in the school. Robinson *et al.* (2008) postulate that this practice is more or less the same as the dimension of establishing goals and expectations for academic success. A vision of academic success provides a sense of direction for the school. Such a vision clearly tells teachers and students what is expected of them. As a consequence of that, they are likely to focus all their attention and energies on ensuring that they realise the dreams and aspirations that their school vision stands for. However, despite the fact that the school vision has been noted as an essential requirement of effective school leadership, Momborquette (2017), noted in a study in Alberta, Canada that 12 out of 27 principals did not have a clear vision to guide the learning process. Therefore, it seems as if some of the school leaders do not attach any importance to the need to have a vision for academic success. Therefore, the current study also desires to establish History teachers' perceptions and experiences on the same issue.

The second practice that is considered by the Wallace Foundation (2013), to be at the centre of instructional leadership is the creation of a climate hospitable to teaching and learning. If schools are ever to provide good learning opportunities for the learners (Shava, 2015), the principals should ensure that they put in place conditions that promote excellence in teaching and learning. The instructional leaders should take it upon themselves to create conditions that promote effective teaching and teacher

learning (Bendikson *et al.,* 2012). There is consensus among various leading scholars on instructional leadership that no effective teaching and learning can be realised if a climate that is hospitable to teaching and learning is not thriving in the school. The Wallace Foundation (2013) also emphasises the need to cultivate leadership in others as one of the key instructional practices that should be carried out by serious instructional leaders. Effective principals usually encourage other members of staff who make up the school to step into leadership responsibilities and roles. Bendikson *et al.* (2012) strongly support this view, saying that the secondary school heads should concentrate on facilitating and developing the instructional leadership of middle level leaders such as deputy heads and heads of department. The school head is expected to regard himself or herself as the "leader of leaders". The act of cultivating leadership in others is instrumental in capacitating teachers to take part in realising the school vision (Mendels, 2012). As such, this act should be given the attention it deserves by the school leaders.

The fourth instructional practice that should be the focus of instructional leaders revolves around the improvement of instruction (Wallace Foundation, 2013). Instructional leaders are expected to focus on instructional quality. "The aims of instructional leadership are tied to the core work of schools: teaching and learning. Thus, instructional leadership practice must include the connection between instructional leadership and instruction itself" (Neurmerski, 2012: 8). Instructional leaders, particularly the school principals, similar to managers in the corporate sector; should focus on the core business (Naidoo & Peterson, 2015). The improvement of instruction is at the heart of the core business of the school. The crux of the matter is that school leaders should strive to improve instruction to empower teachers to teach at their optimum level and learners to learn at their best (Mendels, 2012). The last practice identified by the Wallace Foundation (2013), that is associated with instructional leadership, is the management of people, data and processes to stimulate school improvement. School heads are encouraged to pay special attention to these key instructional leadership practices if they are ever to make a difference to the core business of schools under their jurisdiction.

Kruger (2003) has identified five practices that generally typify instructional leadership. The first function dwells on the process of creating and conveying a clear mission, goals and objectives. The mission, goals and objectives that focus on academic progress of the school should be crafted by the school head in consultation with the other members of staff. The second function that should be performed by instructional leaders revolves around managing the curriculum and instruction. Under this function, instructional leaders are expected to coordinate the curriculum in such a manner that they protect instructional time. It is the mandate of the school leaders, particularly the principals, to support their schools' teaching programmes and to provide their teachers with the resources required for them to operate effectively. The third function proposed by Kruger (2003), calls upon the school leaders to supervise teaching. Instructional leaders should take it upon themselves to ensure that their teachers receive the required support and guidance for them to carry out their duties effectively. The instructional leader should focus more on teacher professional development than performance appraisal. The fourth function that should be executed by instructional leaders pertains to monitoring the progress of learners. The instructional leaders should take it upon themselves to ensure that tests and examinations are continuously used to monitor and evaluate the academic progress of the learners. The results of the tests and assignments have the potential to indicate the areas where teachers and students require assistance. It is vital for the current study to investigate whether History teachers in Zimbabwe perceive their school leaders as having a keen interest in monitoring learners' academic progress.

The last function performed by the instructional leaders, identified by Kruger (2003), focuses on the promotion of a hospitable instructional climate. The onus is on instructional leaders to create a suitable climate in which teaching and learning can thrive. "In a situation where learning is made exciting, where teachers and learners are supported and where there is a shared sense of purpose, learning will not be difficult" (Kruger, 2003: 7). Thus, with an enabling instructional climate in place, chances are high that effective teaching and learning would be realised.

Barrett (2014) has also made a spirited attempt to outline the behaviours and practices that should be exhibited by effective instructional leaders. The effective instructional leaders are expected to put much of their focus on instructional quality by defining and promoting high expectations and reducing teacher isolation by encouraging teachers to form professional learning communities (PLCs). Barrett (2014) also expects instructional leaders to be highly visible in the school, focusing on making formative observations and promoting professional growth. Barrett's ideal instructional leader should be in a position to model effective instructional strategies. Research has shown that effective principals are able to demonstrate teaching approaches, be it in the classroom or at conferences (Hallinger *et al.,* 2017). It is imperative for the school leaders to show their subordinates the way by demonstrating the appropriate pedagogical practices.

Blasé and Blasé (2002) are of the opinion that instructional leaders should focus on talking with teachers to promote reflection and professional growth. The duo believes that effective instructional leaders attach greater importance to the dialogical process that inspires teachers as educators to always ponder and reflect on learning and professional practice. The mentioned dialogical process comprises five major talking strategies. The first strategy involves making suggestions. School leaders, particularly principals, are expected to make suggestions to teachers after lesson observations or even in informal daily interactions. For the suggestions to have a significant impact they should be characterised by listening, sharing of experiences, effective use of concrete examples and demonstrations, teachers being allowed to make choices, questioning obsolete or ineffective policies, identifying teachers' strengths and ensuring that the focus is always on improving instruction.

The second talking strategy, put forward by Blasé and Blasé (2002), concerns the practice of giving feedback. After a lesson observation, a school leader should give immediate feedback to the concerned teacher. Hallinger *et al.* (2017: 229) encourage school leaders "…to discuss strengths and weaknesses that had been observed in a particular lesson". Delayed feedback is highly unlikely to have a significant effect on the teacher's instructional practices. The third strategy pertains to the modelling of effective teaching strategies. Good instructional leaders are considered to be leaders who are

able to demonstrate effective teaching approaches in classrooms and during conferences. Effective instructional leaders should also model cordial interactions with students. Such instructional leaders are likely to win the confidence and respect of their teachers. Fourthly, effective instructional leaders frequently employ an inquiry strategy with their teachers to solicit for the teachers' advice on various issues. Finally, the last talking strategy used by effective instructional leaders to promote reflection is the use of praises that focus on concrete and specific teaching and learning behaviours.

Based on their study, Blasé and Blasé (2002) concluded that one of the key responsibilities of instructional leaders is the act of promoting teachers' professional growth. This act involves six strategies that can be summarised as emphasising the study of teaching and learning and rendering support to collaboration among teachers. Collaboration among teachers is an ingredient for successful teaching and learning. Blasé and Blasé (2002) noted that effective heads of schools actually encourage their teachers to visit educational practitioners from even other schools to observe their pedagogical practices and programmes. Effective instructional leaders were found to be instrumental in creating coaching relationships among educational practitioners. Principals and other school leaders should encourage teachers to be coaches and models for each other. Furthermore, Blasé and Blasé (2002) noted that effective instructional leaders are fond of encouraging their teachers to redesign instructional programmes on a continuous basis and they support the adoption of numerous teaching and learning strategies. Effective principals were also discovered to be in the habit of applying the principles of adult learning, growth and development to staff development programmes. Finally, from Blasé and Blasé (2002), effective instructional leaders promote professional growth in their schools by using action research as the bedrock of professional growth in their schools. From the study conducted by the two researchers, it was established that teachers indicated that effective principals made efforts to use action research in promoting professional growth in their teachers.

Behaviours or practices associated with instructional leadership are best summarised in the table below.

Table 2.1: Behaviours or practices associated with instructional leadership

Hallinger and Murphy (1985)	Krug (1992)	Hussein Mahmood (1997)
1. Frame the school goals	1. Explain school's mission	1. Set school's philosophy
2. Communicate the school goals	2. Supervise teaching	2. Form school's vision
3. Supervise and evaluate instruction	3. Build conducive learning climate	3. Set school goals and objectives
4. Coordinate the curriculum	4. Manage curriculum	4. Formulate and develop school policies and procedures
5. Monitor students' progress	5. Monitor students' achievement	5. Provide supports for teaching and learning
6. Protect instructional time		6. Control teaching quality
7. Maintain high visibility		7. Promote staff development
8. Provide incentives for teachers		8. Cooperate with school external parties
9. Promote professional development		
10. Provide incentives for learning		

(Adopted from Sim, 2011: 178)

The work of various scholars has demonstrated that there is no single explanation of what an instructional leader does (Kursunoglu & Tanriogen, 2009). Instructional leaders are involved in a plethora of instructional practices and behaviours that are aimed at improving teaching and learning. This current study is partly geared towards establishing the instructional practices that are partaken in by instructional leaders from the perspectives and experiences of secondary school History teachers.

2.7 SKILLS REQUIRED FOR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Based on the evidence in the literature, it suffices to say that instructional leadership requires the school leaders to possess certain skills for them to execute their

instructional leadership functions effectively and efficiently. However, there is far less knowledge about the leadership skills that should be possessed by the school leaders for them to confidently execute the practices involved (Robinson, 2010). Very few studies have noted specific skills that are required by the school principals to achieve school effectiveness (Grisson & Loeb, 2011). Thus, this study is partly geared to explore this identified research gap in light of teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership.

A study by Bolanle (2013), in South Western Nigeria, found a significant relationship between school effectiveness and the school head's leadership skills. The crux of the matter is that the effectiveness of the school hinges on the competence of the school head. For the school heads to be competent, they need to be equipped with the necessary instructional leadership skills. These leadership skills are acquired through training. In the words of Blasé *et al.* (2010), outstanding school leaders are made, not born. Therefore, with prior training, school heads develop the right leadership qualities that spearhead school wide achievement.

Whitaker (1997) identified four critical skills for instructional leadership. Firstly, instructional leaders have to be resource providers. The onus is on instructional leaders to procure and provide the necessary instructional resources that are required by the teachers. Besides ensuring the provision of the required resources, instructional leaders should have the essential skills that enable them to operate as instructional resources. Teachers consider their instructional leaders as reservoirs of information on contemporary trends and effective instructional practices. The same idea is firmly supported by (Jenkins, 2009), who contends that instructional leaders should be well positioned to give any form of assistance to their teachers relating to curriculum, effective pedagogical strategies and assessment.

From Whitaker's perspective, instructional leaders should be good communicators. It is the duty of the school leaders, particularly the school principal, to ensure that the school vision and essentials pertaining to learning are communicated to the teachers, students and other important stakeholders. Without proper communication skills, it is always difficult for the school leaders to communicate the dreams and aspirations of the school

regarding teaching and learning to the teachers and students. Finally, Whitaker (1997) expects the instructional leaders to create a visible presence in the school as well as in the classroom. In a study conducted by Hallinger *et al.* (2017: 229), in Vietnam, "the principals claimed to walk through classrooms at different times of the day to see if teachers start classes on time and whether students are focused on lessons". Therefore, the principal should not be far removed from the teachers and students if s/he is to impact positively on teaching and learning in the school.

Dufour (2002) encourages the instructional leaders to have expertise in curriculum, instruction and assessment for them to deliver their instructional leadership functions competently. Instructional leaders should be experts in the field of curriculum. They should be well acquainted with the changing conceptions of the curriculum, guiding philosophies of education and beliefs. The same instructional leaders should also know what curriculum evaluation entails. More so, instructional leaders should have knowledge on various teaching models and the theoretical considerations underpinning those models. Dufour (2002) also emphasises the need for instructional leaders to have a good understanding of assessment procedures. The instructional leaders should have the skills to help teachers to harness various assessment procedures to improve teaching and learning. Assessment provides essential information on which educational decisions can be based. Assessment provides school professionals with information about the effectiveness of their pedagogy and curriculum materials used for learning (Lingham & Lingham, 2016). Assessment is a critical tool in ascertaining the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process in the classroom and consequently plays a key part in finding possible ways to enrich the learning outcomes for children. Thus, it is imperative for the school leaders to be well equipped in the area of assessment for them to execute their duties diligently.

Jenkins (2009) contends that for instructional leaders to have a comprehensive understanding of the three main areas of education, namely, curriculum, instruction and assessment, they should have a good grasp of the principles governing human learning. They should be well acquainted with the various learning theories that have been postulated by different scholars. The claim that instructional leaders who are not well

versed in these three areas of education and are not fully equipped to serve as instructional leaders is not an overstatement. It is imperative for this current study to find out how teachers perceive their instructional leaders' state of preparedness as far as instructional leadership is concerned regarding the mentioned key areas of education.

Jenkins (2009) has articulated four essential skills that should be possessed by instructional leaders for them to execute their instructional mandate effectively and efficiently. Instructional leaders should demonstrate sound interpersonal skills. This involves maintaining trust, spurring motivation, enhancing collegiality and empowering others. The empowerment drive is popular for leading and stimulating teachers to have a sense of ownership and commitment, as they are actively involved in identifying problems and designing strategies for ameliorating the identified problems themselves. The practice of enhancing collegiality is famous for promoting a sense of togetherness, cooperation and collaboration in which the leaders and their followers can freely discuss issues related to teaching and learning.

The old adage that failure to plan is planning to fail applies to instructional leadership as well. Instructional leaders should be good planners who are well equipped with the essential planning skills. Instructional leadership is a deliberate and purposive process. As far as Jenkins (2009) is concerned, the planning process in instructional leadership commences with the step of identifying clear goals or working towards a vision. The next move is to assess what kind of changes or reforms that needs to be ushered in to realise the cherished vision or goals. Besides planning skills, instructional leaders are expected to have instructional and observational skills as well as research and evaluation skills. Research equips instructional leaders with the right kind of information that capacitates them to make informed decisions on how to improve student learning and attainment. These skills, which Jenkins (2009), say should be possessed by school leaders, are demanding skills that are hard to come by. This research study seeks to find out if the teachers under study perceive their instructional leaders as having some of the skills suggested by Jenkins (2009).

Instructional leaders are expected to be endowed with certain capabilities for them to undertake their roles and responsibilities effectively. Robinson (2010) has suggested

that for the principals to undertake their duties effectively it is imperative for them to be in possession of the following interrelated capabilities, which is the ability to use deep leadership content knowledge (LCK), the capacity to solve complex problems and the capability to build relational trust with teachers, students and parents.

For the school leaders to be effective in the execution of their instructional leadership functions, it is vital for them to have leadership content knowledge. Leadership content knowledge refers to "that knowledge of subjects and how students learn them that is used by administrators when they function as instructional leaders" (Stein & Nelson, 2003: 445). Leadership content knowledge integrates pedagogical and curricular knowledge with administrative decision making in areas such as teacher evaluation, student grouping and the selection of teaching materials (Robinson, 2010). Hoadley and Ward (2009) call this leadership content knowledge pedagogical expertise. For them pedagogical expertise encompasses school leaders' understanding and knowledge of curricula, pedagogy and subject knowledge. It is imperative for the instructional leaders to have the knowledge required to engage in proper instructional leadership. In support of this, Spillane and Seashore (2002: 97) say:

> Without an understanding of the knowledge necessary for teachers to teach well content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge and knowledge of school learners, school leaders will be unable to perform essential school improvement functions such as monitoring instruction and supporting teacher development.

Therefore, for instructional leaders to perform their duties effectively they need to know about the teaching and learning of particular school subjects.

It can be categorically said that school leaders' pedagogical expertise is key to successful instructional leadership. "Without knowledge that connects subject matter, learning and teaching to acts of leadership, leadership floats disconnected from the very process it is designed to govern" (Stein & Nelson, 2003: 446). As such, it is of paramount importance to give detailed attention to the subject matter knowledge requirements of leadership at different levels of the school system. Stein and Nelson (2003) have warned that leadership expertise need to be subject matter specific as it is practically impossible for instance for instructional leaders to generalise from what they

know about instruction in Mathematics to History. Spillane (2002) has weighed in by saying that leadership for instruction has to be subject-specific and research on educational leadership has to take cognisance of this. Spillane, Diamond and Jita (2003) also subscribe to the same line of thinking. They posit that as a case in point the kind of instructional leadership that is deemed necessary for the improvement of teaching and learning for science may be different from the kind of instructional leadership that is required to improve teaching and learning in mathematics.

For the school leaders to be in a position to execute their instructional leadership duties quite competently, they should be able "to know good instruction when they see it, to encourage it when they don't, and to facilitate ongoing learning for staff" (Hoadley & Ward, 2009: 10). This can only happen when the school leaders are equipped with the necessary leadership content knowledge or pedagogical expertise. Thus, it can be said that instructional leadership is not a function that can be performed by everyone, as it requires knowledge and skills that cannot be found in all people.

Besides having leadership content knowledge, school leaders should be capable of solving complex problems (Robinson, 2010). It has been noted that as far as the capability of problem solving is concerned, different school leaders perform at different levels. Some perform at expert, typical and novice levels. As such, school leaders' level of operation in terms of problem solving plays a part in determining their effectiveness as instructional leaders. What it entails is that instructional leaders should be above average in terms of intelligence and they should demonstrate good thinking skills for them to execute their problem solving duties diligently.

The third capability identified by Robinson (2010), is that of building relational trust. School leaders should exhibit skills that put them in a strong position to influence their subordinates in ways that advance the group or organisation's progress towards its goals. It is vital for the school leaders to win the trust and loyalty of their followers. Trust is essential for ensuring that organisational goals are attainable. In an organisation characterised by trust between the school leaders and their followers, increased cooperation, enhanced social support and a robust sense of mutual obligation binding the efforts of teachers and their leaders is the order of the day (Robinson, 2010). Where

there is trust and respect between leaders and their followers, the followers tend to work to the best of their ability to achieve organisational goals. There is a positive correlation between trust and student outcomes. Thus, it can be said that for instructional leaders to carry out their mandate effectively they should demonstrate sound pedagogical expertise, the ability to find solutions to various problems that confront them in their attempts to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their given schools and the ability to build relational trust. It is imperative to consider the capabilities identified by Robinson (2010) for teacher preparation and development programmes.

Grisson and Loeb (2011) have identified a set of skills that principals and other school leaders should have to promote effective instructional leadership. Firstly, school leaders should have instructional management skills. They should be well acquainted with the tasks they should carry out to support and improve the implementation of various curricular programmes. The school leaders should have the skills to promote internal relations. The school leaders, particularly the school principals, are expected to build robust interpersonal relationships in their schools. Instructional leaders should also have strong organisational management skills. Grisson and Loeb (2011) also recommend school leaders not to overlook administrative functions and external relations. Thus, the practice of instructional leadership calls upon the school leaders to be armed with multiple skills. Surprisingly, "while there is considerable evidence about the impact of instructional leadership on student outcome, there is far less knowledge about the leadership capabilities required to confidently engage in the practices involved" (Robinson, 2010: 1). It is within the focus of this study to establish how teachers perceive the instructional leadership capabilities and competencies of their school leaders.

2.8 BENEFITS OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE SCHOOLS

Education may be considered as a vehicle through which a society's norms, values and skills are perpetuated or passed down from generation to generation (Isaiah & Isaiah, 2014). The capacity for the education system to play such a role largely hinges on the instructional role of the principal and other school leaders. Thus, one can say that

instructional leadership is a vital cog in the realisation of the goals of any given education system.

Instructional leadership is the cornerstone of effective curriculum implementation (Taole, 2013). Instructional leadership is famous for facilitating best practices and keeping the school's attention centred on the three key areas of education: curriculum, instruction and assessment in order to satisfy learners' learning needs and improve student achievement (Mestry, 2013). Therefore, it can be argued that instructional leadership has what it takes to make a difference to the teaching environment by creating conditions that are hospitable for improved curriculum implementation in the school.

The difference between effective and ineffective schools lies on how instructional leadership is used in those schools. Academic institutions that offer the same curricular programmes, receive identical grant amounts and students of the same ability can differ quite significantly when it comes to student academic attainment (Joyner, 2005). The difference in the performance of students from schools similar in many aspects and respects can be attributed to the use or non-use of instructional leadership in the concerned schools. Based on this, it can be said that instructional leadership is an indispensable element in the operations of schools as it makes a difference between successful and unsuccessful schools.

"Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school". "The total [direct and indirect] effects of leadership on student learning account for about a quarter of [the] total school effects" (Leithwood *et al.,* 2014: 5). Based on these two assertions, it can be deduced that instructional leadership is important in schools as it is second only to classroom teaching in determining students' learning and academic performance. The positive impact of instructional leadership was demonstrated by research conducted by the Consortium for Chicago School Reform. The research revealed that school leaders characterised by greater-than-expected improvement in student achievement attached greater importance to instructional leadership. Such school leaders committed a lot of time and resources to instructional leadership. Thus, research shows that there is a strong link between instructional leadership and student achievement (Matsimura *et al.,*

2010). Based on this, it can be concluded that instructional leadership is instrumental in enhancing student achievement.

Naidoo and Peterson (2015) have observed that recent studies in South Africa have unearthed that student attainment is positively correlated to the kind of school the students attend. The general rule is that the more instructional leadership is provided, the more likely the learners are to produce good results. As far as DeMatthews (2014), is concerned, the hallmark of high-performing schools, is a type of leadership that focuses on teaching and learning. Therefore, the school leaders should know that they are employed to improve instruction and curriculum in their schools. Schools are about teachers teaching and students learning and all the other activities should come after these primary goals.

The positive effects of instructional leadership are more visible in schools that are in difficult circumstances. "There are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader" (Leithwood *et al.,* 2014: 4). Mendels (2012) supports this line of thinking, contending that a seminal study on how leadership influences student learning, carried out in 2004, confirmed that leadership was the second most important school-based factor in determining students' learning and performance. Mendels (2012) observed that there were limited, if any, examples of troubled schools turning around their fortunes without the involvement of effective instructional leaders. Numerous factors may play a part in bringing about such turnarounds but instructional leadership is the catalyst.

Various scholars support the claim that instructional leadership is significant in positively influencing student learning and achievement. Louis *et al.* (2010: 9) are a case in point. They made the remark that,

> In developing a starting point for this six-year study, we claimed, based on preliminary review of research, that leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning. After six additional years of research, we are even more confident about this.

It can be ascertained from the previous research that the impact of instructional leadership on student learning should not be underestimated in any way. Instructional leadership is a game changer as far as student learning and achievement is concerned.

Bas (2012) has noted that instructional leadership has the effect of enhancing teachers' commitment to teaching and learning at school. "Teachers' commitment towards their job will directly affect the students' performance" (Ghavifekr *et al.,* 2016: 49). Furthermore, in schools where instructional leadership is shared, it creates sustainable changes that are embraced and owned by teachers who are responsible for classroom implementation (Hallinger, 2009). The instructional leaders who increase teachers' commitment to teaching and learning are usually good at setting high but attainable goals for teachers and students. They also put in place high standards for learners' performance and they create a learning environment that is orderly and serious. Without commitment to their work, teachers are unlikely to operate at their optimum level and students are unlikely to produce good results. Therefore, instructional leadership is not only beneficial to the teachers; it is also beneficial to the learners.

Instructional leadership as an educational leadership paradigm is instrumental in developing and maintaining effective schools. School leaders who are actively involved in ensuring that there is perpetual improvement of instruction and curriculum in their schools (Naidoo & Peterson, 2015) usually retain good teachers. The Wallace Foundation (2008: 3) contends that "pick the right school leader and great teachers will come and stay. Pick the wrong one and, over time, good teachers leave, mediocre ones stay, and the school gradually (or not so gradually) decline." In order for the school leaders to be good and be leaders who have the propensity to retain good teachers, the practice of instructional leadership is not an option but a must. The more the school leaders retain their good teachers, the more they perpetuate their schools' learning culture. From this ongoing discussion, it can be argued that instructional leadership has an indispensable role to play in ensuring that the school effectively executes its mandate, which is teaching and learning.

According to Bas (2012), instructional leadership is not significant for extracting more commitment from teachers only but it also results in their satisfaction as they conduct

their teaching duties. The satisfaction stems from the fact that in schools where instructional leadership is practiced, teachers and their leaders have a platform where they can freely discuss the problems affecting their practice and consequently they can come up with policies and measures tailor-made to improve their practice for the benefit of their learners. Furthermore, research has shown that instructional leadership culminates in the establishment of a climate that encourages trust, risk taking and sincere cooperation. Thus, instructional leadership is a critical tool for creating an academic climate that prioritises quality instruction.

Instructional leadership has the immense benefit of making school heads accountable for school effectiveness and student performance. The members of the public and the politicians attach great importance to the school leaders and hold them accountable for the school effectiveness and students' attainment (Robinson, 2010). The increased focus on instructional leadership is a consequence of the rise of the accountability movement at the turn of the 21st century, which emphasised the need to increasingly focus on learning outcomes of students and schools (Hallinger, 2009). As a case in point, in South Africa instructional leadership has become more popular, as relentless pressure is put on academic standards and the need for academic institutions to be accountable. The call for school leaders to be held increasingly accountable in the quest for high student attainment culminated in escalated attention being given to the significance of instructional leadership (Grobler, 2013). Therefore, instructional leadership fosters the spirit of goal-orientation in school heads. The school leaders are made to take the lead in shaping the direction for their schools and coordinate efforts geared towards enhancing student learning and increasing student achievement.

Instructional leadership is all about stimulating and reinforcing best practices (Mestry, 2013). As such, school leaders should help teachers to improve on their pedagogical practices by demonstrating teaching methods in classrooms and during conferences (Blasé & Blasé, 2002). Instructional leadership has the effect of making teachers better classroom practitioners. Neumerski (2012) contends that research has found that effective use of instructional leadership was frequently related to the use of learner-centred teaching and learning approaches. Thus, one of the major benefits of

instructional leadership lies in its strength in promoting sound teachers' pedagogical practices.

Instructional leadership has the benefit of creating a culture of learning in the school. The culture of learning relates to a situation where all the role players in the school display a positive attitude towards teaching and learning. It is also characterised by the presence of quality teaching and learning processes in learning institutions (Kruger, 2003). According to Kruger (2003), a positive culture of learning is characterised and reflected by the following:

- All the key stakeholders greatly value the teaching and learning processes;
- Where all practices demonstrate a strong commitment to teaching and learning;
- Where all the resources that are required to support the teaching and learning process are always made available;
- Where the school is structured in a manner that facilitates the teaching and learning processes.

Therefore, the greatest merit of instructional leadership is that it creates a positive culture of learning that promotes quality instruction and academic excellence. As such, it is pertinent for this current study to find out if instructional leadership is perceived to be of great value by the History teachers involved in the study.

2.9 PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ABSENCE OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE SCHOOLS

Instructional leadership is popular for promoting a positive culture of teaching and learning in schools. In the absence of instructional leadership, the opposite unfolds and a poor culture of teaching and learning becomes the order of the day. "A poor culture of teaching and learning in a school refers to a situation where proper teaching and learning has broken down" (Kruger, 2003: 207). The demise of a culture of teaching and learning is most visible in secondary schools. The secondary schools with a poor culture of teaching and learning are usually characterised by, "poor attendance; educators do not have the desire to teach, high drop-out rate, poor school results, weak leadership; demotivation and low morale; and disrupted authority" (Kruger, 2003: 207).Therefore,

the absence of instructional leadership in any given school is likely to be characterised by poor teaching and learning. In such a scenario, student achievement is low.

In schools where instructional leadership is not the order of the day, principals and other school leaders are usually not accountable for their school's effectiveness and the academic performance of their learners. It should be noted that instructional leadership as an educational leadership and management paradigm became popular as immense pressure was exerted on the need to uphold academic standards and to make schools accountable (Taole, 2013). In the absence of instructional leadership, there will be no accountability to talk about in schools and academic standards are likely to be overlooked.

School leaders who are not instructional leaders are usually not in touch with the classroom reality. Thi Hao (2016) noted that school leaders who are not instructional leaders pay more attention to management and administrative tasks. Thus, such school leaders are far removed from the classroom situation and this makes it difficult for them to appreciate the problems and challenges that are encountered by the teachers and learners (Setwong, 2013). Therefore, school leaders who perceive themselves as managers and not as instructional leaders are likely not to put teaching and learning on the top of their priority list. As such the problems faced by the teachers and learners remain unattended and effective teaching remains a dream. In such a scenario, the school leaders are unlikely to win the respect of their teachers. Mestry (2013) argues that for instructional leaders to be legitimate in the eyes of their teachers, they should understand with first-hand experience the challenges related to instruction that are encountered by the teachers.

According to Mestry (2013), it is the mandate of school leaders to promote best practices and ensure the school's attention is glued to curriculum, instruction and assessment. In the absence of effective instructional leadership, these three critical areas of education tend to be neglected. The result of this is catastrophic as students and teachers may underperform resulting in ineffective teaching and learning respectively. This is so because research studies have shown that there is an empirical

link between the school effectiveness and the instructional leadership role of the school head (Kruger, 2003).

Poor student outcomes and results in schools may be attributed to ineffective or the absence of instructional leadership. In South Africa, poor learning outcomes are partly a result of the fact that school leaders primarily interpret their duties as purely managerial (Naidoo & Peterson, 2015). It has been noted that South African students are performing at significantly lower levels of competence compared to students from other third world countries. This poor performance may be a result of a lack of instructional leadership. Seobi and Wood (2016: 1) support this line of thinking, as they contend that, "poor learner performance has been linked to poor quality teaching, which in turn can be attributed in part to a lack of instructional leadership". If teachers do not get proper guidance and assistance from their instructional leaders on teaching and learning they adopt poor instructional practices. This might have some ripple effects on students. As noted by DeMatthews (2014), lack of instructional leadership can have serious repercussions for the teachers and, ultimately, for the students.

The problem of poor academic performance is also linked to the absence of instructional leadership in Kenya. In Kenya, it was observed that most of the heads of schools in that country have the tendency of concentrating on managerial practices at the expense of instructional leadership, which is a vital cog in students' academic achievement. This has resulted in poor academic performance in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) (Stanley *et al.,* 2016). Stanley *et al.* (2016) attribute the decline of reading and writing abilities in primary schools to a gap in instructional leadership. Therefore, the problems that emanate in schools due to the absence of instructional leadership should not be underestimated in any way.

Because of poor results by students in external examinations that were registered in Nigeria between 2003 and 2010, principals were condemned and blamed for the results. "This allegation on principals might have been spurred by research evidence which had shown principal leadership to be second only to teaching in its impact on student performance, and the fact that teaching is carried out by teachers, resources under the control and supervision of principals" (Bolanle, 2013: 27). Thus, a lack of

instructional leadership seriously compromises the academic aspirations and dreams of the learners.

Shava (2015) attributes higher failure rates registered in some of the schools in Zimbabwe and world over to the absence of effective instructional leadership. Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013) echo this sentiment, as they link poor classroom instruction and low student achievement in developing countries such as Zimbabwe to a lack of instructional leadership. Thus, instructional leadership needs to be taken seriously if the problem of poor academic performance is to be tackled in schools.

Isaiah and Isaiah (2014) commenting on the Botswana situation, said that some of the problems besetting the schools such as the high failure rate and absenteeism rate may be attributed to ineffective instructional leadership. It is imperative to note that absenteeism is a clear indication that there is no protection of instructional time. This problem is quite common in many countries. Research has shown that secondary school teachers in Tanzania rarely attend to their classes (Manaseh, 2016). Most of the time, they are away or in the staffroom. The World Bank (2010) confirmed the same finding. The absence of effective instructional leadership in schools results in a host of problems besides high failure rates. According to Kruger (2003), ineffective instructional leadership may result in learner indiscipline, low teacher morale as well as numerous other challenges. Therefore, it can be argued that instructional leadership is the hub of learning and in its absence; no meaningful learning can take place. All the school leaders are encouraged to make sure that instructional leadership is taking place in their schools to eradicate a host of challenges that derail teaching and learning.

In the absence of instructional leadership in the schools, teachers are likely not to use proper teaching and learning methods. Commenting on Tanzanian teachers, Manaseh (2016) says most of the teachers in that country teach using rote techniques requiring students to copy and memorise notes on the board. This malpractice emanates from the lack of effective instructional leadership. In the absence of effective instructional leadership, teachers are usually not given proper guidance and advice on how to improve on their pedagogy.

Having looked at the problems associated with the absence of instructional leadership in the schools, it suffices at this stage to say that this area represents a research gap in the Zimbabwean literature on educational management and administration as it has not received the attention of many researchers. Hence, it is necessary to establish the problems associated with the absence of leadership that focuses on teaching and learning from the perspective and experience of History teachers.

2.10 FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST EFFECTIVE USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE SCHOOLS

Numerous factors are acting as obstacle to the effective use of instructional leadership in schools. One of these factors is the lack of formal training on instructional leadership on the part of the school leaders. This problem is quite rampant in Africa. "… throughout much of Africa there is no formal requirement for aspiring or current head teachers to have any formal preparation and/or development" (Eacott & Asuga, 2014: 919).

Isaiah and Isaiah (2014) have noted with great concern that most of the newly appointed heads of schools in Botswana are not offered any formal training or induction on issues to do with their new roles as instructional leaders. This problem is rampant in most of the developing countries.

> In developing countries, heads of schools emerge from the teaching population and have had little or no training for the job. This might be because heads are promoted as teachers straight from the classroom without any prior training for taking up their headship post (Mapolisa & Tshabalala, 2013: 354).

In their study in Zimbabwe, Zikhali and Perumal (2014) also noted this situation observed by Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013). They noted that school heads were appointed based on the strength of their experience in the teaching field and obtained their training for the job on the job. The assumption is that good teachers make good leaders. According to Marks (2008), principals are chosen because they are good at teaching. They are given new managerial roles that demand different skills altogether. Thus, it may be argued that the lack of training in instructional leadership prior to appointment as school heads is one of the key factors militating against the effective implementation of instructional leadership in schools.

Zikhali and Perumal (2014) contend that Zimbabwe as a country does not have mandatory school leadership programmes. School heads are drawn from the pool of experienced teachers. The question that arises from such a practice is does experience on its own, without formal training on leadership, establish a strong base for the newly recruited school heads to take up their posts and to execute all the duties expected of them as school leaders confidently?

Research studies have demonstrated that because of a lack of proper training in instructional leadership, most of the school heads lack the requisite skills necessary for them to function as instructional leaders. Naidoo and Peterson (2015) claim that many principals in South Africa operate without the necessary skills and competencies required for them to function effectively and efficiently as instructional leaders. Similar to managers in the private sector, school leaders should have the capacity to lead the core business of their organisations, which is teaching and learning. What it entails is that without the relevant skills that are required by instructional leadership, it is difficult for school leaders to lead the core business of the school. The crux of the matter is that "without significant attention to the preparation and development of school leaders, government initiatives aimed at building world class education systems are unlikely to succeed" (Eacott & Asuga, 2014: 919). Thus, initiatives to give proper training in instructional leadership to school leaders should be given due consideration.

Countries such as Zimbabwe and South Africa should take a leaf from the Ministry of Education in Singapore that has enacted a stringent mechanism that guides the identification and training of prospective school leaders (Ng, 2015). In Singapore, prospective school leaders are subjected to a structured course of progression from middle to top management in the school system. Under this arrangement, a 17-week long full-time Management and Leadership Studies (MLS) course has been designed for middle managers to improve their leadership competencies. Vice principals who exhibit the potential to become principals are enrolled for a six months full-time Leaders in Education Programme (LEP) in preparation for principalship. Principals are also exposed to various forms of formal and informal in-service training (Ng, 2015).

Therefore, Singapore has realised that the acquisition of instructional leadership competencies cannot be left to chance.

According to Bush (2013), principals should have the expertise in the curriculum, teaching methods, assessment techniques and current research on learning for them to operate effectively as instructional leaders. High-performing schools are characterised by leaders with expertise in the main areas of education (DeMatthews, 2014). Unfortunately, most of the school leaders lack the expertise required for effective instructional leadership. Without the requisite skills, most of the principals are overwhelmed by the task and they are always left wanting when it comes to the leading of the technical core of the school (Zepeda, 2007).

Research carried out in the Pacific nation of the Solomon Islands by Lingam and Lingam (2016) has identified that most of the school heads are always left wanting when it comes to modelling best practices in assessment. Although it is acknowledged in literature that assessment has a critical role to play in the teaching and learning matrix, school leaders tend to exhibit limited knowledge in this key component of education. The blame for this shortcoming can be apportioned on inadequacies in teacher preparation programmes. According to Lingham and Lingham (2016: 91), most of the school leaders "trace the origin of their problems to an initial teacher training programme that included little on assessment, which adversely affected their ability to work as instructional leaders in assessment for teaching and learning in schools". Therefore, the school leaders should be adequately trained in the area of assessment for them to be in a position to render support and monitor teachers in conducting appropriate effective assessment practices. Without proper training in the area of assessment, it is obvious that school leaders will not be in a position to guide their teachers on various aspects of assessment.

The findings of the study undertaken by Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013) have shown that most of the school heads in Zimbabwe did not adequately understand the concept of instructional leadership. Manaseh (2016) has also found that in Tanzania, most of the heads of schools were not familiar with the concept of instructional leadership. The World Bank (2010) has also noted that most of the school heads have little familiarity

with the concept of instructional leadership. A lack of understanding of instructional leadership makes it difficult for school heads to implement it (Isaiah & Isaiah, 2014). In light of this, Bas (2012) recommends that school heads should take seminars and courses on instructional leadership for them to apply leadership behaviours better at their different schools. The crux of the matter is that the lack of familiarity with the practice of instructional leadership is one of the factors seriously militating against the use of this type of leadership in schools.

Bellibas (2016) has observed that some of the school leaders often find it difficult to undertake a number of their instructional leadership functions effectively because of a lack of subject matter knowledge. It was discovered that teachers and principals concur on that the involvement of principals in the observation of learning is a shear waste of time and does not bring any benefits for the teachers (Manaseh, 2016). The rationale behind the argument is that most of the school heads lack the required knowledge or expertise for undertaking instructional leadership. The principals, particularly of secondary schools, are considered to be lacking the relevant content knowledge regarding specific subject matters (Stein & Nelson, 2003). Chen and Cheng (2017) acknowledge that given the distinctive nature of subjects offered in secondary schools and the clear-cut line between knowledge in different academic disciplines, it is an insurmountable task for a school head to be an effective instructional leader in all the areas of the curriculum. In a study carried out by Bellibas (2016), most of the principals acknowledged that they lacked subject content for some of the subjects; hence, in their lesson observation they focused more on lesson plans and teachers' management skills.

Because of the lack of subject matter knowledge in some of the subjects in the school curriculum, some of the teachers do not believe in their principals' capability of engaging in leadership functions that promote effective teaching and learning (Mapolisa & Tshabalala, 2013). Such a mentality on the part of the teachers can seriously undermine the practice of instructional leadership in schools. According to Stein and Nelson (2003), the problem can possibly be overcome by embarking on programmes aimed at in-servicing school leaders on how to grasp how teachers teach and how

students learn various subject matters. As a case in point, university lecturers subjected a significant number of principals in Michigan (USA) to vigorous algebra courses in a bid to improve their content knowledge in Algebra (Bellibas, 2016). Therefore, it is possible for measures to be adopted to partly ameliorate this problem of a lack of content knowledge on the part of school leaders.

The notion of teachers' classroom privacy is also one of the factors that militate against effective use of instructional leadership in the schools (Bellibas, 2016). Some teachers have a strong sense of classroom privacy. It is generally believed that teachers are experts in their areas of specialisation and as such, interference in their classrooms is unacceptable. This belief has created a scenario where classrooms are considered teachers' private domains. Hence, most of the classroom practitioners conduct their teaching business behind closed doors (Hallinger, 2012). According to Bellibas (2016), most of the school heads respect this private zone and do not observe experienced and good teachers doing the actual teaching. The culture of the classroom as a private domain does not correspond with the ideals of instructional leadership, which call for teachers to learn from their school leaders and from one another during the time of actual lesson delivery.

Besides demanding skills and expertise that are not found in most of the school heads and leaders, instructional leadership is time consuming. Generally, most of the school heads do not have the time required for instructional leadership (Jenkins, 2009). The problem of time is usually experienced by school heads in larger schools and secondary schools, which typically have a more highly differentiated discipline-based curriculum (Hallinger, 2009). In the face of numerous competing and conflicting responsibilities, school heads tend to focus more on administrative and managerial tasks at the expense of instructional leadership. As a result of this, the core business of the school, which is teaching and learning, is seriously compromised. The challenge of time can only be solved when school heads consider instructional leadership as a distributed function.

In a study conducted among South African rural high schools by Taole (2013), it was noted that most of the principals do not consider themselves as instructional leaders. Most of them felt overburdened as they had teaching loads in addition to their

management responsibilities. The concerned principals felt that the HODs should carry out their instructional leadership responsibilities. Seobi and Wood (2016: 1) support this standpoint, as they argue that, "the majority of principals… are too occupied with the daily challenges of just keeping their schools functioning, to fulfil the role of main instructional leader. In such cases, it makes sense for them to delegate their task to heads of department". Research findings in Singapore seem to support this line of thinking. In Singapore, it was noted that in the spheres of curriculum implementation and classroom instruction, the middle managers are generally more active compared to principals (Ng, 2015). This position is also firmly supported by Manaseh (2016), who says that heads of department have a critical role to play in ensuring that different school subjects are taught and learnt effectively because of their proximity to teachers.

In a research conducted by Bellibas (2016), in Turkey, principals indicated that their schools were too large and had limited financial resources for effective instructional leadership. Most of the schools in the developing world operate on a shoestring budget. This makes it difficult for the school leaders to procure the resources that are required for effective instructional practices. For instance, the project method is often neglected in many schools, as it requires monetary support. In the face of financial woes, the school leaders are urged to make an effort to commit a substantial amount of resources to the improvement of teaching and learning (Bellibas, 2016). The limited financial resources should not be seen as a scapegoat for not channelling resources towards activities aimed at improving instructional quality and student academic growth.

One of the factors that militate against the effective use of instructional leadership in the schools is the fact that some school heads are not in touch with the classroom reality. Such school leaders are not in a position to appreciate the challenges that are encountered by teachers and students on a daily basis (Taole, 2013). This may be because in some countries school heads do not have teaching loads (Isaiah & Isaiah, 2014). Mestry (2013) has noted that the majority of principals spend less time in classrooms and even critically looking at instruction with teachers. In such circumstances, the school head lacks first-hand experience of the problems being faced by the classroom practitioners and their learners. Jita (2010) observed that principals

with teaching duties have a great chance of positively influencing instructional practices in their schools. "Research has suggested that schools where principals teach do show better academic results" (Seobi & Wood, 2016: 1). In a study on instructional leadership for the improvement of science and mathematics in South Africa, Jita (2010), noted that the so-called effective schools had principals who had teaching responsibilities and taught either science or mathematics or both subjects. Hoadley and Ward (2009:10), also support this line of thinking as they, noted that research has shown that principals at effective schools maintained a "connection to the classroom". These principals carried a significant teaching load. It is quite refreshing to note that the concerned principals taught examinable subjects at grade 12 level. This is a clear testimony that some of the instructional challenges being experienced in schools are a consequence of the non-involvement in the actual teaching by the people who should be in charge of instructional leadership in the schools. The main thrust of the issue is that school leaders who choose to be armchair theorists find themselves out of touch with the classroom reality and they represent an obstacle to effective instructional leadership in the schools.

A research study conducted by Bellibas (2016) has revealed that a lack of coherence among various instructional leadership activities is one of the factors that seriously impair the effective use of instructional leadership in schools. It was noted that most of the time, different instructional leadership activities are disjointed. The ideal situation is that different leadership activities should inform one another. For instance, teachers' professional development opportunities should emanate from data gathered from classroom observations (Bellibas, 2016). Thus, it is imperative for school leaders to ensure that their instructional leadership activities are interwoven and inform one another.

Jenkins (2009) summarised the reasons for not emphasising instructional leadership as the lack of in-depth training, lack of time, increased paper work and the community's belief that the principal's role is that of a manager. This clearly shows that a lot needs to be done if the school leaders are ever to operate effectively as instructional leaders. Thus, it is within the limits of this study to establish the factors that are perceived by the

History teachers as presenting a powerful hindrance to the practice of instructional leadership in the schools, as this aspect of instructional leadership is one of the less prioritised areas in the reviewed literature.

2.11 WEAKNESSES OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PARADIGM

Numerous criticisms have been levelled against the instructional leadership paradigm. One of its glaring weaknesses is its hierarchical orientation (Goddard *et al.,* 2010; Prytula *et al.,* 2013). This leadership model represents a top-down relationship between the school head and the teachers. It is also characterised by top-down policies and the concept of the directive instructional leader and it inspires change through bottom-up participation (Taole, 2013).The school head is perceived as the undisputed curriculum expert and superintendent of curriculum and instruction. The conventional model of instructional leadership perceives the teachers as passive recipients of the school head's curricular decisions.

Marks and Printy (2003) argue that traditional forms of instructional leadership have no place in the current dispensation of teacher professionalisation. They have dismissed the conventional forms of instructional leadership as paternalistic, archaic and dependent on docile followers. As far as Marks and Printy (2003) are concerned, the traditional forms of instructional leadership have no place in education if teachers are competent and committed to their work. Thus, these scholars argue for the position that instructional leadership should be shared and flat (Prytula *et al.,* 2013) as far as possible as leadership for instruction emanates from the school heads and the classroom practitioners. This is in tandem with the principles of democracy and good governance.

The second criticism against instructional leadership is that it requires the school head to be an expert in all areas of the curriculum (Prytula *et al.,* 2013). Research has shown that it is practically impossible for the school leaders to be experts in all areas of the curriculum. Bellibas (2016) has noted that quite a number of school leaders often find it difficult to undertake some of their instructional leadership functions effectively because of a lack of subject matter knowledge. The principals, particularly of secondary schools, are considered to be lacking the relevant content knowledge regarding specific subject

matters (Stein & Nelson, 2003). In a study carried out by Bellibas (2016), most of the principals acknowledged that they lacked subject content for some of the subjects. Therefore, to expect school principals to be experts in all areas of the curriculum is as good as daydreaming. What the principal should do is to ensure that someone who is qualified does the work.

The third criticism that has been put forward against instructional leadership is that it is time consuming (Prytula *et al.,* 2013). Considering the fragmented role of the principal, it is impossible for the principal to carry out instructional leadership duties effectively without committing significant time to the clock. Hallinger (2009) contends that in practical terms, principals are required to undertake a variety of roles that can be categorised as political, managerial and instruction. For the principal to focus on only one of these roles would be disastrous for the school. Thus, instructional leadership requires the school principal to prioritise teaching over other school responsibilities. This may ultimately prove not to be good for the school in some instances.

Critiques believe that it is unrealistic to expect principals to fulfil all their duties as expected by the instructional leadership model. This is so because the daily routine of managing schools at times forces school heads to embark on a set of activities characterised by brevity, interruption and fragmentation that is at a cross purpose with many of the activities advocated for by the instructional leadership model (Hallinger, 2009). It seems as if instructional leadership is not very practical at times. Possibly this is why it is seldom practiced in schools (Jenkins, 2009; Stanley *et al.,* 2016), irrespective of the fact that it is noteworthy in the realisation of effective schools.

The conventional form of instructional leadership has been condemned for ignoring context variations. According to Hallinger (2009), the one-size-fits-all framework of instructional leadership that was propagated through the school leadership academies does not correspond with a multitude of constraints that act on the exercise of leadership across schools. The truth of the matter is that schools differ quite significantly in terms of their needs and resources. This entails that the type of leadership that is required in different schools vary, depending on the context of the schools.

A number of authors in the literature call attention to the importance of considering context. Those aspects relevant to context are: geographic location of the school (urban/suburban/rural); level of schooling (secondary/primary); small and large schools; the student population, including socio-economic level and support agencies; the historical context; and the policy context. One of the key relationships identified is between the school and its community (Hoadley & Ward, 2009: 11).

The one-size-fits-all approach associated with conventional instructional leadership is flawed in the sense that it disregards numerous contextual factors. Instructional leadership should be implemented in a manner that is responsive to a particular context.

Instructional leadership has been criticised for incorporating the concepts of first order change. This kind of change results directly from the principal's actions directly influencing teaching and learning (Prytula *et al.,* 2013). First order change is criticised for not building the capacity in others to create change; hence, it creates more followers than doers and does not have significant impact on group goals and motivation. Therefore, it may be argued that instructional leadership is not a powerful tool for empowering the organisational members as the leader is considered to be the centre of organisational change. The followers, who are the teachers, are expected to dance to the tune composed by their leaders most of the time.

2.12 INTEGRATING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP WITH TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP (TL)

Some of the weaknesses of instructional leadership are best offset by integrating this type of leadership with transformational leadership. Transformational leadership first emerged in educational leadership in the 1990s in reaction to the hierarchical, supervisory orientation of instructional leadership (Prytula *et al.,* 2013). "The idea became popular…as a reaction to top-down school policies and the idea of the directive instructional leader" (Goddard *et al.,* 2010: 337). Transformational leadership is usually regarded as a kind of shared or distributed leadership (Taole, 2013). This is so because the term entails the capability to foster capacity and personal commitment, making a difference in the followers and heightening their level of motivation, performance and ability to assist one another and their institution. Briefly, "transformational leadership

describes the work of leaders to deepen the motivation, commitment, and dedication of group members to organizational goals" (Goddard *et al.,* 2010: 337).The infusion of some of the elements of transformational leadership into instructional leadership is instrumental to the elimination of some of the weaknesses of the latter.

Transformational leadership is known for paying attention to the nurturing of the institution's potential to innovate. "Rather than focusing specifically on direct coordination, control, and supervision of curriculum, transformational leadership seeks to build the organization's capacity to select its purposes and support the development of changes to practices of teaching and learning" (Hallinger, 2003: 330). Transformational leadership strives to involve all key stakeholders in the achievement of educational objectives. As a result of the recognition that, "leadership at the school level must be shared and flat, the transformational leader works in concert with other teachers, and through collaboration rather than through coordinating and controlling" (Hallinger, 2003: 337). The crux of the matter is that school leaders should not make critical decisions unilaterally, as is the common feature with the practice of instructional leadership. School heads should be "leaders of leaders" (Goddard *et al.,* 2010). Transformational leaders are geared towards empowering group members to deploy their capacity and personal commitment towards attaining the goals of the organisation.

Transformational leadership dwells on diagnosing problems, problem solving and working in unison with the stakeholders with the intention of improving the performance of the organisation (Marks & Printy, 2003). The motive of transformational leadership is to raise the participants' level of commitment, to encourage them in reaching their fullest potential, and to support them in transcending their own self-interest for the good of the organisation. Thus, transformational leadership is underpinned by the belief that teamwork is a prerequisite for ensuring that organisational goals are successfully met.

According to Marishane (2011) school leaders who are transformational leaders perform four main tasks. These tasks are school vision building, capacity building, team building and programme design and management. Transformational leadership is characterised by the thinking that school principals should create a shared vision within the school and community, maintain high expectations pertaining to student learning and provide

opportunities for professional development and intellectual stimulation (Prytula *et al.,* 2013). Thus, the main strength of transformational leadership is that it strengthens organisational capacity. Transformational leaders strengthen organisational capacity by exhibiting idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration (Marks & Printy, 2003).

According to Goddard *et al.* (2010), transformational leadership can be best understood in the context of the four I's. The first I focus on idealised influence, which stipulates that it is imperative for school leaders to cultivate a sense of trust prior to the introduction of organisational changes. The school leaders are also mandated to be role models for their subordinates. The second I deals with inspirational motivation. The school leaders are expected to enact an attainable vision, motivating and inspiring their subordinates to go the extra mile in executing their work. The third I dwells on intellectual stimulation, in which the school leaders use creative and innovative means to induce their subordinates not to take anything for granted and to attempt to experiment with new ways of doing things. The last I is about individual consideration. Under individual consideration, school leaders take the role of coaches or mentors, creating opportunities for learning, listening attentively, and assisting individuals to be responsible for their professional growth. Thus, a good understanding of these four I's makes school leaders better leaders.

Sharma (2012) has identified six dimensions considered critical to transformational leadership, which can be traced to Leithwood and Jantzi (1999). These dimensions include: the identification and articulation of the school vision; promoting the acceptance of group goals; provision of individualised support; intellectual stimulation; provision of a suitable model and high performance expectations. The assumption underpinning these six dimensions is that the school head may share leadership with the other stakeholders in the school and that change may arise from the bottom up, as opposed from the top down.

Transformational leadership is famous for creating second order change. Second order change is characterised by the act of building capacity in others to stimulate change (Prytula *et al.,* 2013). Unlike first order change, which is a direct consequence of the

principal's involvement in teaching and learning, second order change shuns direct supervision in order to produce deep-seated change in individuals. In the words of Prytula *et al.* (2013), this type of educational leadership has what it takes to create more doers as opposed to followers through its effect on group goals and motivation. The systems thinking approach is at the heart of transformational leadership. As far as transformational leadership is concerned, it is not only the actions of the principal that are crucial, it is the direct and indirect impact of those actions on the organisational set up that is of great concern.

According to Prytula *et al.* (2013), transformational leadership involves the concepts of shared and distributed leadership through its emphasis on bottom-up change. However, if curriculum goals are to be adequately achieved, top-down and bottom-up approaches need to be integrated (Taole, 2013). Marks and Printy (2003) support integrated leadership that fuses the elements of instructional leadership and transformational leadership. Their belief is that the two leadership paradigms are not mutually exclusive; hence, they should be used together to complement each other. Goddard *et al.* (2010: 341) contend that,

> Transformational leadership and instructional leadership are interdependent, and each type of leadership is insufficient on its own. For example leaders who are exclusively transformational might focus on vision building and member involvement around mutually created organizational purpose, but lack attention to teaching and learning. In contrast, instructional leaders are likely to focus on instruction, curriculum and assessment issues without considering how to motivate teachers.

Therefore, TL and IL should not be seen in isolation, but rather as mutually supportive when integrated. It is important for this current study to ascertain if teachers perceive their school leaders, particularly school principals, as using a combination of instructional leadership and transformational leadership.

2.13 THE IMPACT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ON CLASSROOM PRACTICE

This section of the study explores the impact of instructional leadership on classroom practice. In a survey conducted in 2010, policymakers and school and district

administrators in the education fraternity considered instructional leadership as second only to teacher quality when they were given the task of ranking 21 educational issues in terms of their importance. Some of the issues included special education, English language learning, school violence and the high dropout rate in schools (Mendels, 2012). The importance of instructional leadership in school effectiveness has also been revealed by recent research studies in South Africa. It has been noted that student outcomes are closely linked to the type of school attended by the learner. The more effectively the schools are administered the more instructional leadership is provided by the school leaders and, the more likely the students are to produce good results (Thi Hao, 2016).Thus, one can say that instructional leadership is an indispensable element of the teaching and learning matrix as it has been demonstrated that it has a significant impact on classroom practice.

Bendikson *et al.* (2012) emphasise the need for school leaders to engage in instructional leadership since it has been proven in numerous studies that this type of leadership has a significant and considerable impact on learner results compared to other leadership types. Research has shown that if the leadership at the school is focused more on instruction, the chances are high that the school will be more effective in making a difference and in adding value to student outcomes. The critical question is how does instructional leadership influence classroom practice and make a difference to student learning in schools.

Instructional leadership impacts on classroom practice directly and indirectly. Principals and other school leaders have the capacity to influence classroom practice directly by focusing their attention on the quality of teacher practice itself as well as the quality of the curriculum, teaching and assessment, and the quality of teacher inquiry and teacher learning. Indirectly it influences classroom practice by creating conditions that are conducive for good teaching (Bendikson *et al.,* 2012; Hallinger, 2009). Principals can influence classroom practice directly by setting school goals, ensuring quality teaching and leading teacher learning (Robinson *et al.,* 2008). By participating in these instructional practices, the school principals will consequently positively influence the instructional practices of their teachers thereby enhancing student outcomes. It is critical

to note that in carrying out leadership functions that exercise a direct influence on classroom practice, the school principals do not go it alone but the other school leaders assist them. For secondary schools, which are the focus of this study, middle leaders such as heads of department and deputy heads perform most of the leadership functions that influence classroom practice directly such as lesson observations and book inspections. Heads of department often provide direct instructional leadership to their departments because they are usually responsible for paying attention to the details of curriculum delivery in the subjects under their jurisdiction (Bendikson, *et al.,* 2012).

The school leaders, particularly the school heads, influence classroom practice indirectly by taking an active part in strategic resourcing and ensuring a safe and orderly environment in the school (Heaven & Bourne, 2016). Although the effects of the indirect practices are not as powerful as the impact of the direct functions, they are also quite significant as they create a conducive environment for the teachers and students that make teaching and learning possible (Bendikson *et al.,* 2012). Most of the leading scholars on instructional leadership agree that, "mostly leaders contribute to student learning indirectly, through their influence on the people or features of their organizations" (Leithwood *et al.*, 2016:4). Horng and Loeb (2012) echo these sentiments as they, contend that the effects of instructional leadership are usually realised indirectly via the principal's efforts to exercise an influence on those who frequently interact with the learners. Hallinger (2009) also subscribes to the same line of thinking. As far as Hallinger (2009) is concerned, most of the school heads influence students' learning indirectly by enacting conditions in the school that have a positive bearing on teacher practice and student learning. These conditions encompass the act of defining the academic mission of the school and fostering capacity for professional growth. Therefore, evidence from the literature point to the fact that school leaders tend to contribute to the improvement of the classroom practice through the actions they adopt in a bid to ensure that school and classroom conditions are favourable for teaching and learning.

Horng and Loeb (2010) believe that the school heads can influence classroom practice through the teachers they hire, the way they assign those teachers and how they create opportunities for professional growth for the same teachers. Teachers should be provided with the necessary support and training for them to succeed in their core business (Leithwood *et al.,* 2014). It has been established that in effective schools where instructional leadership is practiced, good teachers are usually retained and teachers improve more rapidly compared to their counterparts in less effective schools. The implication for this is that instructional leadership influences classroom practice by promoting positive instructional practices among the teachers, thereby promoting quality instruction, which in turn influences learners' outcomes.

Instructional leadership exercises its influence on classroom practice by standardising the practice of effective and efficient teaching. According to Taole (2013), instructional leadership capacitates the classroom practitioners to teach students according to the highest possible standards. The school head ensures that this is accomplished by maintaining high expectations for teachers and learners, supervising classroom instruction, coordinating the school's curriculum and monitoring the academic progress of the students (Marks & Printy, 2003). Thus, instructional leadership influences classroom practice by facilitating, improving and promoting teachers' classroom instructional practices and the academic progress of students.

A growing body of literature has shown that instructional leadership has the propensity to instil the spirit of hardworking in learners and dedication and devotion on the part of the classroom practitioners (Manaseh, 2016). This is usually achieved by setting directions in the form of academic goals and objectives. By formulating academic goals and objectives for the school, the school leader will be providing teachers and students a clear course that they can understand, creating high expectations and a point of reference against which academic progress and achievement can be measured (Leithwood *et al.,* 2014). This has a positive bearing on the classroom practice. Thus, by charting a clear course for teachers and students, instructional leadership inspires these key players in the teaching and learning process to perform to the best of their ability in their work.

Instructional leadership partly affects classroom practice by cultivating the spirit of continuous improvement in which incentives for learners and teachers are aligned with the mission of the school (Hallinger, 2009). Incentives for teachers and learners inspire teachers to improve their instructional practice and encourage learners to focus more on the improvement of their academic performance. Therefore, instructional leaders should be people who are good at motivating others to work at their optimum level.

Instructional leadership is known for influencing classroom practice by promoting excellence in teaching and learning with the intention of improving student achievement (Mestry, 2013). Instructional leadership plays a critical role in improving teachers' pedagogical expertise by exposing them to effective pedagogical practices and teaching strategies. Manaseh (2016) noted that most of the teachers in Tanzania employ rote-learning techniques that require students to copy, memorise and regurgitate information. This problem is not confined to Tanzania. The problem can be overcome by adopting instructional leadership, which allows the school principals and other school leaders to demonstrate effective teaching methods and strategies in the classroom and during conferences (Blasé & Blasé, 2000). Instructional leadership assumes that the school heads have what it takes to model effective instruction and identify effective instruction whenever it unfolds and understand the key outputs of effective instruction (Prytula *et al,* 2013). Therefore, instructional leadership can be used to spearhead the use of learner-centred teaching and learning approaches that put the learners at the centre of their own learning.

Teachers do not just teach but they teach in accordance with what is stipulated by the school syllabi. As such, lesson observations and exercise book inspections should be mounted to ensure that what the teachers teach is congruent with the syllabi and suitable for the level of the learners (Manaseh, 2016). The problem of high failure rate in schools may be attributed to the absence of instructional leadership in schools. "Teachers perceive school heads as not monitoring students' progress by checking teachers' work books such as scheme books and record books" (Isaiah & Isaiah, 2014: 119). Thus, it can be argued that instructional leadership improves the classroom practice through ensuring that what the teachers teach and the work that is given to the

learners is of high quality and pitched to their level of development as demanded by the syllabi.

Instructional leadership improves classroom practice by ensuring that the syllabi are covered adequately before the learners sit for their final examinations. Manaseh (2016) observed that in most schools, school heads are not setting goals that ensure teachers adequately cover the syllabi within a given academic year. Failure to cover the syllabus in time before the learners sit for their examinations may be catastrophic for the learners. According to Plewis (2011), syllabus coverage is an important ingredient in ensuring the academic achievement of the learners. The crux of the matter is that the more the curricula for any subject is covered by the teachers, the greater the chances of the learners of passing that subject. Mwasoo (2011) backs this line of thinking, contending that syllabus coverage is one of the factors that determine whether the students succeed or fail in their examinations. Improper and inadequate syllabus coverage negates student performance. Therefore, it can be argued that instructional leadership partly influences classroom practice by ensuring that the syllabus is adequately and properly covered.

Closely linked to the notion of syllabus coverage is the quality of the curriculum materials used at classroom and school level. Manaseh (2016) and Isaiah and Isaiah (2014) concur on that the curriculum materials that are used at school should be reviewed to ensure that they are relevant and are of high quality. Such a review process is best achieved through school leadership that focuses on teaching and learning. Manaseh (2016) has noted that some of the curriculum materials that are used in Tanzania are of poor quality. Without effective instructional leadership in schools, such curriculum materials of poor quality may continue to be used by the teachers. Thus, this demonstrates that instructional leadership has a bearing on classroom practice as it determines the quality of the curriculum materials that are used by teachers at classroom level.

Instructional leadership improves the classroom practice by making it possible for the school leaders to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their teachers and thereby

formulate necessary support measures for them (Manaseh, 2016). It is the responsibility of the school leaders to ensure that teachers execute their duties effectively and in a manner that benefits the learners. In the event that the teachers exhibit certain weaknesses in the process of conducting their instructional duties, the school leaders should take it upon themselves to devise appropriate staff development interventions to offset the identified weaknesses. Thus, instructional leadership positively influences classroom practice by helping instructional leaders to diagnose instructional problems in schools and at the same time find a panacea for the diagnosed problems.

Instructional leadership positively influences classroom practice by enacting a container within which effective teaching and learning can be obtained through the protection of instructional time (Hoadley & Ward, 2015). A vast body of research has shown that effective schools are characterised by limited erosion of instructional time by non-academic activities. In such schools, teachers and learners move quickly to class and there is zero tolerance for loitering and unattended classrooms (Hoadley & Ward, 2015). Therefore, instructional leadership promotes a sound culture of teaching and learning through the protection of instructional time. It creates a path to excellent teaching and learning (Kruger, 2003). This is critical for effective schools and classroom practice. The optimum use of time ensures that the syllabi are adequately covered and student performance is enhanced as well.

While the impact of instructional leadership on classroom practice has been examined in several research studies, what has not been explored is the influence of teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership on classroom practice. The current study partly endeavours to fill that gap in scholarship.

2.14 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section of the literature review explores the theoretical framework underpinning the study. Kombo and Tromp (2009) consider a theoretical framework to be a set that encompasses broad ideas and principles that are borrowed from the relevant literature and constitute the basis for the study. It acts as the basis for formulating research questions and constructing hypotheses, or making informal tentative predictions on the

possible outcomes of a study (Tashakorri & Teddlie, 2003). It plays a critical role in outlining possible courses of action in a research study. As such, it functions as a road map that provides coherence for a research study.

The current study is rooted in the leadership model proposed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), which is popularly known as the principal instructional management rating scale (PIMRS) framework or model (Al-Mahdy & Al-Kiyumi, 2015). The PIMRS model is used as the basis for determining teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership in the current study. The model proposed three dimensions for the instructional leadership role of the principal: defining the school's mission, managing the instructional programme and promoting a positive school learning climate. These three dimensions are further delineated into ten instructional leadership functions (Goddard *et al.,* 2010; Hallinger, 2009) that are going to be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

The first dimension which relates to defining the school's mission has two functions. These functions are framing the school's goals and communicating the school's goals (Hallinger, 2012). As far as this dimension is concerned, the principal has a key role to play in determining the key purposes of the school. The school will channel its resources into this area during a given academic year (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). For the goals to have a positive impact on teaching and learning, they should be formulated in such a way that they are clear, measurable, time-based and focused on the academic progress of the learners (Hallinger, 2009; Thi Hao, 2016). Therefore, vague goals should always be avoided, as they do not provide a clear sense of direction.

It should be noted that the dimension of defining the school's mission does not stipulate that the principal alone define the school's mission. What it says is that it is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that such a mission is in place and is communicated widely to all the stakeholders of the school (Al-Mahdy & Al-Kiyumi, 2015). It is imperative for the principal to ensure that the school has a mission. Goddard *et al.* (2010) encourage the principal to create the mission of the school in cooperation with the other members of staff to ensure that the mission is widely known and supported by all the members of the school community. It is also important to note that if

goals are to be supported and incorporated by the teachers in to their daily practice, the teachers should play a part in creating those goals. The mission should be prioritised and accepted as legitimate by all the teachers in the school. Their involvement inevitably gives them a sense of ownership over the school's mission.

Hallinger and Wang (2015) consider the dimension of defining the school's mission as the starting point in creating a learner-centred school. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) also subscribe to the same line of thinking. As far as the two are concerned, effective schools are characterised by a vision that is strongly entrenched in the school's culture. In such scenarios, the mission gives the school a sense of direction. Hallinger (2012) regards the vision and goals, which are part of the school's mission, as the most significant way through which school leaders exercise their influence on learning. According to Sun and Leithwood (2015), the vision and goals achieve their impact in two ways. Firstly, they inspire the school's key stakeholders to sacrifice for the success and achievement of the school's collective goals. Through this way, higher levels of performance may be attained. Furthermore, goals produce their effect by narrowing the attention of the members of staff to a limited desirable ends. They help in clarifying what should be done and what should not be done. When goals are clearly defined, they provide a benchmark for making decisions on staffing, resource allocation and staff development. For the goals to have a significant impact, it is important for them to be less so that all the staff energy and other school resources are mobilised around them.

The school's mission, vision and goals need to be communicated widely. Even a good mission, vision and goals do not produce any meaningful results if they are not communicated to all the stakeholders. Hallinger and Wang (2015) encourage the use of formal and informal channels of communication in communicating the school's mission and goals. The formal channels of communication include goal statements, staff bulletins, the school handbook and assemblies. On the other hand, the informal channels of communication encompass parent conferences, teacher conferences and curricular meetings (Thi Hao, 2016). This study partly seeks to establish History teachers' perceptions and experiences on mission and goal formulation and

communication in their schools. The big question is who frames the school's mission and goals and in what way are these communicated in Zimbabwean schools?

The second dimension of the PIMRS model dwells on the management of the instructional programme. This dimension specifically deals with the coordination and control of instruction and the curriculum (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). The dimension under consideration encompasses three leadership functions: supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum and monitoring student progress (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). The managing of the instructional programme entails that the school head should be deeply involved in stimulating, supervising and monitoring activities related to teaching and learning in the school. For the principal to execute the functions effectively under the dimension of managing the instructional programme, it is imperative for that principal to have expertise in teaching and learning as well as unwavering commitment to school improvement efforts (Hallinger, 2009). This dimension demands that the principal be "hip-deep" in the instructional programme of the school (Marks & Printy, 2003). Thus, the onus is on any given principal to take an active involvement in the school's teaching and learning activities and processes if the school is to deliver its mandate successfully.

The supervision and evaluation of instruction is vital in ensuring that the goals of the educational institution are translated into practice at the classroom level. This leadership function requires the coordination of the classroom objectives of teachers and those of the school and the evaluation of the classroom instruction (Hallinger & Wang, 2015).This leadership function also mandates the school leaders to provide instructional support to classroom practitioners and to monitor classroom instruction via a combination of formal and informal classroom visits on a continuous basis (Hallinger, 2012). This helps in determining if the school's goals are being accomplished.

The school leaders, particularly the school principals, should take it upon themselves to ensure that the curriculum is coordinated in the school. The content that is taught to the learners and the achievement tests they write should be aligned to the curricular objectives of the school (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). In a setup where the curriculum is

centrally controlled, such as the Zimbabwean scenario, it is the duty of the school leaders to ensure that what happens in the classroom does not depart from the curricular goals set by the government through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education.

School leaders are also expected to take a leading role in monitoring student progress (Isaiah & Isaiah, 2014). This is usually done through the administration of tests and other assignments. The school head plays a critical role in monitoring student progress through providing classroom practitioners with test results in a timely and useful fashion. They should also discuss test results with the members of staff and provide analyses of test results in a manner that can easily be comprehended by the teachers and other stakeholders that might have an interest in the same results (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). For this current study, it is also pertinent to find out if History teachers perceive their school leaders as taking part in monitoring students' progress and achievement.

The third and final dimension of the PIMRS model, which focuses on developing a positive school climate, has numerous leadership functions. It involves protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers and providing incentives for learning (Hallinger, 2009). The responsibility lies with the school leaders, particularly the school head, to ensure that instructional time is protected and not consumed by announcements and unnecessary requests from the school administration (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). It is also critical for the principal to curb absenteeism among teachers and students.

Goddard *et al.* (2010) argue that it is vital for the school head to maintain high visibility on the campus and in the classroom. It is believed that if the school head maintains high visibility, his interaction with the students will also improve. This is likely to impact positively on learners' behaviour and classroom instruction. It should be noted that although some of the teachers are self-starters who can work with or without the school leaders in their vicinity, the same could not be said of all the teachers. Some teachers only work if they know that the school head is around (Manaseh, 2016). Thus, it is

imperative for the principal to maintain high visibility on the campus and in the classroom.

It is also the duty of school principals to incentivise their subordinates through the provision of different types of incentives (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). In affluent schools, the school head can use monetary rewards to motivate teachers. This was the case in Zimbabwe during the tenure of the then inclusive government. It should be noted that teachers are not only motivated by monetary rewards. Recognition and praises are also crucial incentives that can be used to spur teachers to work above their optimum level (Robinson *et al.,* 2008). Therefore, the crux of the matter is that school leaders should strive to use formal and informal incentives in a bid to bring out the best in their teachers.

Professional development is an indispensable component of any serious school improvement initiative. As such, the school head should promote professional development in the school. Robinson *et al.* (2008) have noted that the school head's involvement and participation in the professional learning of teachers tends to produce the most effect on the learners' outcomes. It is advisable for the school's professional development activities to be in tandem with the school's wider goals. It is also imperative for the school's staff development activities to be informed by the problems diagnosed during classroom observations.

The dimension of developing a positive school learning climate also attaches great importance to the provision of incentives for learning (Bellibas, 2016). The thinking behind this is that the provision of incentives for learning has the inherent power for creating school climates in which academic achievement is the top priority for many students (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). Hallinger and Wang (2015) are of the opinion that the school leaders should strive to create a platform for an array of, visible opportunities for students to be recognised and rewarded for their outstanding academic performance and improvement. Some school leaders may argue that their operating economic environment does not allow them to reward outstanding performers. Such an argument is baseless as the rewards required do not need to be fancy or expensive; what

students appreciate is a scenario where they are given recognition for their success at classroom and school levels.

The theoretical framework for this study was also undergirded by the use of social constructivism theory. Social constructivism is traced to the work of Vygotsky. The other prominent members of the social constructivist tradition include Kuhn, Greeno, Simon and Brown. "Constructivism has been recognised as both a paradigm as well as a theory". (Hua & Matthews, 2005: 443). "A paradigm is a way of looking at the world. It is composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action" (Mertens, 2015: 8). Teddlie and Tashakorri (2009: 84) echo this line of thinking as they; consider a paradigm as "a worldview, together with the various philosophical assumptions associated with that point of view". Therefore, a research paradigm is all about shared belief systems that are regarded as instrumental in determining the types of knowledge that are sought by researchers. It also explains how the researchers interpret the data they gather (Morgan, 2007).

In the current study, social constructivism has been used as a theoretical lens or as part of the theoretical framework. This entails that the theory of social constructivism in conjunction with the PIMRS model played an important role in guiding the entire process of my research study.

"Social constructivism is a theory of knowledge… that examines the knowledge and understandings of the world that are developed jointly by individuals" (Amineh & Asi, 2015: 13). Creswell (2013) regards social constructivism as an interpretive framework characterised by individuals who strive to understand the world that surrounds them and create their peculiar meanings that correspond to their experience. A close analysis of the two definitions indicates that social constructivism is premised on the belief that individuals reside in the world of their own personal and subjective experiences and they create meaning through social interaction (Starman, 2013). The proponents of this paradigm regard knowledge and truth as developed by the interactions of individuals within a given society (Andrews, 2012). The underlying assumption is that knowledge is created through social interaction and is a consequence of social processes and

diversity within a group, which results in multiple meanings, interpretations and perceptions of the same phenomenon.

Similar to all the other research paradigms, social constructivism is characterised through its ontology (what is reality), epistemology (how do you know something), and methodology (how do you go about finding it out) (Mertens, 2015). As far as social constructivism is concerned, there is no single reality or truth and individuals create reality as they interact in groups. There is no such thing as objective reality. In the words of Hua and Matthews (2005: 390), "… any truth is as good as other" and as such it is imperative for the researcher to make an effort to grasp the multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge. The social constructivism paradigm is premised on the thinking that people who are actively involved in the research process socially construct knowledge and therefore the researcher is advised to attempt to reach an understanding of the complex world of the lived experience from the standpoint of those who live it. The researcher and the respondents are perpetually bound in an interactive process.

The epistemological position of constructivism is that reality has to be interpreted in order to discover the underlying meanings of any given activities and events. What it implies is that the duty of the researcher is to listen attentively to the views and ideas of the research participants and interpret the findings based on the research participants' background and experiences (Creswell, 2013). In the current study, the interpretation of findings revealed plenty of information pertaining to the phenomenon under investigation. As far as Amineh and Asi (2015: 15) are concerned, the use of the social constructivism approach is the best way "in gaining access to the views and nuances that influenced the individual worlds of research participants".

As far as the data collection process is concerned, the research paradigm underpinning the current study encourages the use of a more personal, interactive mode of data collection. The paradigm advocates for the predominant use of qualitative methods such as observations and focus group discussions that have also been used in the current study. The philosophy behind the use of such data collection tools is that meaningful research can only be conducted through interaction between and among the researcher

and the respondents (Mertens, 2015). Constructivists emphasise the importance of the research context. They state that research data is not mechanically acquired but gathered in an active manner within the constraints and offerings of the research environment (Hua & Matthews, 2005). The use of this framework helps the researcher to consider the organisational context. Hallinger and Wang (2015) support the practice, as they, assert that research on school leadership effects must consider features of the organisational context and continue to approach issues of causal interference with caution.

Social constructivism augurs quite well for this study because the teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership, which are the focus of the study, are a consequence of social construction and they are bound to differ. The approach also empowers and accords the research participants, the opportunity to express their own perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership freely and adequately. Furthermore, the phenomenon under investigation does not take place in a vacuum and it cannot be separated from its place of occurrence. For the researcher to understand the phenomenon fully, it was imperative to investigate it from the respondents' own frame of reference. These considerations prompted me to settle for social constructivism as the theoretical basis of the current study. The ontology, epistemology and methodology underpinning social constructivism are appropriate for the phenomenon under investigation.

2.15 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Concisely, this chapter has reviewed the literature related to the topic guided by the research questions and objectives of the study as stated in chapter one. It has been established that there is no single understanding of the concept "instructional leadership" in the literature. This is critical in the sense that the way an individual conceptualises a particular phenomenon influences the way the individual perceives that phenomenon. The historical context of instructional leadership was explored. This was motivated by the thinking that everything in this world is best understood in light of its historical antecedents. A strong attempt was made to establish the persons with the responsibility of executing instructional leadership functions in schools. Focus was on

the role played by the school heads and other formal leaders. Informal leaders were also given special consideration. The priority given to instructional leadership in schools was also examined. It was noted that instructional leadership is not given a prominent position in most schools, not only in Zimbabwe but also across the globe. The various instructional leadership behaviours or practices associated with instructional leadership were discussed. A detailed analysis of the skills required for effective instructional leadership was made, as it is essential to find out what teachers think about the instructional leadership capabilities and competencies of their school leaders. The benefits associated with instructional leadership in the schools were also explored. To prove that instructional leadership is of immense benefit, the problems that arise in the absence of effective instructional leadership were highlighted. Factors that militate against effective use of instructional leadership in schools were also considered, so were the weaknesses of instructional leadership as an educational leadership paradigm. It was ascertained that instructional leadership affects classroom practice indirectly more than it does directly. This does not mean that direct consequences of instructional leadership should be neglected. The theoretical framework underpinning the study was examined as it provides a road map and philosophical considerations underlying the study. The next chapter is going to dwell on research methodology and design of the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter mainly focuses on the presentation of the research design and methodology. Ideally, the chapter commences by giving an overview of the research approach adopted and the design employed. It then examines the target population, sampling design and procedures, the research instruments and data collection and analysis procedures. A treatment of triangulation and pilot studies as well as related issues is also going to be done. It is also within the framework of this chapter to give a brief synopsis of how I paid special attention to the critical concepts of research validity and reliability and the notion of research ethics.

For the purpose of clarity, the issues that are central to this chapter are shown in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: An overview of the employed research methodology

Title	Zimbabwean teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership.
Research paradigm	Social constructivism
Research approach	Mixed methods
Research design	Sequential explanatory mixed methods
Target population	Secondary school History teachers
Sampling procedures	Multi-stage purposeful random sampling. • Phase 1: Participants were randomly selected. • Phase 2: Participants were purposively selected.
Research instruments	Phase 1: Questionnaires Phase 2: Focus group discussions and observations.
Validity and reliability	Numerous strategies were employed to ensure validity and reliability:

	• Validation of the instruments with the assistance of the supervisor • Pilot testing the instruments • Methodological triangulation • Exposing the research participants to basically the same research questions
Data analysis	Quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis used: • For phase 1, quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics • For phase 2, qualitative data was analysed using the thematic approach.
Ethical considerations	The research process was characterised by voluntary participation, informed consent and the right to withdraw by the participants when they saw it fit to do so. Confidentiality was guaranteed as the names of the participants and information provided was not to be divulged to anyone.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

This study has its own guiding research paradigm. "A paradigm is a way of looking at the world. It is composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action" (Mertens, 2015: 8). The current study is informed by the social constructivism theory whose main tenet is that individuals reside in the world of their own personal and subjective experiences and they create meaning through social interaction (Starman, 2013). The assumption is that diversity within a group results in multiple meanings, interpretations and perceptions of the same phenomenon. As far as social constructivism is concerned, there is no such thing as objective reality and as such it is imperative for the researcher to make an effort to grasp the multiple social

constructions of meaning and knowledge by the participants. The social constructivism paradigm has been discussed at length under the theoretical framework section (See Section, 2.14 in chapter 2)

3.3 THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research design may be defined as the overall strategy chosen by the researcher to integrate the various constituent parts of the research study in a logical and coherent manner, thereby, making sure that the problem that is the focus of the research is adequately attended to. In simple terms, it represents the blueprint that informs data collection, measurement and analysis (Creswell, 2012). This definition is more or less similar to the one given by Parahoo (1997: 142), who contends that a research design is "a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analysed". Ponce and Pagan-Maldonado (2014: 118) also regard the research design as "the research plan that will guide the researcher in conducting the study". Bhattacherjee (2012: 35) regards a research design "as a blueprint for empirical research aimed at answering specific research questions…and must specify at least three processes". These three processes may be summarised as the process of collecting data, the process of developing the research instruments and the sampling process. Therefore, a research design is a road map or a guiding framework that guides the researcher in the execution of his duties throughout the whole research process.

Closely linked to the research design is the concept of research methodology. Rajasekar, Philomminathan and Chinnathambi (2013) regard research methodology as a systematic way of exploring the different steps followed by an investigator in studying the research problem at hand. In essence, the research methodology encompasses the mechanisms that are adopted by the researcher in making descriptions, explanations and predictions pertaining to the research problem. Thus, it may be sensibly argued that the twin concepts of research design and research methodology are inseparable as they both dwell on the research guiding framework that defines the parameters of operation for the researcher.

This research study drew on the mixed-methods research approach with the explanatory sequential design as the guiding framework. Mixed-methods research

refers to the engagement of a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods in a single research study (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). A mixed-methods study deliberately combines or integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches as components of the research at different points in the research process (Ponce & Pagan-Maldonado, 2014). The same line of thinking is echoed by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004: 17), who contend that mixed-methods research may be viewed as that "class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study". Therefore, the mixed-methods approach is a middle of the road approach that fuses various aspects of the quantitative and qualitative research paradigms to produce a superior hybrid.

In order to understand the mixed methods approach adequately, it is imperative to review the two research approaches that inform it, namely, quantitative and qualitative research.

- **Quantitative Research**

Gay, *et al.* (2011) have defined quantitative research, as that type of research that collects and analyses numerical data for the purpose of describing, explaining, predicting, or controlling the phenomenon of interest to the researcher. The gathered data are in the form of figures, scales, weights and measurements. The quantitative research approach is based on the deductive approach, which is empirical in nature. Such a research approach employs quantitative techniques of collecting and analysing data. Surveys in the form of questionnaires are used to collect data. This yields quantitative data. According to Borg, Gall and Gall (1993), quantitative data are primarily numerical and are quantifiable. Quantitative data are susceptible to analysis by statistical procedures. Thus, the quantitative data collected are analysed using various statistical procedures that include descriptive and inferential statistics.

There are quite a number of assumptions underpinning the quantitative approach. According to Burrell and Morgan in Cohen *et al.* (2011), the quantitative perspective is based on the assumption that social reality is foreign to any given research respondents

manifesting itself upon their consciousness from outside. This truth or reality exists out there independently of humans and is not mind-dependent and constructed. Therefore, the quantitative approach views the social world and reality as independent of each other and valid research as that which takes reality as non-human and the one and only view of the single world.

According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995), the quantitative approach is also premised on the assumption of "empiricism" which holds the view that dependable knowledge is obtained via experience and through the senses, by literary touching, hearing and seeing which is normally associated with controlled experimental contexts and some kind of observational studies. Therefore, the quantitative perspective views the world as made up of hard, tangible, objective, measurable and quantifiable truth.

The assumption of objectivity is central to the quantitative research paradigm. According to Tuckman (1998) the research approach stresses the importance of the detached objective researcher. The canon of objectivity asserts that in the investigation of any phenomenon, the researcher's own private values must never intrude in determining the findings. In other words, the researcher's colour, race, creed and political beliefs should be of absolutely no significance in determining the outcome of the study. In essence, if two researchers carry out similar research they should produce similar findings.

According to Borg *et al.* (1993) the quantitative approach assumes that it is feasible for the researcher to operate independently of the research participants and respondents to a greater extent, although the inevitability of some form of interaction cannot be completely ruled out. Effort should be made to reduce the impact of the effect of the researcher-respondent interaction upon findings of the research. Therefore, to the quantitative approach, research findings are valid when the researcher is independent of the research subjects. Furthermore, the quantitative paradigm assumes that various elements connected to a process that is complex may be subjected to independent studies. The assumption of the quantitative approach is that there is only one, concrete reality broken into autonomous variables and processes of which each can be subjected to studies independent of the others (Bhattacherjee, 2012).

According to Borg *et al.* (1993) the assumption of the possibility of generalisation is of paramount importance to the understanding of the quantitative research approach. According to this approach, the target objective of research is to produce a corpus of knowledge that can be generalised to the other contexts. This emanates from the fact that the approach is geared towards giving explanations not the development of understanding and new insights. The concept of generalisation is based on the notion that the social world and the truth are universally the same and valid research produces findings that can be generalised.

- **Qualitative Research**

On the contrary, qualitative research is all about gathering, analysing and interpreting visual and narrative data to gain insights into a given issue that is of interest to the researcher. Qualitative research is largely descriptive. The gathered data are non-numerical and, are characterised by words and pictures not by numbers. However, qualitative research involves using descriptive statistics were necessary.

More so, Bogdan and Biklen (1982), point out that the qualitative research approach considers the natural setting as the undisputable data source and the investigator is the principal instrument. Qualitative researchers are of the opinion that the results of research should emanate from an inquiry executed in a true world context to be relevant to true-life situations (Gay *et al.,* 2011).Thus, researchers who use the qualitative approach visit a particular setting under investigation because their concern is the context of the study. They are of the thinking that for action to be best understood, it should be observed in a setting of its occurrence. To them the world is naturalistic and can only be studied in a natural setting.

The qualitative research approach is premised on a number of assumptions. The qualitative perspective asserts that the social world or reality is a consequence of human construction. The mind and the social world are inseparable. People assign meaning to the objects, events and situations. Therefore, no two persons see the world in the same manner, hence, in the words of Best and Khan (2006), it follows that there are as many, intangible realities and constructions as there are people making them. To

the qualitative approach, research is valid when it brings out these "multiple realities". Therefore, the way a person sees the world is necessarily influenced and coloured by his/her background, race, creed, religion, needs and interests. This culminates in more than one social world and several personalised truths.

The qualitative approach rejects the notion of a detached, objective researcher. The qualitative perspective argues that individuals' behaviour is best grasped by the researcher who shares their frame of reference. Understanding of how individuals interpret their worldview should arise from within, not from the outside. To the qualitative approach, the world and valid research are highly subjective. In addition to this, the qualitative approach assumes that the qualitative researcher and the research participant perpetually interact to influence one another significantly and they are inseparable. The qualitative researcher acknowledges that his/her presence may result in the research participants being observed changing their behaviour. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982), the qualitative researchers minimise the problem of the "observer effect" by trying to associate with their research participants in a natural, unobtrusive manner that is non-threatening.

The qualitative approach aims at understanding experience as something that is unified. As far as this approach is concerned, situations or contexts ought to be investigated in a holistic fashion. The qualitative perspective acknowledges the presence of numerous social worlds and considers research as valid when it studies each social world in its totality, not as a mere sum of parts and consequently gives a composite picture of the whole scenario. The underlying argument is that human nature is complex and therefore, it cannot be broken into constituent parts or variables. For meaningful understanding and insights to be generated, there is a need to study any given context in its entirety. Best and Khan (2006) support this line of thinking as they say, the holistic approach adopted by the qualitative researcher is significant for understanding many of the aspects associated with the complex nature of human behaviour.

These conflicting assumptions that characterise quantitative and qualitative research culminated into what is popularly known as the "paradigm wars". The paradigm wars tended to focus on the differences between the two paradigms (Johnson &

Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The purists across the divide have made the claim that to combine the two paradigms is as good as "to dilute and adulterate them, trying to mix oil and water" (Cohen *et al.,* 2011: 26). This kind of thinking fails to appreciate that there are some convergent zones between quantitative and qualitative research. For instance, both approaches use empirical observations in addressing pertinent research questions. Furthermore, both approaches "describe their data, construct explanatory arguments from their data, and speculate about why the outcomes they observed happened the way they did" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 15). It is also imperative to note that in social sciences, both approaches are geared towards providing explanations pertaining to human beings and the environments in which they reside and evolve. Therefore, the differences between the two paradigms should not be over-emphasised; instead, educational researchers should strive to ascertain how the two could be used in combination in their studies.

- **Mixed-methods Research**

The belief that quantitative and qualitative researches are quite significant and useful has resulted in the birth of mixed-methods research as a "third methodological movement" (Teddlie & Tashakorri, 2009) or as a "third research paradigm" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).It should be noted that several scholars have contributed to the development of mixed-methods as a research paradigm as shown in Table 3.2 below.

Table 2.2: Selected writers important in the development of mixed-methods approaches in the process of research

Stage of development	Authors (Years)	Contribution to mixed-methods research
Formative period	Campbell and Fiske (1959)	Introduced the use of multiple quantitative methods
	Sieber (1973)	Combined surveys and interviews

	Jick (1979)	Discussed triangulating qualitative and quantitative data
	Cook and Reinchardt (1979)	Presented 10 ways to combine quantitative and qualitative data
Paradigm debate period	Rossman and Wilson (1985)	Discussed stances toward combining methods-purists, situationalists, and pragmatists
	Bryman (1988)	Reviewed the debate and established connections within the two traditions
	Reinchardt and Rallis (1994)	Discussed the paradigm debate and reconciled two traditions
	Greene and Caracelli (1997)	Suggested that we move past the paradigm debate
Procedural development period	Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989)	Identified a classification system of types of mixed-methods design
	Brewer and Hunter (1989)	Focused on a multimethod approach as used in the process of research
	Morse (1991)	Developed a notation system
	Creswell (1994)	Identified three types of mixed-methods designs
	Morgan (1998)	Designed a typology for determining design to use

	Newman and Benz (1998)	Provided an overview of procedures
	Tashakkari and Teddlie (1998)	Presented a topical overview of mixed-methods research
	Bamberger (20000)	Presented a topical overview of mixed research methods
Advocacy as separate design period	Tashakkari and Teddlie (2003a)	Provided an international policy focus on mixed-methods research
	Creswell (2003)	Compared quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches in the process of research
	Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004)	Positioned mixed-methods research as a natural complement to traditional qualitative and quantitative research

(Adopted from Creswell, 2006: 14)

"Mixed methods research recognizes, and works with, the fact that the world is not exclusively quantitative or qualitative; it is not an either/or world, but a mixed world, even though the researcher may find that the research has a predominant disposition to or requirement for, numbers or qualitative data" (Cohen *et al.,* 2011: 22). Therefore, it can be argued that the idea of being faithful to one research approach is restrictive and results in a partial understanding of the issues under investigation.

It is important to note that qualitative and quantitative research approaches have their own advocates and critics (Borg *et al.*, 1993). Personally, I subscribe to the opinion that both approaches have much to offer to the research on instructional leadership if they

are used with sensitivity. Both approaches have a place in instructional leadership research because each approach addresses different research questions about educational issues. For instance, the methods of qualitative research are more appropriate for a piece of research that desires to produce in-depth data on a phenomenon under investigation such as how teachers perceive instructional leadership. On the contrary, the quantitative methods are more appropriate if we wish to know about matters as the number of teachers who perceive instructional leadership positively. For this said reason, quantitative and qualitative approaches were used for the quantitative and qualitative phases my study respectively.

Some educational researchers such as Reinchardt and Cook (1979), cited by Borg *et al.* (1993), are of the opinion that many educational issues including instructional leadership can best be studied through a blend of quantitative and qualitative research methods. For instance, a quantitative research study may be conducted to ascertain how well an instructional leadership style functions, whereas a follow-up study can be conducted to explain why it works or does not work and how it is perceived by the teachers. Therefore, quantitative and qualitative research approaches have the potential to make a significant contribution to instructional leadership practice. Neither approach is better than the other, hence, the use of the mixed-methods approach in the current study.

My choice for the mixed-methods approach was also premised on the fact that a number of advantages may be derived from the use of this approach. The rationale for using the mixed-methods approach was to build on the advantages of each approach to grasp the phenomenon under investigation more adequately than what was possible through either paradigm alone (Chen, 2005; Yin, 2012). Words and narratives from the qualitative phase of the study can be used to add meaning to quantitative data collected during the quantitative phase. Therefore, the mixed-methods approach has the greatest merit of providing a broader and in depth understanding of the phenomenon under study that is not practically feasible using either design by itself. This approach has the greatest merit of addressing multiple questions. Mixed-methods research is famous for addressing the quantitative and qualitative types of research questions. The mixed

methods research approach "can answer a broader and more complete range of research questions because the researcher is not confined to a single method or approach" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 21). The current study constitutes the "what" (quantitative) and "how" (qualitative) type of questions. Therefore, the best way to address these mixed types of research questions is to adopt a mixed-methods research approach. Mertens (2015: 305) supports this practice, contending that, "because mixed methods designs incorporate techniques from quantitative and qualitative traditions, they can be used to answer questions that could not be answered in any other way".

Furthermore, the approach also helps the researcher in avoiding potential single method bias and it makes the research study appealing to various audiences. Some people are convinced by quantitative research, while others find qualitative research appealing. The use of "mixed methods will increase the likelihood that a wider audience will find the conclusions convincing and use the findings" (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009: 308). Therefore, this design enhances the chances of the research findings of the current study being accepted and used by the protagonists of the quantitative and qualitative paradigms.

The considerations that persuaded me to settle for the mixed-methods approach are summarised in the table below and were adapted from the work of Mertens (2015).

Table 3.3: Strengths of mixed methods approach

Consideration	Explanation
Triangulation	Compare findings from the qualitative data with the quantitative results
Complementarity	Seek elaboration, illustration, enhancement and clarification.
Development	Use the results from the quantitative phase to inform the qualitative phase.

Initiation	Discover paradoxes and contradictions that emerge when findings from the two analytical strands are compared that might lead to a reframing of the research questions.
Expansion	Expand breadth and range of a study by using multiple analytical strands for different study phases.

It should be noted that the choice for the mixed-methods approach was made after careful consideration of the shortcomings of this approach. Generally, it is challenging for one researcher to carry out quantitative and qualitative research in a single study as this requires the researcher to master how to use "multiple methods and approaches and understand how to mix them appropriately" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 21). This may prove to be time consuming and expensive for the researcher. However, the benefits to accrue because of using this approach far outweigh the noted shortcomings.

An explanatory sequential mixed methods design, which is also popularly known as the two-phase model (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2011) was used as the guiding framework for this study. According to this design, the researcher gathers quantitative and qualitative data in sequence or in two phases. What it implies is that quantitative data that is collected during the first phase will inform qualitative data to be collected in the subsequent phase. "The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and results provide a general picture of the research problem; more analysis, specifically through qualitative data collection, is needed to refine, extend, or explain the general picture" (Creswell, 2012: 542). In simple terms, this design helps to study or describe the research problem in greater depth (Ponce & Pagan-Maldonado, 2014). It is imperative to note that the findings of the quantitative phase are instrumental in determining the kind of data to be collected in the qualitative phase of the study.

In the second phase of the study, I explored a few typical cases, probes the main findings at length or makes a follow-up on outlier or extreme cases as shown by the quantitative results from the first phase of the study (Creswell, 2012; Terrell, 2012). The

qualitative analysis and interpretation in the second phase of the study was essential in explaining and elaborating on the quantitative results produced in the first phase.

I found the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design appealing in the sense that this design has the merit of clearly distinguishing the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. This is not only beneficial for the readers but also for the researcher, as he is not expected to carry out the insurmountable task of integrating two different forms of data. In the words of Creswell (2012: 543), this design has the greatest advantage of capturing "the best of both quantitative and qualitative data – to obtain quantitative results from a population in the first phase, and then refine or elaborate these findings through an in-depth qualitative exploration in the second phase". Thus, this design fulfils the aspirations and expectations of the mixed-methods research approach.

In this two-phase research study, I first gathered data that are quantitative through the survey instrument to explore research question 1 on the teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understandings of instructional leadership. This entails that the study prioritised the act of collecting and analysing data of a numerical nature. The quantitative phase represents the principal data collection stage. The second phase was a typically small qualitative component of the study that used observations and focus group discussions to help explain or elaborate on teachers' experiences as proposed in question 2. Questions 3 and 4 were answered by mixing quantitative and qualitative data. The preference for the explanatory sequential design for this study was motivated by the consideration that generally, similar to the mixed-methods approach that informs it, the explanatory research design has the strength of capturing the best of the qualitative and quantitative worlds.

It should be noted that this research design has its own shortcomings. In the qualitative phase, the researcher needs to ponder on which aspects of the quantitative phase to make a follow-up on, deciding on respondents to include and which questions to ask. This is generally time consuming and labour intensive. However, the strengths of the design in question outweighs its shortcomings, hence its use in the current study.

3.4 TARGET POPULATION

Best and Khan (2006) define population, as any given congregation of individuals that possess at least a single or more traits in common that may appeal to the researcher. In other words, the research population is "the total number of units from which data can be collected" (Parahoo, 1997: 218). In this research study, the target population, which is made up of teachers characterised by some common defining trait that can be identified and studied by the researcher, was restricted to secondary school History teachers in the educational province of Mashonaland Central in Zimbabwe. The sample includes secondary school History teachers from rural and urban schools to facilitate exploration into whether the central phenomenon is context specific. As far as Burns and Grove (2003), are concerned, the individuals that make up a population should satisfy particular requirements in order for them to be part of the study. For this study, the criterion for inclusion was not an open and a free for all approach. To be part of the target population, one had to be a secondary school History teacher, teaching in the Mashonaland Central province of Zimbabwe.

3.5 RESEARCH SITE

As far as Kombo and Tromp (2009) are concerned, the process of selecting the research site constitutes a vital cog in the research process, as it is instrumental in determining the kind of data to be collected. The research site reveals the areas relevant to the study. For the current study, the research site included the four districts of Bindura, Guruve, Mazowe and Shamva situated in the Mashonaland Central province of Zimbabwe. The research site consists of rural and urban schools. The secondary schools that are found in the concerned research site can also be grouped into boarding or day schools. The inclusion of these different types of schools facilitated exploration into whether the central phenomenon was context specific. The map below shows the eight districts of the Mashonaland Central province from where the research sites were selected.
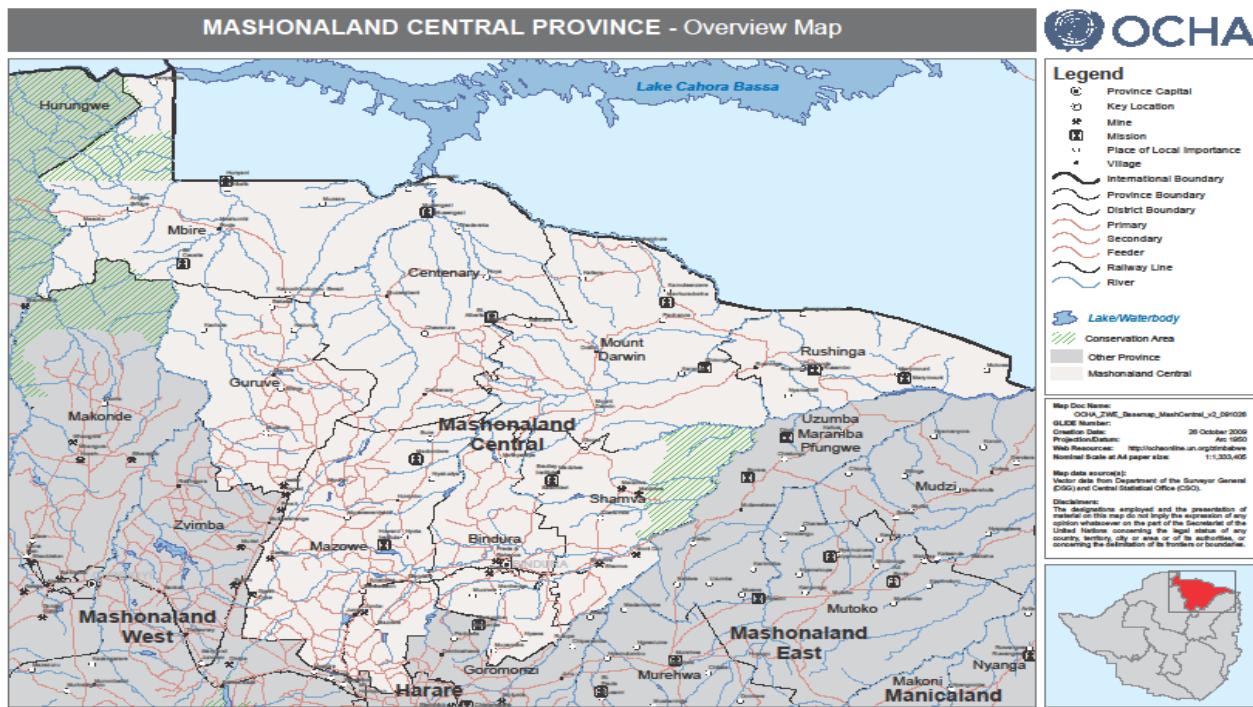
3.6 SAMPLING PROCEDURES

"A sample is a group of individuals, items, or events that represents the characteristics of the larger group from which the sample is drawn" (Gay *et a*l., 2011: 129). Donald (1979: 106) says, "a sample may be viewed as a small group which the researcher makes observations on and then generalise the findings to the larger population. Thus, for a sample to be effective, it must be representative of the whole group". The sample for this study was selected from a population of secondary school History teachers in the educational province of Mashonaland Central of Zimbabwe.

In this study, the research participants were selected through what Onwuegbuzi and Collins (2007), term multi-stage purposeful random sampling. This entails selecting research participants representing a sample in at least two phases. In the first phase, participants were randomly selected. In the first phase, the researcher employed what is termed stage sampling. According to Cohen *et al.* (2011), stage sampling concerns the selection of the sample in stages that is, drawing samples from samples.

I selected four districts from the eight districts that are found in the Mashonaland Central province of Zimbabwe at random. For the second stage, 50 History teachers were

drawn from 15-20 secondary schools from each of the four participating districts. The number of schools involved per district varied depending on the number of History teachers found in the selected schools. The schools were randomly selected using random sampling and History teachers from each of the selected school automatically became part of the sample. Therefore, randomness was guaranteed at two different stages and a big population of teachers was rendered manageable (Cohen *et al.,* 2011).

In the qualitative phase of the study, the three schools from where the participants were drawn were purposively selected. A purposive sample is usually chosen for a clearly identified specific purpose (Cohen *et al.,* 2011). Purposive sampling targets information rich sites (Patton, 1990), and selects the participants most able to provide information for the study's key questions. According to Trochim (2006), a purposive type of sampling, is selective and judgemental in nature. This non-probability sampling mechanism dwells on sampling procedures where the sample to be investigated is entirely based on the researcher's judgement when it comes to the selection of the units for inclusion. Normally, the sample to be investigated is small. Thus, the motive behind my use of purposive sampling in the qualitative phase of this study was to allow myself to focus on particular characteristics of interest of a population that were likely to enable me to best answer my second research question and partly answer research questions three and four.

Purposive sampling was not chosen just for the sake of choosing a sampling technique, but a number of considerations were made. This research study was carried out within the context of limited time and therefore purposive sampling was used, as it is known to be of great use for scenarios where the researcher has to reach a targeted sample as quickly as possible and where the concern is not sampling for proportionality (Babbie, 2001). Thus, purposive sampling, allows the researcher to get the opinions of his targeted population quickly.

It should be noted that although purposive sampling was used for the second phase of this research study, the sampling technique has its own glaring shortcomings. It is at times susceptible to the bias of the researcher. Usually the notion that a purposive

sample is a creation that rests on the researcher's judgement is not a good defence mechanism when it comes to the alleviation of possible biases of the researcher. More so, because of the subjectivity and non-probability nature of how the units are selected in purposive sampling, it makes it difficult to come up with a representative sample. However, irrespective of the mentioned weaknesses, purposive sampling remains the best and indispensable for the second and final phase of this research study as it is best suited for qualitative research studies.

The second phase of the study purported to collect data that represents the range of perceptions, experiences and behaviours that are relevant to the research problem. For the qualitative phase, three secondary schools were selected. One subject group per school, namely History teachers, was subjected to focus group discussions about their experiences and observation of some of their instructional leadership activities. Three focus group discussions and two observations per school, choosing a representative activity such as a departmental meeting, were conducted. Therefore, this study has employed probabilistic and non-probabilistic sampling procedures in line with the dictates of the mixed-methods approach to research.

3.7 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

In this research, the researcher used three main research instruments, the questionnaire, the focus group discussion and the observation technique.

3.7.1 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

According to Bailey (1987) a questionnaire may be defined as a series of written questions that are given to a selected group of respondents to record their answers. The questionnaire is generally mailed or handed to the respondent. The same line of thinking is echoed by Borg *et al.* (1993: 228), who define a questionnaire as "a set of questions which are to be responded to by different respondents in writing". A questionnaire may consist of unstructured or structured questions. According to Bhattacherjee (2012: 74), "unstructured [questions] ask respondents to provide a response in their own words, while structured questions ask respondents to select an answer from a given set of choices". The questionnaire used for this study consisted of structured questions.

The questionnaire for this study was divided into two segments. The first segment focused on biographical data of the informants such as gender, age, educational level and the experience in the teaching service as well as the organisational characteristics. The second segment of the questionnaire utilised the Likert scale using the three dimensions of the instructional leadership role of the principal devised by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) in the PIMRS. This formed the basis for formulating questionnaire items for measuring teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership. The model is based on the three dimensions for the instructional leadership role of the principal, namely, defining the school's mission, managing the instructional programme and promoting a suitable school learning climate. The three dimensions are further divided into ten instructional leadership roles (Hallinger, 2009, Goddard *et al.,* 2010).

The popular Likert scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) represents a scale that is considered to have theoretically equal intervals among responses. The respondents were given the opportunity to mark the responses of their choice along a five point scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The choice of a five-point scale for this study is supported by Johns (2010), who contends that the normal practice is for the Likert scale to have response scales with an odd number of points. This researcher also settled for the five-point Likert scale because "research confirms that data from Likert items becomes significantly less accurate when the number of scale points drops below five or above seven" (Johns, 2010: 6).

The neutral mid-point was included following Likert's original example to give the respondents the opportunity to indicate whether they are neutral to the given statement. The neutral point shows that the respondent is undecided or neither agrees nor disagrees with the given Likert item. According to Bhattacherjee (2012), it is not fair to adopt a forced approach that compels the respondents to disagree or agree with the Likert statement by not including the neutral mid-point since some respondents may really be neutral to some of the given statements. Johns (2010: 6) supports this, saying that, "the purpose of this option is evidently to avoid forcing respondents into expressing agreement or disagreement when they may lack such a clear opinion. Not only might this annoy respondents, but also risks data quality" (Johns, 2010: 6). Thus, the use of

the midpoint is vital in preventing what might otherwise be a more or less random choice between agreement and disagreement. Cohen *et al.* (2011) back the use of the Likert scale because the use of this scale assists in combining the chances for flexible responses with the capacity to determine frequencies, correlations and other forms of statistical analysis.

The questionnaire was administered to 200 secondary school History teachers who were sampled through the use of multi-stage random sampling as explained under Section 3.6 on Sampling Procedures. The questionnaire was made up of items that elicit teachers' opinions, feelings and attitudes on the subject under investigation. Only closed items were used. These were based on the research questions or sub-problems of the investigation as they are stated under the research questions in chapter 1 of the study.

The respondents were requested to complete the questionnaire instrument individually in the presence of the researcher to make sure that the answers that were given were not group but individual responses. All the questionnaires for the 200 teachers were filled in thereby ensuring that a 100 per cent response rate was achieved.

The choice of the questionnaire instrument for the quantitative phase of this study was motivated by the consideration that the questionnaire is the most suitable data collection tool that produces data that can easily be analysed since each individual research respondent will answer exactly uniform question items ordered in the same manner. Therefore, any observed discrepancies are regarded as an indication of true divergence of opinion amongst the respondents. More so, other researchers can verify the produced research findings. This reflects on the reliability of this research instrument.

In addition, the anonymity at the heart of the questionnaire helps any researcher to get candid responses from the sampled respondents. The instrument accords the respondents the opportunity to be at liberty in giving their answers, as they are usually not under the kind of duress that is normally created by face-to-face situations associated with the interviews. This increases the possibility of producing valid data.

However, although the questionnaire approach was used for this research study, it has its own limitations. With this instrument, it is possible for the respondents to misinterpret

some of the questions; the questionnaire respondents may not get clarification on ambiguous questions thereby giving incorrect answers and some of the respondents may decide not to respond to some of the questionnaire items.

Bailey (1987) has noted that no data collection instrument is perfect, however, questionnaires that are self-administered by the researcher are better compared to interviews when the respondents that are involved are literate, the questionnaire items do not require further clarification and when a high response rate is desired. If this is anything to go by, then for the purpose of this research study, questionnaires were appropriate. All the respondents, as teachers, were relatively educated.

3.7.2 THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

In an attempt to offset some of the weaknesses that characterise the questionnaire instrument; a focus group discussion was used in the qualitative phase of the study.

Creswell (2012) regards a focus group discussion as a process of gathering research information by interviewing a group of respondents, ranging from four to six. Gay *et al.* (2011) concur that a focus group discussion involves collecting shared meaning and understanding from a group of respondents as well as tapping the ideas of a particular group of respondents. Therefore, a focus group is a qualitative research tool that brings together various people to deliberate on specific issues under the direction of a facilitator or moderator. I used focus group discussions to solicit information from History teachers pertaining to question two and partly to question three and four as stated under the research questions in the first chapter of this study.

I settled for focus group discussions in the second phase of the study because the tool offers numerous advantages. My assumption was that focus group discussions have the potential to yield optimum information especially if the respondents have a lot in common. In the context under review, the participants were all History teachers and therefore they were expected to cooperate with each other in a meaningful way to produce insights that cannot be produced in straightforward individual interviews. As colleagues, the respondents were anticipated to be comfortable in voicing their opinions in each other's company than on their own with the researcher. Creswell (2012) and

Cohen *et al.* (2011) have noted that generally this method of data collection yields large quantities of data from a group of people within a considerably limited space of time. This is so because with this data collection tool, all the respondents together with the researcher himself are provided with the chance to pose questions and as such, this will result in more information than what is yielded by individual interviews. Therefore, I employed focus group discussions in order to be economical with time and to compensate for time consumed by the process of administering questionnaires in the quantitative phase of the study since focus group discussions are generally known to be a less expensive and a faster mechanism of collecting valuable data. It should be noted that since the research study was highly scheduled it was always critical for me to be sensitive on the issues regarding time, hence, the use of focus group discussions.

The other consideration that swayed me to use focus group discussions was the perceived realisation that focus group discussions have what it takes to induce the respondents to speak more freely and they can also build on the answers of others. Furthermore, this data collection tool allows the views of more than one individual to be captured than is usually possible in a one-to-one scenario. Thus, the approach promotes the generation of a group perspective and the respondents are also accorded the platform to agree or disagree with the opinions of other respondents. Focus group discussions open the avenue for divergent perspectives. With focus group discussions "participants tend to provide checks and balances on each other, which weeds out false or extreme views" (Manaseh, 2016: 35).

Cohen *et al.* (2011) have argued for the use of focus group discussions because they are capable of collecting data on perceptions, opinions, values and attitudes. Furthermore, they empower respondents to communicate and in their own words, they motivate groups of participants rather than individual respondents to raise their concerns, views and opinions and they provide much coverage of issues under consideration compared to surveys.

More so, the use of focus group discussions augurs quite well with the theoretical framework of social constructivism undergirding the current study. This theoretical framework encourages the use of more personal, interactive mode of data collection

such as focus group discussions and its central assumption is that knowledge is created through social interaction and is a result of social processes and diversity within a group. As far as the constructivists are concerned, individuals create reality as they interact in groups. Therefore, I decided to use focus group discussions for this study after carefully considering the strengths associated with this qualitative data gathering tool and how it allows the research participants to express their own perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership in groups as advocated by social constructivists.

However, it is vital to note that the focus group discussion, as a data gathering tool, has its own glaring weaknesses. According to Holloway and Wheeler (2002), the moderator may find it difficult to manage the ensuing debate and control the discussion compared to interviews involving individuals. Creswell (2012) supports this, contending that focus group discussions are demanding on the part of a moderator who does not have control over the group Interview discussion. Therefore, if the moderator does not have the prerequisite skills required to control group discussions, focus group discussions may degenerate into an uncontrollable chaotic situation. It should be noted that as an experienced lecturer who is used to facilitate group discussions in my lectures, I did not find it difficult to control any of the focus group discussions convened as I was armed with the requisite experience and expertise demanded by the exercise.

Cohen *et al.* (2011), and Holloway and Wheeler (2002), concur on that the data that are produced through focus group discussion tend to be difficulty to record and analyse. Usually it is not practical to jot down some notes when numerous respondents are talking at the same time. In addition, when focus group sessions are audio taped, the researcher may find it difficult to distinguish among the voices of various respondents within the group. More so, the recorded data may not be easily analysed. The process of analysing data is usually labour intensive and is also known to involve transcription and analysis costs. To solve some of these challenges, one of the ground rules that guided all the focus group discussions I conducted was that all the participants were to speak through the chair and only one person was to speak at a time. Furthermore, the audiotaped data was always decoded soon after the focus group discussion when my

memory as the moderator or facilitator was still fresh to allow for correct distinction between the voices of various respondents within the group.

For focus group discussions to produce the much needed meaningful results, all the participants should be accorded the opportunity to voice their concerns and opinions. However, this is not always the case with focus group discussions. One or two individuals may dominate the discussion. The trend generally is that some of the respondents may be introverts while others have the potential to assert their dominance over the discussion thereby influencing the outcome of the discussion, or perhaps even introduce bias (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002).The same line of thinking is accentuated by Cohen *et al.* (2011), who argue that focus group discussions are characterised by the challenge of the same voice being heard time and again, especially if there is a dominant member of the group and dissenting voices on issues of controversy are at times suppressed by the influence of group dynamics. What it entails is that "inarticulate members may be denied a voice; the data may lack overall reliability" (Cohen *et al.,* 2011: 437). Thus, it may be argued that at times, the issues of validity and reliability are not adequately addressed by the use of focus group discussions. I made an effort to curb this weakness of the data collection tool under discussion by partly ensuring that all the participants were given the opportunity to express their views and concerns. This was achieved through having a ground rule for all the focus group discussions that stipulated that no participant was to talk for more than five minutes without giving others a chance to speak.

3.7.3 OBSERVATIONS

Nevertheless, in an effort to offset some of the noted disadvantages of the focus group discussion approach, observations were carried out in the qualitative phase of the study. "Observation is the process of gathering open-ended, first-hand information by observing people and places at a research site" (Creswell, 2012: 213). According to Weiss (1998), observation involves a look-and-see perspective. From the two given definitions, it can be discerned that observation involves watching the participants carrying out their daily routine and emphasis is on understanding and grasping the natural environment as lived by the participants without altering or manipulating it. There

are two common types of observation, participant and non-participant observation. For this research study, I settled for non-participant observation. Under this type of observation, the researcher does not directly involve himself in the context or activities under observation. "In other words, the researcher observes and records behaviours but does not interact or participate in the life of the setting under study" (Gay *et al.,* 2011: 382). Therefore, I was more of an outsider who sat on some advantageous location to carefully observe and record the phenomenon under investigation.

A number of considerations motivated my choice of non-participant observation. First, I was not quite familiar with the sites and participants involved to participate in their activities. Furthermore, this type of role generally demands less access compared to participant observation as authorities and teachers at a school may be more comfortable with it. However, it should be noted that this observational role has its own shortcomings as well. By choosing not to actively participate in the activities of the research participants, the researcher may remove himself from the exact experiences and the observations noted may not be as authentic as if the researcher had been directly involved (Creswell, 2012).

I conducted two observations per school watching representative activities, namely, beginning and end of term departmental meetings, over a period of time. All the observations were geared towards ascertaining the instructional leadership practices that were taking place in the sampled schools. Most of the meetings lasted for a period of one to two hours. I observed all the meetings for their entire duration. I developed an observational protocol for recording specific behaviours such as the teachers' reaction and level of participation in matters to do with instructional leadership such as assessment, lesson observations and protection of instructional time that the study was meant to identify during the observation period. The observational protocol that I used to guide myself in conducting observations clearly listed the issues that were to constitute the focus of the observations such as the nature of the instructional leadership activity, its purpose, and teachers' level of participation (See Observation protocol on page 241-245, under the Appendices Section). Observational protocols have the advantage of providing a common basis that makes the organisation and categorisation of data across

different sets of notes easier (Gay *et al.,* 2011). In recording observational data, as the researcher and also the observer, I made sure that my field notes contained descriptive and reflective information. According to Creswell (2012: 217), "descriptive fieldnotes record a description of the events, activities and people (what happened)". On the contrary, "reflective fieldnotes record personal thoughts that researchers have that relate to their insights, hunches, or broad ideas or themes that emerge during the observation (what sense you made of the site, people and situation)". For the purpose of clarity and detail, the fieldnotes were recorded in the field.

The use of the observation technique as a backup data collection instrument for the study under consideration stems from the fact that the use of this technique offers numerous benefits to the researcher. One of the merits of the observation method is that it does not require the researcher to ask the research participant anything, and therefore it guards against the biases brought about by obtrusive questioning (Weiss, 1998). When the researcher's presence in the situation is unobtrusive, people may not expressly tailor their actions and responses to the type of image they want to create. Thus, it collects data on actual behaviour rather than self-reported behaviour or perceptions and it is real time rather than retrospective.

Cohen *et al.* (2011) posit that the main strength of observation as a data collection tool is that it accords the researcher the platform to collect "live" data and naturally unfolding social scenarios. This enables the researcher to watch what is happening "in situ" rather than to rely on respondents' accounts. Furthermore, the observation technique makes a reality check mechanism available as what the participants' claim they do may contradict with the reality on the ground. Therefore, using observation as a data collection tool it was hoped that this would enable and empower me as the researcher to establish whether the claims of the respondents correspond with the reality on the ground.

The use of observations as a data collection technique also emanates from the consideration that this data collection tool is a more personal mode of data collection which enjoys the support of social constructivists. Social constructivists consider knowledge and truth as developed by the interactions of individuals within a given society (Andrews, 2012). The use of the observation data collection tool offers any

researcher the opportunity to observe the participants interacting in their natural context. Thus, through the use of observations, I was able to gather data within the constraints and offerings of my participants' research environment. This is in line with the dictates of the theory of social constructivism underpinning this study.

However, observation as a method of data collection has its own shortcomings. Creswell (2012) posits that this approach to data collection tends to limit the researcher to those sites and situations where he is likely to be admitted or gain entry and at times, the researcher may find it problematic to develop good rapport with respondents in those sites. More so, this tool for gathering data remains prone to bias. This is a consequence of the fact that the researcher, who is also the observer, is the main instrument and at times can bring his set of blinders to the task. I made a spirited attempt to reduce the observer effect by using an observation guide.

3.7.4 TRIANGULATION

According to Tosh (2000), the collection of the same information, using different approaches in order to get more accurate information on a research question is called methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation is interplay of an array of data gathering methods. In this study, the questionnaire instrument, observations and focus group discussions were used to achieve methodological triangulation.

Cohen *et al.* (2011) view triangulation as the desire to map out and, adequately explain the complexity and richness of human behaviour by studying it from more than a single viewpoint. This promotes data validation by employing cross verification using two or more sources. The motive of triangulation in this study was to ensure the credibility, reliability and validity of the research findings. Furthermore, triangulation enabled me to get a balanced and detailed picture of the phenomenon under investigation.

The gist of the matter is that no single research instrument can provide totally reliable or accurate data to a particular study. Therefore, I used triangulation so that various research instruments would cross-validate and augment each other in an attempt to address their shortcomings. For the purpose of this study, I used questionnaires, focus

group discussions and observations to ensure the triangulation of the collected data. This is also in line with the dictates of the mixed-methods approach to research.

3.8 PILOT STUDIES

An excellent strategy for research should be underpinned by careful planning and a pilot study is often an integral component of this strategy. Haralambos and Holborn (1990: 227) contend that a pilot study is "… a small-scale preliminary study conducted before the main research in order to check the feasibility or to improve the design of the research". A pilot study in this context was used as the pre-testing or "trying out" of a specific instrument of research (Baker, 1994). In line with this, I carried out pilot studies in an effort to validate the questionnaire and focus group discussion instruments.

The carrying out of pilot studies is supported by Bailey (1987), who says that if interviews or questionnaires are used, the questions may be subjected to a test to find out if they make sense to the respondents, they are capable of producing the sort of data sought and they are not ambiguous. Thus, the two research instruments were administered to a few respondents so that their flaws were identified and corrected. The pre-testing of the research instruments facilitated their refinement and development.

The pilot study was carried out on members of the relevant population, but not those who were to form part of the final sample. This is so, because in the words of Holloway (1997), the pilot study may have a significant impact on the behaviour of research participants if they have already been exposed to the research study.

Pilot studies were used in this research study because they offer numerous benefits to any research study. One of the merits of rolling out a pilot study is that it might give advance warning about whether proposed instruments are unsuitable or too complex. De Vaus (1993: 54), cautions that, "do not take the risk, pilot test first". Thus, this demonstrates that pilot studies are instrumental in the development and verification of the adequacy of instruments for research. They also help in improving the internal validity of research instruments.

It is advisable to note that pilot studies have a number of shortcomings. They may mislead the researcher into making wrong predictions or assumptions based on pilot

study data. More so, although results of pilot studies have the capacity to give an indication of the anticipated magnitude of the rate of response in the actual survey, they cannot always guarantee this due to the fact because they lack a statistical foundation and, most of the time, are premised on small numbers (Barker, 1994). To make the matter worse, pilot studies require funding which is a problem for many research studies in third world countries such as Zimbabwe. Therefore, having considered these shortcomings, it can be said that the execution of a pilot study is not a guarantee for success in the actual study but it does enhance the chances for success; hence, the use of a pilot study in this research study.

The pilot studies were carried out in one district with twenty teachers who were not part of the final sample.

3.9 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

In the quantitative phase of the study, the respondents at the same institution were brought together and requested to complete the questionnaires as individuals while in a chosen venue in the researcher's presence. This was done to make sure that the answers given were not group responses but individual responses. "This format is convenient for the researcher, and high response rate is assured. If respondents do not understand any specific question, they can ask for clarification" (Bhattacherjee, 2012: 74). Group administered questionnaires helped me to personalise the questionnaire instrument in line with the paradigm of social constructivism.

All 200 questionnaires for the History teachers were completed giving a 100 per cent return rate. I was able to attain this 100 per cent return rate because I administered the questionnaires in person. Furthermore, the questionnaire was made up of items that did not demand correct answers but the personal opinions of the respondents. Such question items did not embarrass the respondents as their answers were not to be judged as right or wrong but just a mere reflection of their perceptions and experiences. More so, for all the question items, the respondents were simply asked to select an answer from a given set of choices. The questionnaire was also not to long as it was made up of 46 question items. Therefore, I believe that all these well-thought out

considerations combined forces to encourage all the 200 History teachers that were requested to respond to the questionnaire instrument to cooperate positively.

In the qualitative phase of the study, 13 History teachers, previously included in the questionnaire sample, were interviewed through focus group discussions. These 13 History teachers were drawn from three schools that were purposively sampled. The basis for the selection of these schools was the consideration that they had adequate numbers of History teachers necessary to constitute focus group discussions. This is supported by Creswell (2012) who posits that focus group discussions should be made up of respondents ranging from four to six. The first school had five History teachers, the second one had four History teachers and the last one had four History teachers as well. A relatively small sample was thus chosen in order to allow a detailed treatment of the data gathered through focus group discussions. In a bid to encourage research participants to comfortably give the researcher objective responses, the respondents were told that the information provided by them was to be handled in a confidential manner.

In order to complement data that was collected through focus group discussions, I mounted two observations per school, choosing representative activities such as beginning and end of term meetings. As I was conducting my observations, I wrote field notes on the observed issues. An observation schedule was used to guide the researcher in his work. According to Cohen *et al.* (2011), the use of recording schedules prepared beforehand combats the problem of selective or faulty memory, which usually happens when there is a time gap between the recording of the event and the time when it was observed.

3.10 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The collected data was analysed using a blend of quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis, as per tradition of the mixed-methods design. Phase one of the study yielded quantitative data. Quantitative data were analysed using statistics. In order to reduce a plenty of data into manageable proportions, they were combined into a few categories or they were reduced by computing into a small number of statistics that then described the main traits of the sample or population. This helped the findings of the

study to be understood. Labovitz and Hagerdon (1976) also subscribe to this way of data analysis. According to the duo, most of the time, social and educational researchers are faced with enormous amounts of data that has to be considerably reduced to some statistical measures prior to meaningful interpretation. Statistics or statistical measures are generally divided into descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

I used mainly descriptive statistics with a bit of inferential statistics to analyse data. Descriptive statistics is the branch of statistics that is most often used to analyse quantitative data. According to Lockhart (1998), descriptive statistics is used to describe data. It focuses on frequency distribution, measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion and measures of association. In understanding descriptive statistics, it is important to note that this branch of statistics is used to calculate the characteristics of the available data. Thus, descriptive statistics was used to describe the data that I gathered. For the first phase of this study, a Likert scale was used to collect and analyse the data and provide frequencies, means and standard deviations on teachers' perceptions and understandings of instructional leadership. Data analysis was done using the SPSS software.

In the qualitative phase of the study, the qualitative, non-numerical data that were gathered through focus group discussions and observations were analysed using qualitative methods. Observational fieldnotes and focus group transcripts all require the use of qualitative data analysis techniques. Miles and Huberman (1994) assert that qualitative methods of data analysis are best used where an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon is required. This is the greatest strength of qualitative procedures of analysing data. The approach reveals the themes, categories, patterns and relationships embedded in the given data. The proponents of qualitative procedures of analysing data argue that the perspective is inductive in its approach. It uses detailed readings of primary data to deduce themes, patterns and concepts. Based on this, it can be said that the greatest advantage of qualitative data analysis is that it yields grounded theory. However, the approach can consume time and it may be challenging to develop a proper coding scheme which is at the centre of this approach.

The analytic tool used for analysing qualitative data in this study is the thematic networks approach. According to Attride-Stirling (2001), thematic networks are web-like designs that summarise the key themes embedded in a given text. The approach has been commended for providing a practical and effective way of carrying out data analysis. It should be noted that once a network of themes has been put in place, it serves as a rallying point and an illustrative instrument for the text interpretation, facilitating disclosure for the researcher and understanding for the reader. Thus, this approach deserves a special place in the analysis of qualitative data in the second phase of this study.

Using thematic analysis, themes that are salient at various levels of the text can be unearthed. After their disclosure, the themes can be structured and depicted. Thematic networks facilitate the identification and organisation of basic, organising and global themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001). A category of basic themes constitutes an organising theme and in turn, a category of organising themes constitutes a global theme. The themes are classified in terms of the underlying story they are telling. Therefore, the tool allows the breaking up of a text with the intention of identifying different groups of themes and their relationships. This has the merit of facilitating reduction of data, the process of displaying data and the verification and drawing of conclusions.

Bryman and Burgess (1994) outline the guiding steps followed by the researcher in analysing qualitative data. The steps can be summarised as the coding of material, the identification of themes, construction of thematic networks, description and exploration of thematic networks and the summarisation and interpretation of the themes. The data from focus group interviews was transcribed into texts that can be coded and categorised into various themes for developing the narrative accounts that explain the observations and descriptive statistical data.

Qualitative research is famous for yielding verbal type of descriptions that are mainly derived from interviews and observations (Gay *et al.,* 2011). Therefore, in this research study, I analysed the focus group discussions and observational notes to derive themes and patterns. Quotations and examples were used to describe and illustrate the emerging themes and patterns capturing personal experiences and perceptions of the

respondents. Some of the focus group discussions' responses and observational field notes were presented in the form of percentiles, tables and figures.

3.11 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

According to Last (2001), validity is a concept that is used to describe if an assessment tool or measurement process actually measures what it is intended to gauge. Cohen *et al.* (2011) support this line of thinking as they, assert that traditionally validity has been conceptualised as an act of demonstrating that a specific research instrument is capable of measuring what it is purported to measure so that the resultant account correctly mirrors those features it is intended to describe, explain or theorise. According to Cohen *et al.* (2011), in present times, validity has acquired new dimensions in qualitative research. It is associated with honest, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and objectivity of the research. Therefore, in a bid to ensure validity, the questionnaire and focus group question items were subjected to pilot studies. This facilitated the refinement and improvement of the concerned question items.

In research, validity comprises two critical components, namely internal and external validity. Internal validity is aimed at establishing the capacity of the research instruments to measure what they were intended to measure. For this study, pilot studies were executed to take care of the notion of internal validity. Conversely, external validity focuses on the generalisability and transferability of the findings of the research to other groups. To ensure external validity, the sample in the initial phase of the study was selected using probabilistic sampling procedures.

The concept of reliability dwells on the repeatability of findings (Creswell, 2012). For a piece of research to prove that it is reliable, it is expected to show that if it was to be carried out on a similar group of participants in a comparable setting, it would produce similar results. In essence, reliability has to do with how dependable, consistent and replicable the research results are, over groups of participants, time and instruments. I ensured the reliability of the questionnaire instrument used in the quantitative phase of the study by pilot testing it and consequently all possible errors and ambiguities were eliminated. The respondents were also exposed to the same research questions.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1993), in qualitative studies, reliability is viewed as a relationship between what the researcher captures as authentic data and what really transpired in the research context from where the data is recorded. Therefore, what it implies is that for qualitative research to be reliable, it must focus on the degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of coverage. Therefore, to ensure reliability in the second phase of the study, member checking was conducted. "Member checking is a process in which the researchers ask one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account" (Creswell, 2012: 259). I asked five of the respondents to comment on whether the findings portrayed a true picture of their input, whether the explanation was adequate and acceptable and if the interpretations were fair and truly representative in character.

The final report was also subjected to external audit. Under the process of external audit, the researcher may invite an individual not associated with the research study to carry out a vigorous scrutiny of the study and make a report on its strengths and shortcomings (Creswell, 2012). I hired a PhD holder to review the study at its conclusion. The observations noted by the external auditor were taken into consideration and were used in fine-tuning the report before its submission.

3.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As the researcher, I took full responsibility for ethically conducting this research. Research ethics were given adequate consideration. Research ethics refers to "the moral principles guiding research, from its inception through to compilation and publication of results and beyond…" (Tendler, 2013: 18). Research ethics are applicable to all forms of research and this current research is not an exception since it deals with human participants.

This study acknowledged that participants have a right to consent to participate, confidentiality, privacy, security and safety (European Commission, 2013; Shamoo & Resnik, 2009). The participants were informed about their rights to decide whether to participate or not, or even to stop participating at any given moment during the course of study for any or no apparent reason. These rights were provided for through the

consent form given and signed by the participants to indicate their voluntary and informed agreement.

Before the participants completed the consent forms, I adequately explained to them the goals of the research study under consideration. The participants were briefed of the process in which they were to be involved, including the rationale for their involvement, how the research findings were to be used and to whom were they to be reported (BERA, 2011). The participants were also fully informed of the consequences of their consent. Therefore, it can be noted that the research participants were engaged based on voluntary informed consent.

According to BERA (2011), the researcher is obligated to make sure that the individual research participants are entitled to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. In line with that, the identity of the research participants was not divulged to guarantee the security, privacy and confidentiality of the provided information. I made a commitment not to disclose any given information from any of the research participants in a manner that may lead to the identification of that individual or enable anyone to trace that respondent (Cohen *et al.,* 2011). The anonymity of the questionnaire respondents was protected by assigning numbers to the returned questionnaire instruments. I took heed of the advice by Creswell (2012), of regarding all the data gathered as confidential and not sharing it with individuals who are not part of the study. Conversely, I did not deny the participants' rights to be identified with the publication of this thesis if they so wish.

Furthermore, I took it upon myself to ensure that the research was conducted with honesty; integrity and respect for intellectual property (Resnik, 2011). I tried to the best of my ability to report honestly on data, methods procedures and findings emanating from the study. I seriously guarded against fabricating, falsifying and deliberately misinterpreting data. The principle of integrity was upheld as the researcher walked the talk by keeping agreements and promises made to the research participants. The research was conducted in the spirit of openness as the researcher shared information, ideas and findings with the research participants and welcomed criticism. Some of the

participants were asked to read and verify the information they supplied before the compilation and publication of this thesis.

According to Shamoo and Resnik (2009), the researcher should be objective and strive to avoid bias at all times while interpreting and analysing data. As such, I made a spirited attempt to be as objective as possible by following clearly laid down procedures of data analysis.

I applied for ethical clearance from the Ethical Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State and the clearance was granted (Ethical clearance number: UFS-HSD 2016/100). Permission to conduct the study was requested from the relevant authorities where the study was to be conducted as stipulated by the ethical protocols of the university. According to Creswell (2012: 169), "obtaining permission before starting to collect data is not only a part of the informed consent process but also an ethical practice". Therefore, I did not bulldoze my way into the research sites without prior permission from the Permanent Secretary and relevant school officials.

I made sure that I minimised the disruption of the research sites through my presence by fully explaining to the research participants the reason why I was attending their departmental meetings at their schools. "By obtaining permission and clearly communicating the purpose of the study before you collect data, you can lessen the reservations some individuals may have about your presence in their educational setting" (Creswell, 2012: 170).

3.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the research design and methodology. The chapter started by giving an overview of the research approach adopted and the design employed. It then examined the target population, sampling designs and procedures, the research instruments and data collection and analysis procedures. A treatment of triangulation and pilot studies related issues was also made. The chapter briefly gave a synopsis of how the researcher paid special attention to the critical concepts of research validity and reliability and the notion of research ethics. The next chapter is going to focus on data presentation, analysis and interpretation.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The main thrust of this chapter is the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the findings of the study. The data presented were collected through the questionnaire; focus group discussion and observation instruments. Since a mixed-methods research approach was employed to explore History teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership, the presentation, analysis and interpretation of findings has been categorised into two sections. The first section focuses on the analysis of quantitative data that were gathered using the questionnaire instrument during the first phase of the study. In the spirit of the mixed-methods approach, the second section delves in to the presentation of qualitative data collected using observations and focus group discussions. An attempt is then made to consolidate and relate the quantitative and qualitative findings. During the course of data presentation, analysis and interpretation, reference to the research problem, sub-problems and the reviewed literature is made.

4.2 DATA FROM THE QUANTITATIVE PHASE

The quantitative phase of the study addressed the first research question:

- What are the teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understandings of instructional leadership in Zimbabwe?

4.3 DEMOGRAPHICS AND ORGANISATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE POPULATION FOR THE QUANTITATIVE PHASE

In total, 200 participants responded to the questionnaires. The first part of which sought to generate the demographical and organisational data of the participants. An analysis of this data gives the context of the perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership that are represented in this study. Figure 4.1 displays the frequency counts on the three demographic variables namely qualification, gender and age. It has to be noted that the y-axis represents raw frequencies and not percentage frequencies.
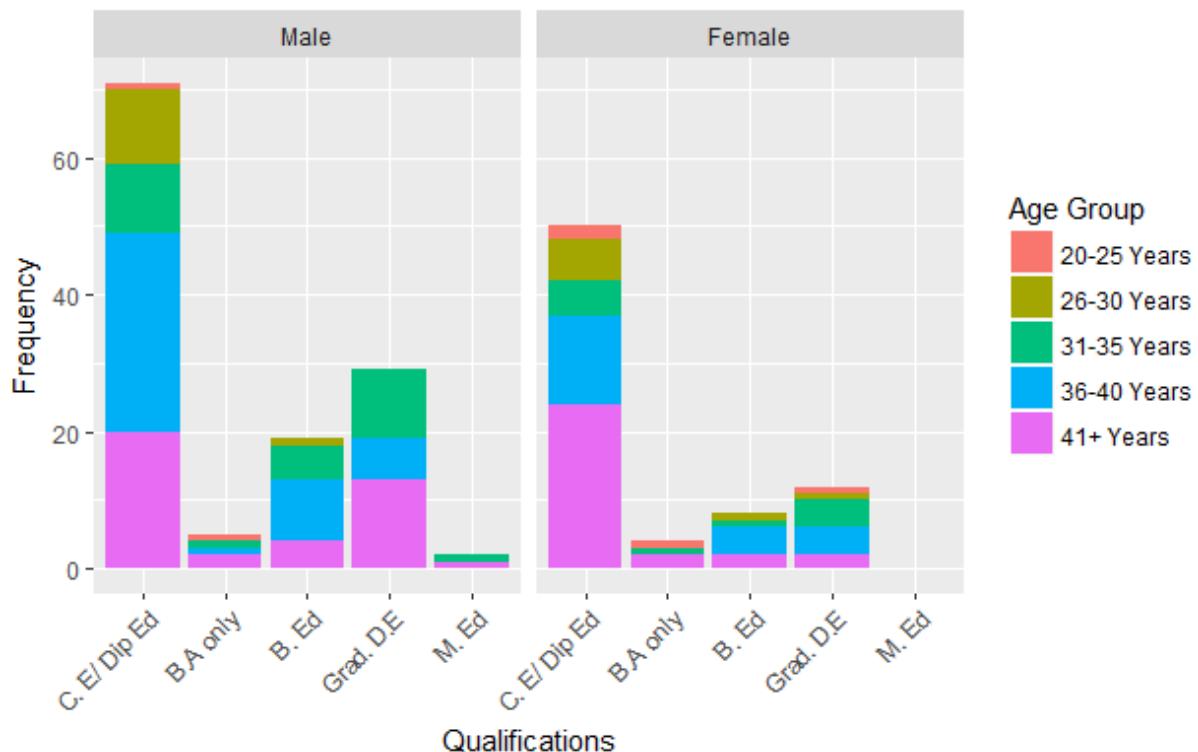
Figure 4.1 Distribution of respondents by qualifications, gender and age

Figure 4.1 shows that the sampled respondents have different qualifications, ranging from a certificate or a Diploma in Education (60.5%); Bachelor of Arts only (4.5%); Bachelor of Education (13.5%); Graduate Diploma in Education (20.5%) and Master of Education (1%). These statistics suggest that most of the respondents in the study were holders of either a certificate or a diploma in education, which is the entry-level qualification for teachers in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, it appears that the majority of teachers (95.5%) have qualifications in education. Only 4.5% of the teachers have a Bachelor of Arts degree without a teaching qualification. The inclusion of teachers with different qualifications was justified on grounds that all the teachers, irrespective of their qualifications, experience the concept of instructional leadership.

Figure 4.1 reveals that for the holders of a certificate or a Diploma in Education, who represent 60.5% of the total sample, males constituted 35.5% and females 25%. For

males and females, most of the holders of the entry level qualification were 36 years and above with a cumulative percentage of 24.5% for males and 18.5% for females as compared to 11% and 6.5% for males and females respectively for those that were 35 years and below. Therefore, judging by their age, most of the respondents that were involved in the study who had a Certificate or a Diploma in Education were quite mature.

Most of the respondents who were holders of the Bachelor of Arts Degree without a teaching qualification who represented 4.5% of the total sample were 30 years and above, 2% being males and 1.5% being females. Only one male teacher (0.5%) and one female teacher (0.5%) in this category were below the age of 30. Thus, this reflected the general distribution of teachers who hold the Bachelor of Arts Degree only by age in Zimbabwe. Most of the teachers in this qualification category are above 30 years because the government stopped recruiting teachers without formal teaching qualifications approximately five years ago. The few teachers who are being employed without formal qualifications are usually employed by private colleges or by public schools, as additional teachers and they are not on the government pay roll.

Figure 4.1 further shows that for the Bachelor of Education degree category, which represented 13.5% of the sample population, 9.5% were males and 4% were females. On the males' side, 9% out of 9.5% of the holders of BEd are above the age of 30. Only one male respondent (0.5%) was in the 26-30 age category. On the other hand, for the female respondents, 3% out of the 4% of the teachers with this qualification were 36 years old and above. Only 1% of the female holders of BEd were below 36 years, with one (0.5%) respondent in the 26-30 years' age group and the other respondent (0.5%) in the 31-35 years' age group. This reflected the general distribution of holders of the Bachelor of Education Degree by gender and age in Zimbabwe. Before the recent introduction of the Bachelor of Education Degree for Post-Advanced level students, enrolment into the Bachelor of Education Degree programme was a preserve for the holders of a Certificate or a Diploma in Education with a minimum of two years' experience in the teaching service. This explains why most of the BEd holders are above 30 years.

The distribution of the holders of the Graduate Diploma in Education by gender and qualification show that out of the 20.5% of the total sample population who were holders of this qualification, 14.5% were males and 6% were females. All the males (14.5%) and 5% of the females were above 30 years. Only two female respondents (1%) were below 30 years. This research finding could be taken to reflect the general situation in the country where most of the teachers who are holders of the Graduate Diploma in Education are above 30 years. The qualification in question is a postgraduate one. Furthermore, only teachers with degrees that include a subject taught in secondary schools with not less than two years of teaching experience are considered for the programme. Thus, this explains why the majority of the holders of the Graduate Diploma in Education were above the age of 30 years.

The distribution of the respondents by qualifications, gender and age shows that only two respondents (1%) were holders of the Master of Education Degree. These two respondents were both males. One of the two respondents (0.5%) was in the 31-35 years' category and the other one (0.5%) was above 41years. This is the expected age range for the holders of the Master of Education Degree who would have gone through an undergraduate qualification before enrolling for a Master's degree.

Overall, Figure 4.1 shows that out of the two hundred sampled secondary school History teachers, 63 percent were males and 37 percent were females. These statistics are skewed in favour of male teachers as they clearly show that more male teachers were sampled for the study compared to female teachers. Given that the participants for the quantitative phase of the study were drawn from schools that were randomly selected, both male and female History teachers from the participating schools had equal chance of becoming part of the sample population for the study. Therefore, the disparity in male and female representation in the sample may suggest that there may be more males than females in the true population.

Figure 4.2 below shows the frequency count on the demographic variable of leadership experience distributed by gender and teaching experience.

Figure 4.2: Respondents' leadership experience by gender and teaching experience

The above figure shows that only seven teachers out of the 200 (3.5%) had leadership experience and 193 teachers (96.5%) had no leadership experience. For the male and female respondents, no teacher with leadership experience had less than six years in terms of History teaching experience. Seven of the teachers (3.5%) with leadership experience are males and only one (0.5%) is female. The males in the teaching experience categories of 6-10, 11-15 and 16-20 are each represented by one responded (0.5%). Half of the males with leadership experience (1.5%) had 20 years and above of History teaching experience. The only 1 female (0.5%) with leadership experience was in the group of teachers with 11-15 years of History teaching experience. For the teachers without leadership experience, 120 (60%) were males and 73 (36.5%) were females. This is quite reflective of the situation in most schools in

Zimbabwe where teachers who had the opportunity to hold leadership positions have considerable teaching experience and are usually men.

This information is important in the sense that teachers who have been in positions of leadership may be expected to be more knowledgeable on the practice of instructional leadership, although this might not be the case at times. For the current study, this information was vital in assisting the researcher to ascertain whether teachers' prior leadership experience has a bearing on how they perceive and experience the practice of instructional leadership.

Figure 4.2 reveals that 171 (85.5%) of the teachers involved in the study had more than five years in the teaching service; only a paltry figure of 29 (14.5%) had 0-5 years in the teaching field. Of the 85.5% of the teachers with more than five years in the teaching service, 64 (32%) were females and 107(53.5%) were males. The results indicate that the majority of the respondents were experienced classroom practitioners who would be expected to be well versed in more acceptable instructional leadership practices. For this current study, all things being equal, it could be anticipated therefore that the teachers involved would be able to clearly articulate issues on instructional leadership considering their vast experience in the teaching service. Thus, the chosen sample was well suited for the purposes of the study, viz. to explore Zimbabwean teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership. This information is vital since limited experience is considered as a variable that limits one's exposure to more acceptable professional and instructional practices (Al-Mahdy & Al-Kiyumi, 2015).

Figure 4.3 displays the frequency counts on the three demographic variables namely number of teachers, pupils and school class.
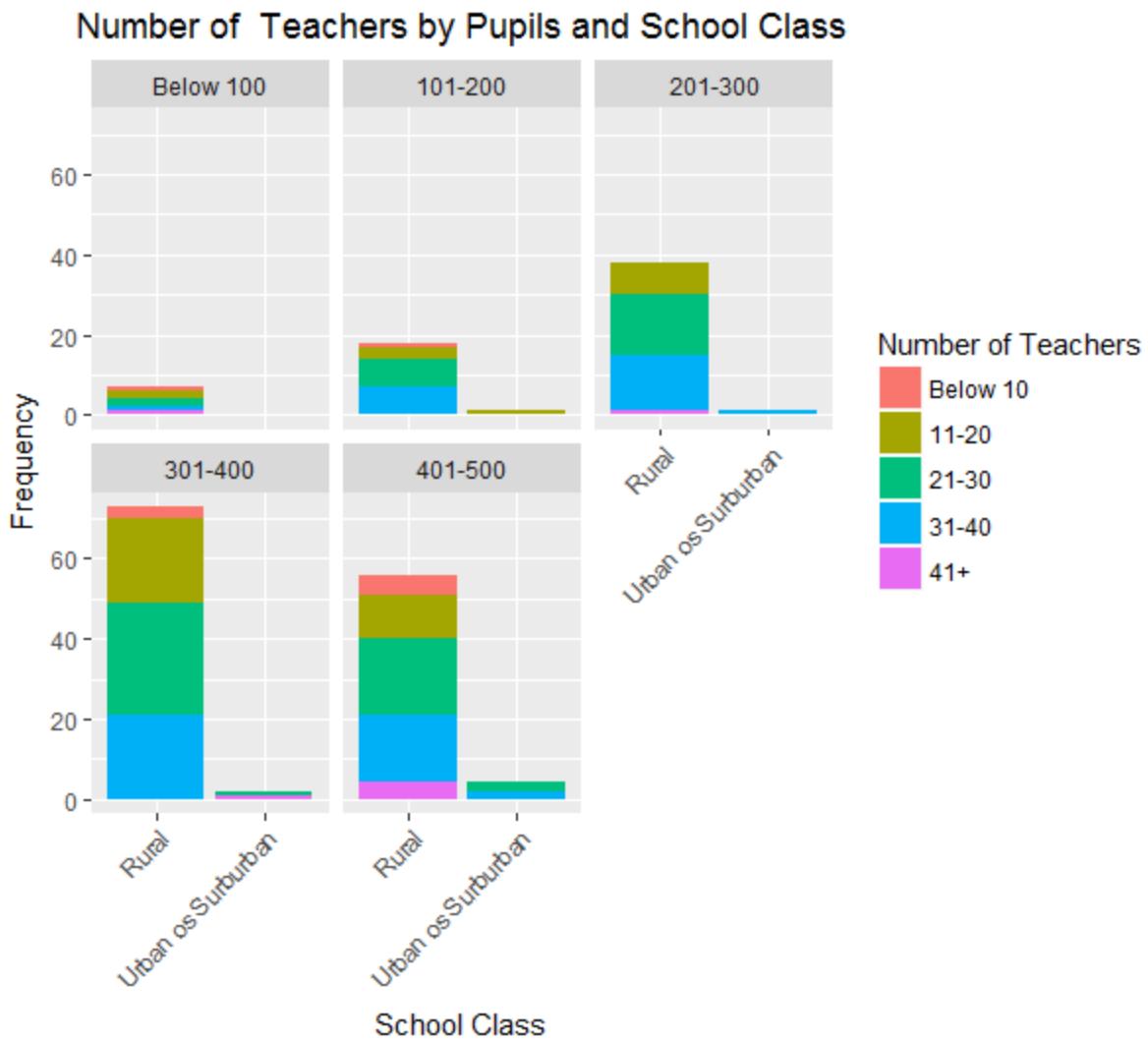
Figure 4.3: Number of teachers by pupils and school class

The above figure reveals that the majority of the respondents, 192 out of 200 (96%), were from secondary schools that are classified as rural. Only eight respondents (4%) were from urban/suburban schools. Thus, given that the schools were randomly selected, it suggests that the province of Mashonaland Central, which was the focus of this study, is predominantly rural with limited urban centres. The inclusion of teachers from schools of different background or classification was done to facilitate exploration into whether the central phenomenon was context specific.

Figure 4.3 above shows that the respondents for the study were drawn from secondary schools that belong to different categories in terms of staff establishment. The majority of the respondents belong to the schools with an establishment of more than 10 teachers. It was critical for this study to establish the number of teachers at the schools from where the respondents were drawn since it is believed that the practice of instructional leadership is partly influenced by the size of the school in terms of the number of teachers (Bellibas, 2016).

Figure 4.3 also shows that the respondents were stationed at schools with a population of learners ranging from 101 to above 500, with the majority of the respondents being at schools with a student population that ranges from 301 to above 500. The researcher found it necessary for this study to establish the number of learners at the schools of the respondents since it is believed that the practice of instructional leadership may be partly influenced by the size of the school (Bellibas, 2016). The size of the school is measured in terms of the number of learners and teachers at the given school.

4.4 ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS
4.4.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 1
The findings in this section were geared towards answering the question:

- What are the teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understandings of instructional leadership in Zimbabwe?

The three leadership dimensions postulated by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) were used as the basis for constructing the question items that were used to explore the study's first research question. These three leadership dimensions are "defining the school's mission, managing the school's teaching programme and creating a conducive learning climate" (Hallinger, 2009: 3). The survey used a five-point Likert scales, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". To analyse the data, the Likert scale was coded as follows:

- 1= Strongly agree
- 2= Agree

- 3= Neutral
- 4=Disagree
- 5=Strongly disagree

Percentiles, means, standard deviations and correlations were calculated to render the data manageable and easy to analyse.

4.4.1.1 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE INSTRUMENT

The survey instrument used for the study was subjected to a reliability test using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. According to Pallant (2005), the Cronbach's coefficient statistic provides an indication of the average correlation among all the items that make up the scale and values range from 0 to1, with higher values indicating reliability and lower values indicating an unreliable scale. The same line of thinking is echoed by Cohen *et al.* (2011: 639–640) who assert that,

> Cronbach's alpha is a measure of the internal consistency and calculates a coefficient of reliability that can lie between 0 and 1 with the guidelines of > 0.90 considered to be a very highly reliable score; 0.80-0.90 as highly reliable; 0.70-0.79 reliable; 0.60-0.69 minimally reliable and < 0.60 should be considered unacceptable.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the question items in each of the sections of the survey instrument used for the study was calculated to produce the results shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Reliability test for the survey instrument

Section	Cronbach's alpha based on standardised items	Number of items
Teachers' conceptualisation of instructional leadership	0.866	12
Defining the school's vision, mission and goals	0.719	10
Management of teaching and learning programme	0.785	13

Developing a conducive learning climate	0.854	11

Table 4.1 shows that the first and last themes have coefficients between 080-0.90, which are considered as highly reliable. The second and third themes have each a coefficient between 0.70-0.79 which is regarded as reliable. Thus, the survey instrument used for the study was reliable and consistent. As noted by Creswell (2012), reliability is the extent to which a measuring procedure leads to the same results when repeated. This suggests that if the research instrument (questionnaire) used for this study is to be used repeatedly in different settings, reliable results will be obtained.

4.4.1.2 TEACHERS CONCEPTUALISATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

This sub-section focuses on analysing the responses to the first twelve question items in the questionnaire, which are aimed at reflecting on teachers' conceptualisation of instructional leadership. The researcher adopted a step-by-step approach in analysing and interpreting the responses that were given by the respondents using mainly the mean, standard deviation (S.D.) and the measure of skewness. The mean is commonly known as the arithmetic average and uses every score in the distribution; hence, it is usually representative of every score. The standard deviation was used to determine whether the scores are near or far away from the mean. Skewness was used to establish whether the responses of the respondents were positively or negatively skewed.

Figure 4.4 below shows the statistics pertaining to History teachers' perception on which category of leaders should execute instructional leadership functions in secondary schools.
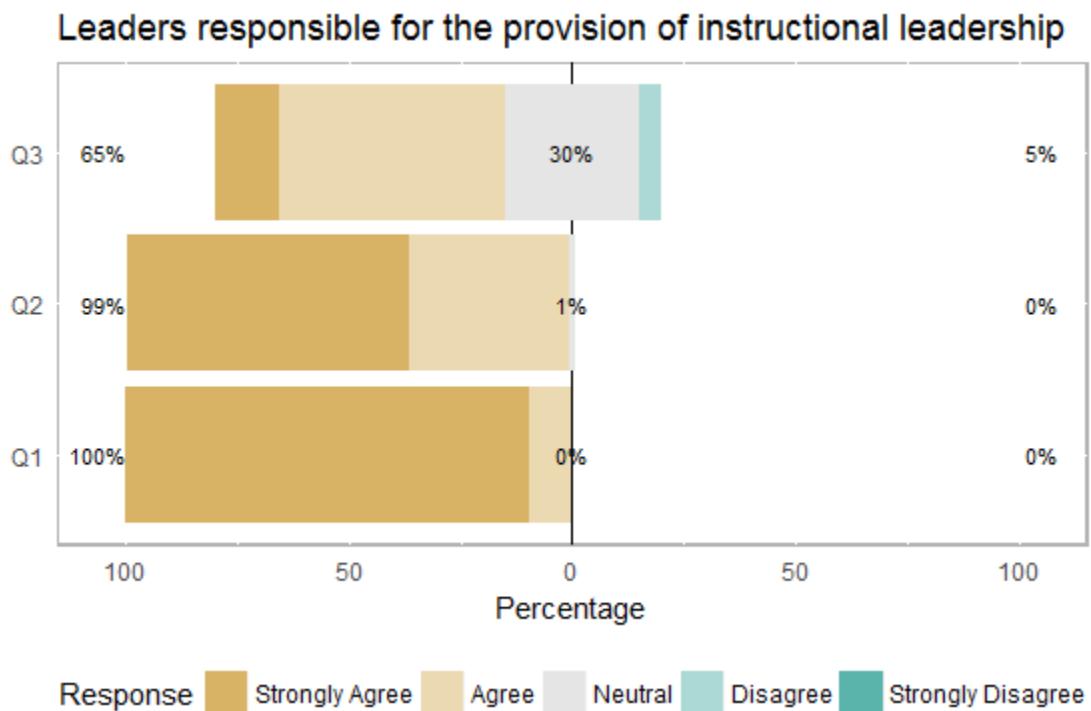
Figure 4.4: Leaders responsible for the provision of instructional leadership

Figure 4.4 shows the distribution of the responses to question 1, 2 and 3, which is Q1, Q2 and Q3 respectively. The distribution was visualised choosing neutral as a centre of the distribution in order to determine if the respondents' responses to questions are skewed towards strongly agree or strongly disagree. Responses for question Q1 in figure 4.4, which address the item, "school heads are expected to provide leadership aimed at improving teaching and learning in their schools" show that 100% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposition that school heads are supposed to provide leadership which is aimed at improving teaching and learning. Thus, this is further understood as an indication that the perceptions of the sampled History teachers about the leadership role of the school head is to improve teaching and learning. The History teachers' perception concurs with the argument of Al-Mahdy and

Al-Kiyumi (2015), that the school heads are instrumental in the school's bid to attain high quality instruction and enhanced learner achievement.

Respondents were asked in question 2 whether it is good for the school head to share leadership functions related to teaching and learning with other school leaders in designated positions of authority. Responses to that question suggests that 99% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree with the suggestion that it is good for the school head to share leadership functions related to teaching and learning with other school leaders in designated positions of authority. It is also notable that only 1% of respondents are uncertain, with the rest (99%) either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposition. Therefore, based on this, the results could be understood to mean that instructional leadership is considered by most of the teachers not as a solo effort, which is the prerogative of the school head only. This History teachers' belief agrees with the assertion of Marks and Printy (2003), that instructional leaders have been broadened to encompass others besides the school head, such as deputy heads and heads of department.

Responses to question 3, "Teachers who are not in formal positions of authority should engage in leadership activities within the school", demonstrates that most of the respondents (65%) agree with the concept of having teachers who are not in formal positions of authority engaging in instructional leadership activities within the school. Of the remaining 35%, 30% of the respondents were not sure and took a neutral position and the other 5% disagreed with the issue. Therefore, although quite a reasonable number of the respondents decided to remain neutral, the results emphasise the notion that the idea of involving informal leaders in instructional leadership enjoys support from most of the participants who were involved in this study. This perception shared by most of the History teachers is consistent with the argument of Sun *et al.* (2013) that instructional leadership also involves informal leaders such as teacher leaders who are central in assisting their colleagues in the implementation of the newly introduced practices in schools.

Respondents were asked in Q4 to comment on whether teachers should be encouraged to make decisions concerning teaching and learning. The details are presented in Figure 4.5 below.
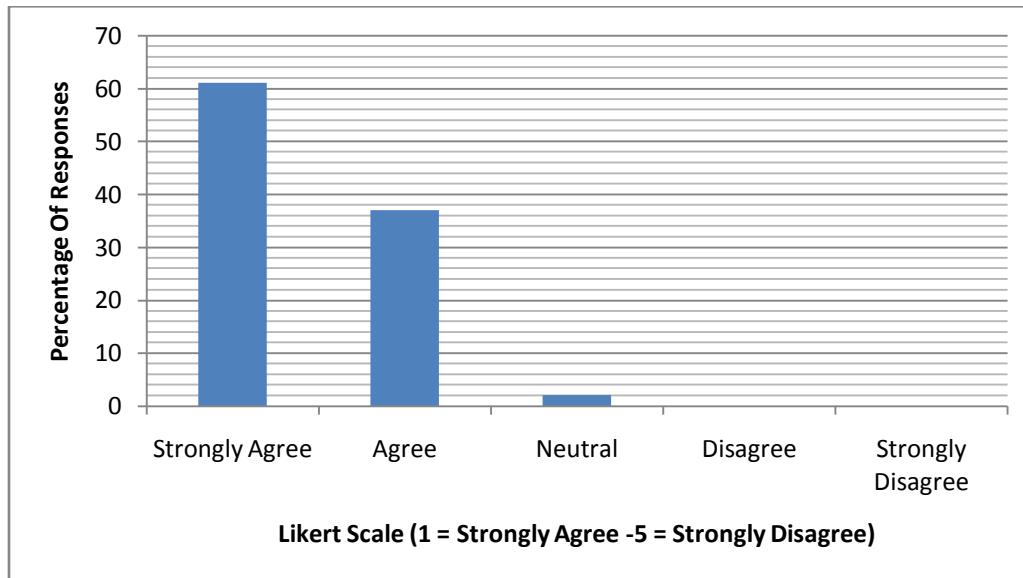
Figure 5: Teachers' participation in making teaching and learning decisions

From Figure 4.5 it can be noted that 98% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree with the idea of encouraging teachers to make decisions concerning teaching and learning. Only 2% of the respondents decided to be neutral on the issue. Based on these results, it could be discerned that the notion of encouraging teacher participation in making teaching and learning decisions enjoys widespread support from almost all the History teachers. Similarly, Bas (2012) and Bellibas (2016) argue that teachers should be actively involved in making decisions pertaining to teaching and learning since they are the arbiters of classroom practice.

Participants were asked questions aimed at establishing their perceptions, beliefs and understandings on administrative issues and the improvement of teaching practice. The details are presented in Figure 4.6 below.

Administrative & Improvement of teaching practice

Q7	16%	24%	60%
Q6	79%	2%	18%
Q8	74%	10%	15%
Q5	46%	54%	0%

Response ▉ Strongly Agree ▉ Agree ▢ Neutral ▉ Disagree ▉ Strongly Disagree
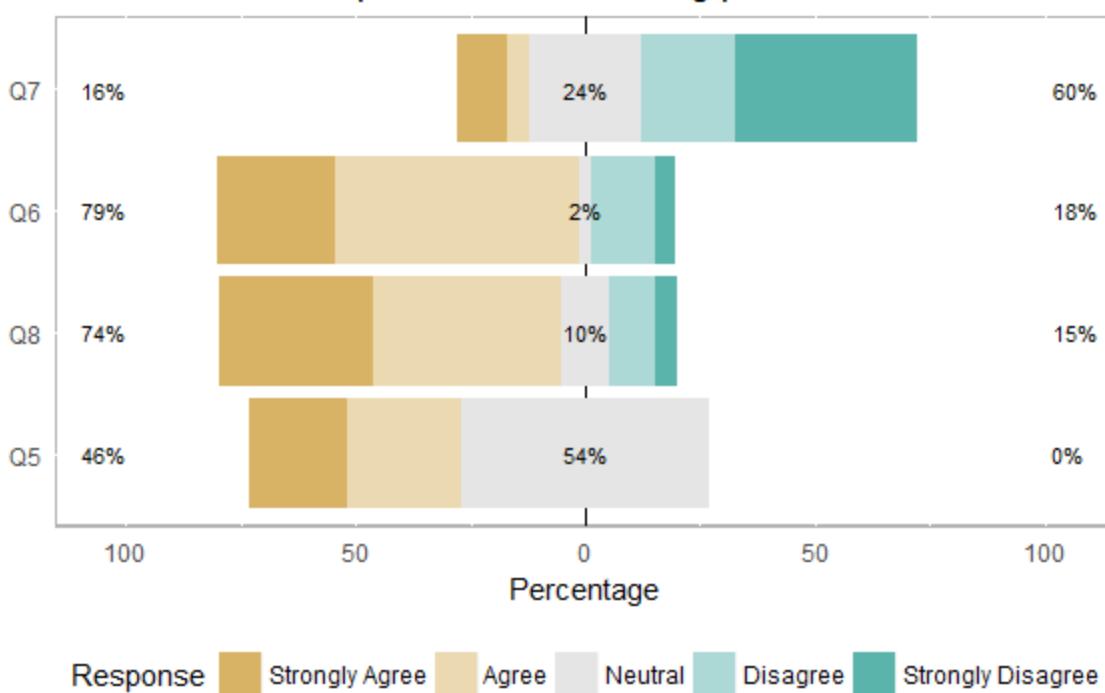
Figure 4.6: Administrative issues and improvement of teaching practice

Figure 4.6 shows the distribution of the responses to questions 5 to 8 that is, Q5 to Q8 respectively. The distribution was conceived selecting neutral as a midpoint of the distribution in order to determine the extent to which the responses given by the respondents are skewed towards strongly agree or strongly disagree. Responses for question 5: "It is essential to encourage teachers to share their practice and use feedback from each other to improve their practice", shows a cumulative value of 46% for strongly agree and agree responses to the notion that it is essential to encourage teachers to share their practice and use feedback from each other to improve their practice. Fifty-four per cent of the respondents were not sure and took a neutral position. This shows that although slightly below half of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed, slightly above 50% of them were uncertain on the issue. Therefore, the findings could be understood as an indication that the notion of encouraging teachers to share their practice and use feedback from each other to improve their practice is not well supported by a substantial number of teachers.

Responses to question 6: "the school head should focus more on administrative and managerial roles than on instructional role", reveals that the majority of respondents (79%) either strongly agreed or agreed with the proposition that the school head should focus more on administrative and managerial roles than on instructional roles. Only 19% disputed the idea of the school head focusing more on administrative and managerial roles than instructional roles. This History teachers' perception, which emphasises the school head's administrative and managerial responsibilities at the expense of instructional functions, does not concur with the argument of Jenkins (2009) that the school heads should put teaching and learning on top of their priority list. It could be argued that the Zimbabwean teachers believe that the school head should focus more on administrative and managerial roles than instructional roles because this is what is happening in their schools. As noted in a study conducted by Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013), most of the school heads in Zimbabwe engage in issues such as financial management, sport and ground development at the expense of instructional leadership. However, it should be noted that the teachers are not saying that the school head should not focus on instructional leadership. Their perception is that the school head should focus more on administrative and managerial tasks than on instructional leadership functions. Therefore, there is no contradiction between this and their belief shown in Q1 that schools heads should play a part in the provision of instructional leadership.

Respondents' reaction to the proposition in question 7 that: "it is possible for the school head to strike a balance between administrative, managerial and instructional roles", shows a cumulative value of 16% for either agreeing or strongly agreeing responses as compared to a cumulative value of 60% for disagreeing and strongly disagreeing. A sizeable number of respondents (24%) were uncertain with the proposal. Thus, based on this, it could be argued that more than half of the respondents are of the perception that it is almost practically impossible for the school head to strike a balance between administrative and managerial tasks on the one hand and instructional roles on the other hand. This perception contradicts the proposition of Kruger (2003) and Mestry

(2013), that school heads need to attempt to strike a balance between administrative and managerial tasks on one side and instructional roles on the other side.

From figure 4.6 it can be noted that 74% of the respondents to question item 8: "the middle level school leaders such as heads of department should focus more on instruction", either strongly agreed or agreed with this proposition. Only 15% of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed. These results could be understood as indicating that most of the respondents perceive that middle level leaders should focus more on instructional leadership than managerial and administrative roles. The History teachers' perception of the need for middle level managers such as heads of department to concentrate more on instructional functions compared to administrative and managerial tasks concurs with the observation of Marishane (2011) and Taole (2013). According to Marishane (2011) and Taole (2013), most of the principals tend to focus more on tasks related to administration and management, while they delegate instructional leadership to other players in the administration hierarchy such as heads of department.

Table 4.2 below gives the means and standard deviations of the responses to question items 1-8.

Table 4.2: Summary of items 1 to 8 with mean and standard deviation

Summary of items 1 to 8 with Mean and Standard Deviation

	Mean (SD)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q8	2.12 (1.13)	33.5%	41.0%	10.5%	10.0%	5.0%
Q7	3.73 (1.32)	11.0%	4.5%	24.5%	20.5%	39.5%
Q6	2.18 (1.11)	26.0%	53.0%	2.5%	14.0%	4.5%
Q5	2.33 (0.80)	21.0%	25.0%	54.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q4	1.41 (0.53)	61.0%	37.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q3	2.25 (0.76)	14.5%	50.5%	30.0%	5.0%	0.0%
Q2	1.38 (0.51)	63.0%	36.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q1	1.09 (0.29)	90.5%	9.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Percent: 100, 75, 50, 25, 0
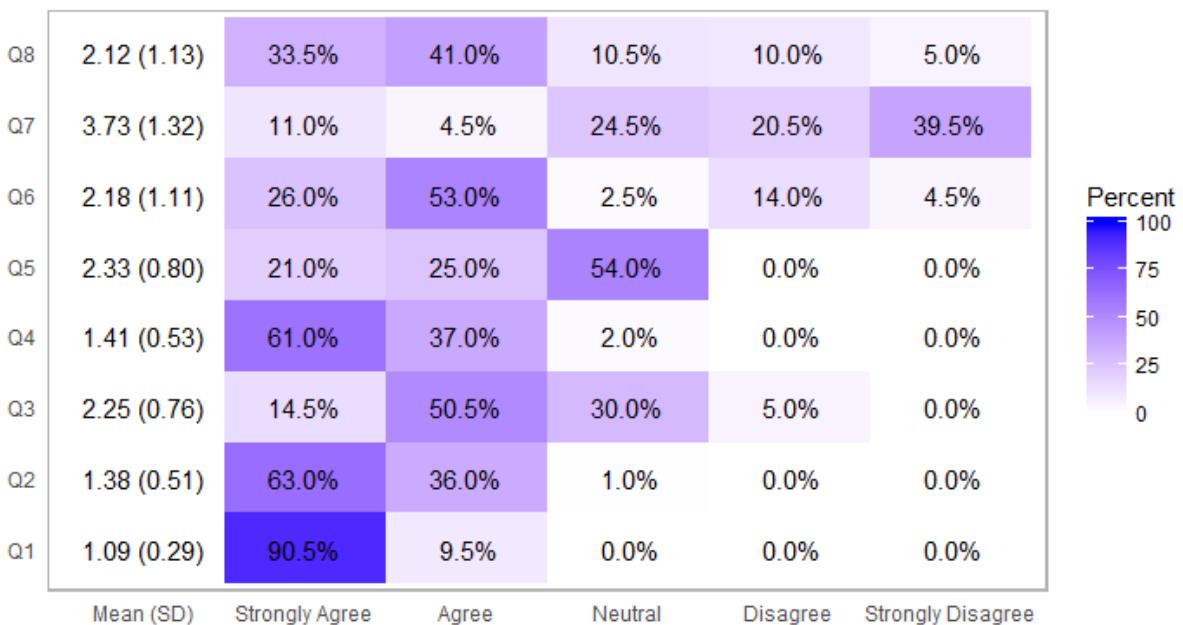
It is worth noting that for this study, strongly agree was coded 1 and therefore the lower the mean values, the more the means distribution is skewed towards strongly agree and the lower the standard deviation, the less the variability of the responses away from the mean. For question 1, the mean value of 1.09 and standard deviation (SD) of 0.29 are an indication that the responses on that question are concentrated to the left side of the Likert scale made up of strongly agree to agree responses and there is little variation from the mean. The same applies to question 2, which has a mean of 1.38 and SD of 0.51.

A mean value of 2.25 for question 3 demonstrates that most of the respondents agree with the concept of having teachers who are not in formal positions of authority engaging in instructional leadership activities within the school. Responses to the same question also show a standard deviation value of 0.76, which suggests that the responses are spread away from the mean. The responses for question 4 have a mean value of 1.41 and a SD value of 0.53, which suggests that responses are concentrated on the agree side and there is little spread of responses from the mean. Responses for question 5 have a mean value of 2.33, which suggests that although quite a number of

respondents either agreed or strongly agreed, a fair percentage of them are uncertain on the issue and therefore the responses are concentrated in the middle. An SD of 0.80 for the same question shows that there is more variability of the responses from the mean.

Responses for questions 6 and 8 show almost the same pattern. Statistical data for question 6 shows a mean value of 2.18, which is close to response 2 and concentrated to the left side made up of strongly agree to agree responses. A standard deviation of 1.11 for the same question shows that there is more spread of responses from the mean. A mean value of 2.12 and a standard deviation of 1.13 for question 8 are understood to mean the same as the explanation given for responses to question 8. On the other hand, responses to question 7 shows the opposite trend as most of the responses are concentrated to the disagree to strongly disagree right side, represented by a mean value of 3.73. A standard deviation of 1.32 for the same question reveals that there is more spread of responses from the mean.

The researcher found it necessary to explore the relationship between questions 1 to 8 further. The correlation analysis details are presented in table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: A correlation analysis of question 1 to 8

A correlation analysis

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
Q1	1	0.46	0.54	0.49	0.27	0.67	0.31	0.69
Q2	0.46	1	0.84	0.95	0.63	0.72	0.72	0.77
Q3	0.54	0.84	1	0.83	0.76	0.81	0.87	0.84
Q4	0.49	0.95	0.83	1	0.65	0.73	0.74	0.78
Q5	0.27	0.63	0.76	0.65	1	0.67	0.91	0.69
Q6	0.67	0.72	0.81	0.73	0.67	1	0.7	0.94
Q7	0.31	0.72	0.87	0.74	0.91	0.7	1	0.73
Q8	0.69	0.77	0.84	0.78	0.69	0.94	0.73	1
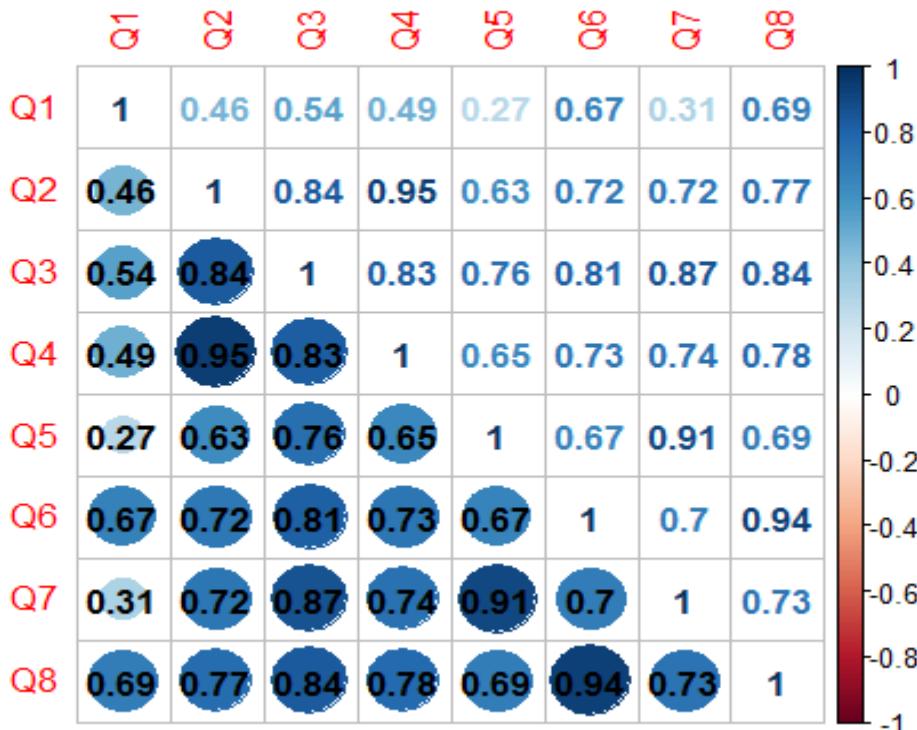
Correlation analysis has been used here as a valuable tool to ascertain how strong a relationship is between two variables. The coefficient value is always between +1 and -1, where +1 shows a strong positive relationship, -1 depicts a strong negative relationship and a result of 0 (zero) indicates no relationship at all. The absolute value of the correlation coefficient shows the relationship strength between variables, the higher the coefficient number, the stronger the relationship. Table 4.3 above displays that there is a weak positive correlation between Q1 and Q5 (correlation coefficient value = 0.27) and between Q1 and Q7 (correlation coefficient = 0.31). The correlation coefficient of 0.27 between Q1 and Q5 shows that although the answers for the question on whether school heads are expected to provide leadership and that on whether teachers should share their practice and experience and utilise feedback from each other positively are not strongly related, there is a weak positive relationship between the two. There is no perfect relationship since 0.27 is not close to +1. Even though, the issue of leadership in

Q1 and that of the school head striking a balance between administrative, managerial and instructional roles in Q7 are positively related with a 0.31correlation coefficient, the relationship is weak.

The correlation coefficient of 0.67 depicts a strong positive relationship between the notion of school heads providing leadership aimed at improving teaching and learning in their schools in Q1 and the notion in Q6 that the school head should focus more on administrative and managerial roles than on instructional role. Both notions enjoy widespread support from the teachers. Thus, it could be argued that teachers who believe that the school head should provide leadership aimed at improving teaching and learning also share the perception that the school head should focus more on administrative and managerial tasks at the expense of instructional roles.

Correlation between Q1 and Q2 (coefficient = 0.46), between Q1 and Q3 (coefficient = 0.54) and between Q1 and Q4 (coefficient = 0.49) are positively related. This suggests that responses on whether the school head should provide leadership aimed at improving teaching and learning are positively related to those about the head sharing leadership functions and that of allowing teachers who are not in formal positions of authority to get involved in leadership activities. The correlation coefficient between Q1 and Q4 also reveals that responses show that respondents also believe that teachers should be allowed to make decisions as much as they also feel that school heads are supposed to provide leadership.

Results in table 4.3 show that there are strong positive correlations between Q2 and Q3 (coefficient = 0.84), Q2 and Q4 (coefficient = 0.95) and between Q3 and Q4 (coefficient = 0.83). This shows that the respondents' feelings about whether the school head should share leadership responsibilities, whether teachers not in formal positions of leadership should be involved in leadership activities or that teachers should be allowed to make decisions with regard to teaching and learning activities are significantly related. We could conclude that history experts believe that although the headmaster is the key school official, /s/he should allow other staff members to make decisions and take leadership roles on a lower level.

Results also reveal that correlations between Q3 and Q5 (coefficient = 0.76), between Q3 and Q6 (coefficient = 0.81), or between Q3 and Q7 (coefficient = 0.87) all share a strong positive relationship with correlation coefficient values that are very close to +1 (perfect positive correlation). This conclusively suggests that History teachers believe that teachers not in formal leadership roles should also be allowed to lead as much as they also feel that teachers should share experiences, that heads should focus less on instructional roles and the fact that school heads should strike a balance between all their roles. The correlation coefficient between Q4 and Q6 (0.73) and between Q4 and Q7 (0.74) show the same strong positive correlation trend. The correlation coefficient value between Q5 and Q7 (0.91) is the highest, revealing that the responses for the two questions are strongly tied.

The correlation matrix shows positive correlation values between Q8 and Q1 (coefficient = 0.69), between Q8 and Q5 (0.69) and between Q7 and Q8 (0.73). This implies that the views of history professionals on whether school heads are expected to provide leadership are moderately similar to those on whether middle level leaders should focus more on instructional roles. The views of the history professionals are also moderately similar for Q8 and the importance of encouraging teachers to share their practice and use feedback from each other. The same applies to Q8 and Q7 (It is possible for the school head to strike a balance between administrative, managerial and instructional roles).

The correlation matrix results reveal strong positive correlation values between Q8 and Q2 (0.77), Q8 and Q3 (0.84) and between Q8 and Q4 (0.78). This suggest that the views of History teachers on whether it is good for the school head to share leadership functions related to teaching and learning with other school leaders are almost similar to those on whether middle level school leaders such as heads of department should focus more on instructional roles. The same applies to views on whether teachers who are not in formal positions of authority should engage in leadership activities and on whether teachers should be encouraged to make decisions concerning teaching and learning.

The correlation coefficient between Q8 and Q6 reveals an almost perfect positive relationship with a value of +0.94, which is very close to the perfect correlation value of +1. This suggests that the views of History teachers on whether middle level school leaders, such as heads of department, should focus more on instructional roles are identical to those on whether the school head should focus more on administrative and managerial roles than on the instructional role.

It should be noted that the researcher decided to include only Q1-Q8 in the correlation matrix excluding Q9–12 because the first eight questions seem to focus on issues to do with the instructional leadership functions. The same cannot be said about Q9-Q11 and Q12 whose focus is the nature of school leaders preferred by History teachers and the impact of instructional leadership respectively.

Teachers have their own perceptions and beliefs on what constitutes an ideal school leader. Table 4.4 below gives details on the calibre of school leaders that are preferred by History teachers.

Table 4.4: The nature of leaders preferred by History teachers

The nature of leaders preferred by History teachers

	Mean (SD)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q9	1.75 (0.84)	45.5%	39.0%	10.5%	5.0%	0.0%
Q11	1.62 (0.65)	47.5%	43.0%	9.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Q10	1.55 (0.61)	51.0%	43.0%	6.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Percent: 100, 75, 50, 25, 0
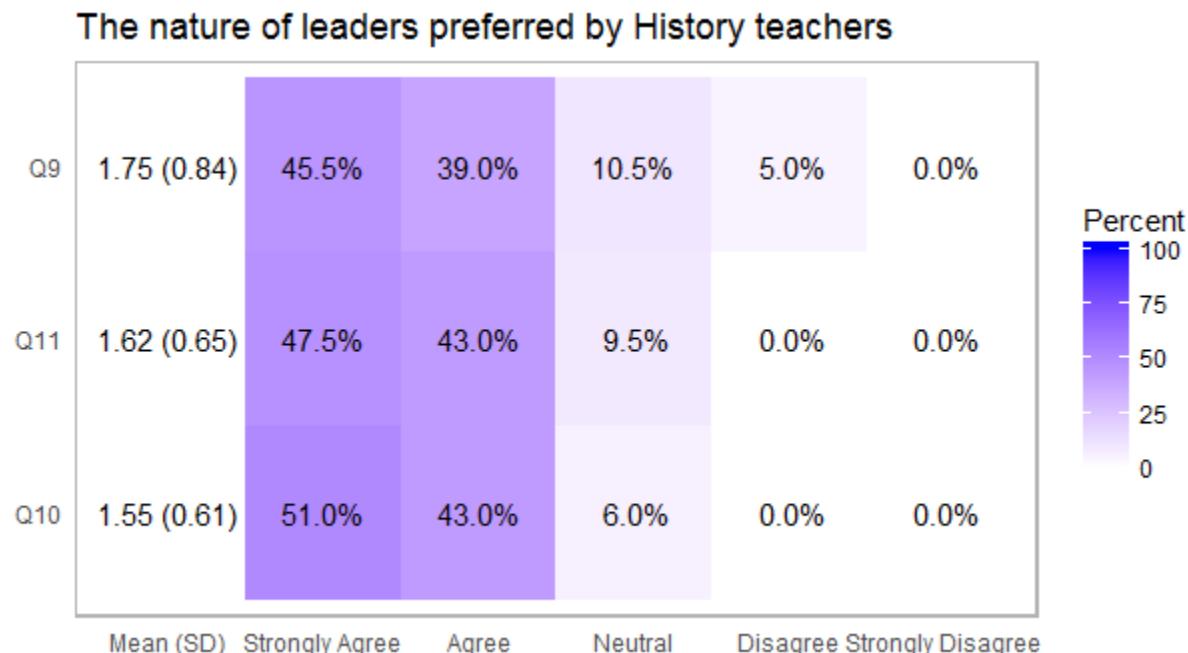
Responses to question 9 show that 84.5% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the suggestion that leadership aimed at improving teaching and learning should be subject-specific rather than general. This is further supported by a mean value of 1.75 in table 4.4, which is close to the agree Likert value response which shows that values are concentrated on the left. The standard deviation value of 0.84 suggests that responses to this question were concentrated close to the mean. The History teachers' belief that instructional leadership should be subject-specific is consistent with the argument of Spillane (2002), that leadership for instructional leadership is subject matter sensitive and as such, this should be considered.

From Table 4.4, it can be noted that the majority of the respondents to question 10: "I prefer to be supervised by a school leader who shares the same area of specialisation with me", (94%) either strongly agreed or agreed that someone who shares the same area of specialisation with them should rather supervise them. Only 6% were rather uncertain and none of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed. The mean value of 1.55 also supports this prediction since it shows that the responses are concentrated towards the agree side of the Likert scale and that there is less deviation (standard deviation value of 0.61) of responses away from the mean. Thus, it may be argued that generally most of the History teachers have respect for instructional leaders who share the same area of specialisation with them. However, as noted by Hallinger (2009), this poses challenges for the secondary school head, as it is practically impossible for him/her to be a specialist in all the different areas of the curriculum considering that secondary schools are characterised by a more highly differentiated discipline-based curriculum.

Summarised results in Table 4.4 show that 90.5% of respondents to question 11: "I prefer school leaders, particularly the school head with formal training on how to improve teaching and learning", either agreed or strongly agreed with the idea of having a leader or head with formal training on how to improve teaching and learning. The results show that none of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposition. A mean value of 1.62 suggests a positive skewness that shows that most responses (99.5%) are concentrated towards the agreeing section of the Likert

scale. A standard deviation of 0.65 also suggests that there is little variability away from the mean value. While it could be noted that most of the History teachers are of the perception that school leaders should have formal training in instructional leadership, research by Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013) and Zikhali and Perumal, (2014) has shown that most of the school leaders in Zimbabwe lack training in this critical area.

Participants were asked to comment on the impact of instructional leadership in schools. The details are presented in table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: The impact of instructional leadership

The impact of instructional leadership	Mean (SD)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Percent
Q12	1.59 (0.7)	54%	34%	12%	0%	0%	
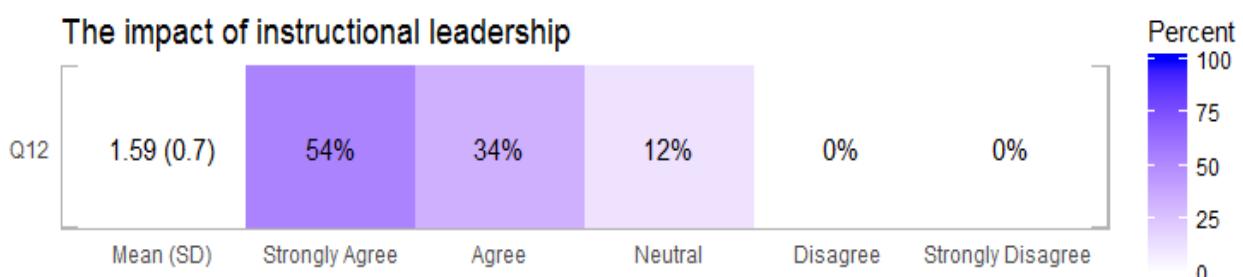
Summarised results in table 4.5 for the proposition: "Instructional leadership enhances school effectiveness and improves student attainment", shows that 88% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the idea. This is also supported by a mean value of 1.59, which is close to the strongly agree response and a standard deviation of 0.7, which suggests that there is little variability from the mean and responses are concentrated on the agree and strongly agree side of the Likert scale. None of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposition. Only 12% of the respondents were neutral on the issue. Possibly, those who decided to be neutral on the issue, lack clear views on the topic (Johns, 2010). Thus, the majority of the respondents' are of the perception that instructional leadership is a vital instrument for enhancing school effectiveness and improving student achievement. This is in tandem with the observation of Grisson and Loeb (2011) and Hallinger (2009), that findings from studies associated with the effective schools' movement consider instructional leadership as an indispensable tool in improving school effectiveness and student outcomes.

4.4.1.3 TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS, BELIEFS AND UNDERSTANDINGS OFVARIOUS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP DIMENSIONS AND FUNCTIONS

This section, similar to the preceding section, endeavours to answer the study's first research question:

- What are the teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understandings of instructional leadership in Zimbabwe?

The section has three sub-sections, namely, 1) defining the school's vision, mission and goals, 2) managing the school's instructional programme and 3) developing a conducive learning climate.

4.4.1.4 DEFINING THE SCHOOL'S VISION, MISSION AND GOALS

This sub-section on defining the school's vision, mission and goals starts by analysing and interpreting data pertaining to history teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understandings on the formulation of the school's vision and mission as shown in table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6: Formulation of the school's vision and mission

Formulation of the school's vision and mission

	Mean (SD)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q16	1.45 (0.50)	55.0%	45.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q15	1.27 (0.52)	76.0%	20.5%	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Q14	1.36 (0.52)	66.0%	32.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q13	1.33 (0.47)	67.0%	33.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
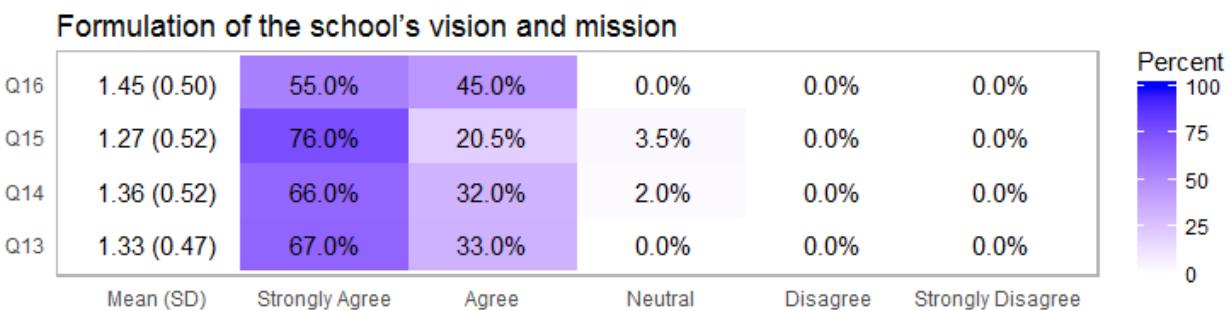
Results for question 13 in table 4.6 show that 100% of respondents agree to the proposition that: it is necessary for a school to have a clear vision on student learning. This is also supported by a mean value of 1.33 and a standard deviation of 0.47, which is closest to the Likert value response of strongly agree. Thus, it could be generalised and concluded that History teachers believe that a school should have a clear vision on

learning. This belief is in line with the assertion of Robinson *et al.*, (2008), that instructional leaders should take it upon themselves to establish a clear vision on student learning in their schools.

Research results also show that 98% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree with the claim in question 14 that it is the responsibility of the school head to formulate the school vision in consultation with other staff members. Only 2% of the respondents decided to be neutral on the issue. A mean value of 1.36 and a standard deviation of 0.52 further indicate that the History teachers' perception that the school head should formulate the vision of the school in liaison with the other staff members enjoys widespread support. This concurs with the sentiments echoed by numerous scholars on instructional leadership such as Goddard *et al.* (2010), Grisson and Loeb (2011), and Hallinger and Wang (2015).

Table 4.6 shows that 96.5% of the respondents to question 15: "It is necessary for the school to have a mission statement", agree on the issue. Thus, it could be generalised to the History teaching population that they are of the perception that a school needs a mission statement. This tallies quite well with the argument of Hallinger and Murphy (1985, 1987), that every school needs a mission statement since a sense of direction for the school is drawn from its mission statement.

All the respondents (100%) either agree or strongly agree with the proposition represented in (Q16) that all staff members should to be involved in constructing the school's mission statement. This is also supported by the mean value of 1.45, which is closest to the Likert value response of strongly agree and a standard deviation of 0.50. It could be concluded that this is the general perception of all teachers. Similarly, Goddard *et al.* (2010), encourage the principal to craft the mission of the school in liaison with the other members of the staff to ensure that the mission is widely known and supported by all the members of the school community.

Table 4.7 below explores the statistical analysis of the research findings related to the vital instructional leadership function of communicating the school's vision, mission and goals.

Table 4.7: Communication of the school's vision, mission and goals

Communication of the school's vision, mission and goals

	Mean (SD)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Q22	1.67 (0.53)	36.0%	61.0%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	Percent
Q21	1.81 (0.70)	30.5%	63.0%	1.5%	5.0%	0.0%	100
Q20	3.88 (1.27)	6.5%	13.5%	7.0%	31.5%	41.5%	75
Q19	2.12 (1.12)	31.0%	45.0%	10.5%	7.5%	6.0%	50
Q18	1.75 (0.74)	43.0%	39.0%	18.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25
Q17	2.11 (0.99)	30.5%	41.5%	14.5%	13.5%	0.0%	0
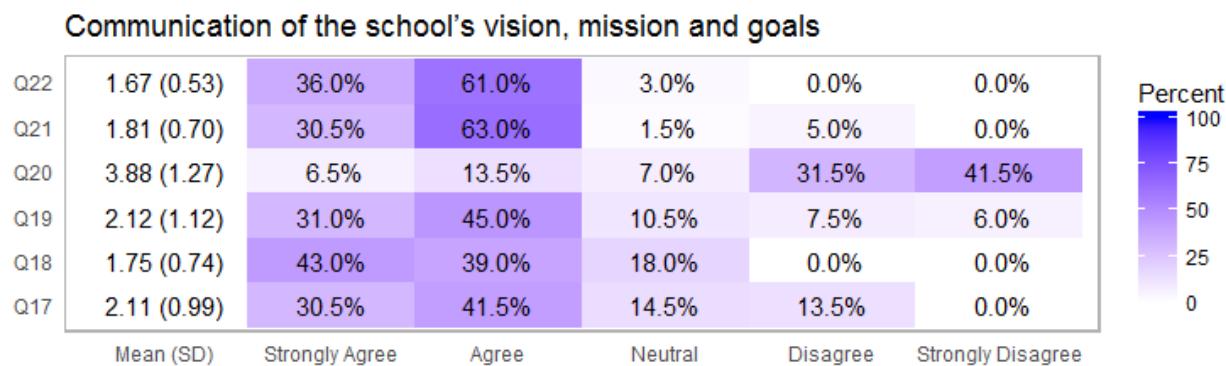
Table 4.7 shows that 71% of the respondents to (Q17) either strongly agree or agree that their school's vision, mission and goals are clearly articulated. A mean value of 2.11 indicates that responses to question 17 are concentrated towards the agree side of the scale. This is further supported by a standard deviation of 0.99, which suggests that there is little variation of figures away from the mean. A positive skewness depicted suggests concentration of responses towards the left side of the scale. Therefore, it could be argued that most of the History teachers sampled believe that their schools' vision, mission and goals are clearly articulated.

From the responses to question 18 in table 4.7, it can be noted that 82% of respondents agree or strongly agree to the proposition that their school's vision, mission and goals need to be formally communicated to all staff members. This is supported by a mean value of 1.75 and a standard deviation of 0.74, which shows little variability from the mean. A value of 18% for those who were uncertain may be interpreted as an indication that there is need for training of staff or awareness campaigns that can highlight the importance of a mission statement to staff members. Although a few History teachers decided to take a neutral position on the issue, it may still be argued that the majority of the History teachers' perception concurs with the observation of Isaiah and Isaiah

(2014), that Botswana teachers perceived their school leaders as utilising formal channels in communicating their schools' vision, mission and goals.

Furthermore, it could be noted that 76% of the respondents to question 19 either agree or strongly agree that their school's vision, mission and goals are communicated formally. This is further supported by a mean value of 2.12, which illustrates that the values are concentrated towards the agree side of the Likert scale. A standard deviation value of 1.12 indicates that there is minimum deviation away from the mean value. Thus, the majority of teachers' perceptions and belief that a school's vision, mission and goals need to be communicated formally seems to be confirmed in most of the schools. Similarly, the Wallace Foundation (2013) supports the use of formal channels of communication.

The mean value of 3.88 in table 4.7 for responses to question 20 suggests that responses are tilted towards the disagree side. This is also supported by statistical evidence in the same table that shows that 74% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree with the proposition that the mission statement of their schools is informally communicated. A strong negative skewness depicted by a mean value that is above neutral, which is the centre of the distribution, shows that responses are concentrated towards the disagree side of the scale. Based on this, it could be argued that History teachers perceive that informal communication channels are not being utilised in schools in communicating the vision, mission and goals of the schools. This is contrary to Hallinger and Wang's (2015) call for the use of formal and informal channels of communication for the same purpose.

The majority of the respondents (94%) either agree or strongly agree with the idea of informing learners of, the school's vision, mission and goals represented in (Q21). This is also supported by a mean value of 1.81, which is on the agree side of the Likert scale and a standard deviation of 0.7, which shows less spread of responses away from the mean value. Therefore, the majority of History teachers believe that such information should be conveyed to the learners since they are the ultimate beneficiaries of instructional leadership. This is in line with the stipulation of Al-Mahdy and Al-Kiyumi

(2015), that the school's vision, mission and goals should be communicated widely to the school's stakeholders.

From the responses to the last question (Q22) in this sub-section, it could be noted that 97% of respondents believe that the school's mission statement should be communicated to key stakeholders such as parents. This is also supported by a mean value of 1.67 which is on the agree and strongly agree side of the Likert scale and a standard deviation value of 0.53, which shows that there is minimal spread of response values away from the mean. Therefore, this belief could be generalised among History teachers. Similarly, Thi Hao, (2016) emphasises the need to bring on board key stakeholders such as parents on issues to do with the education of their children.

4.4.1.5 THE MANAGEMENT OF THE TEACHING PROGRAMME

This segment of the study analysed and interpreted teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understandings of the dimension of the school's management programme.

Figure 4.7 below gives a summary of results pertaining to what the History teachers think on the issue of allocating a teaching load to the head of the school.
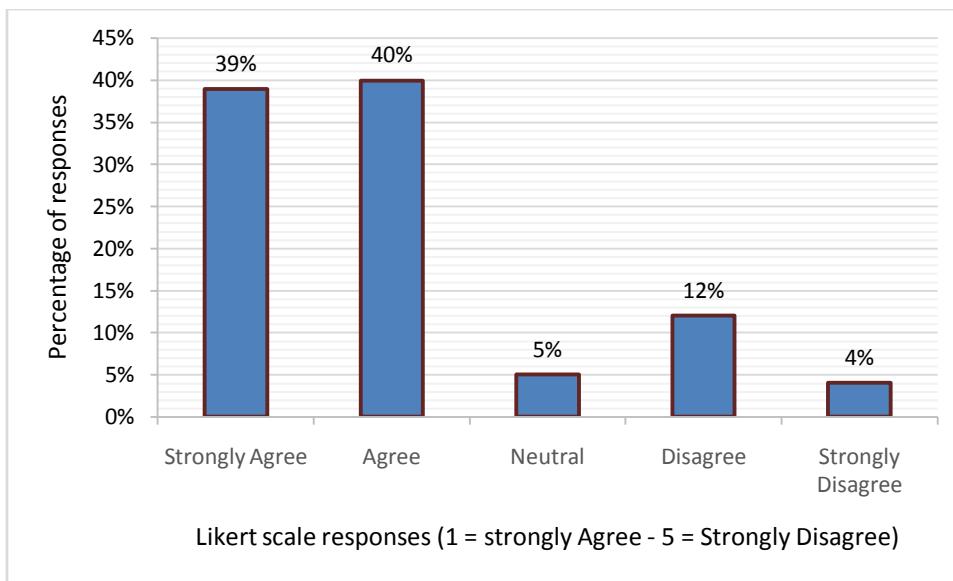
Figure 4.7: Bar graph on whether the head should have a teaching load

From Figure 4.7, it can be noted that 79% of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the idea of the school head having a teaching load. On the contrary, 16% of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed. From the above results, it can be discerned that most of the History teachers are of the view that the school head should be allocated a teaching load. Similarly, Taole (2013) and Isaiah and Isaiah (2014) argue that school heads should have a teaching load for them to fully appreciate the challenges faced by teachers in the classroom situation. Jita (2010) supports this proposition, observing that principals with teaching duties have a greater chance of positively influencing instructional practices in their schools.

Table 4.8 below shows the school leaders who are often consulted by History teachers in a bid to improve their classroom practice.

Table 4.8: School leaders consulted by teachers to improve classroom practice

		As a teacher, I often ask for help from the school head	As a teacher, I often ask for help from the school deputy head	As a teacher, I often ask for help from the school senior master/woman	As a teacher, I often ask for help from the school head of department
N	Valid	200	200	200	200
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.70	3.19	3.60	1.24
Std. Deviation		1.008	1.285	1.190	.473
Skewness		-1.453	-.489	-.592	1.787
Std. Error of Skewness		.172	.172	.172	.172

Based on the mean value of 1.24 and a standard deviation of 0.473 for the responses to the question item on the respondents who prefer to consult the heads of department, it seems clear that most of the History teachers consult the head of department. The responses for those respondents who consult the school head, deputy head and senior master or woman have means above three and negative skewness of varying degrees indicating concentration towards the disagree side of the Likert scale. Therefore, it could be noted that the majority of the History teachers perceive the head of department as the ideal source of ideas that may help them to improve their classroom practice, as they often prefer to consult this school leader for assistance in improving classroom practice. This perception by History teachers concurs with the observation of Taole (2013) that most of the South African rural high school principals feel that instructional leadership responsibilities should be carried out by the heads of department. Possibly this perception stems from the belief shared by Manaseh (2016) and Bellibas (2016), that the involvement of principals in teaching and learning processes is a sheer waste of time and does not bring any benefits for the teachers since principals may lack subject matter knowledge.

Lesson and book inspections are part of the instructional leadership functions that are executed under the instructional leadership dimension of managing the school's instructional programme. Table 4.9 gives a summary of results on History teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understandings of lesson and book inspections in schools.

Table 4.9: Lesson and book inspections

Lesson and book inspections

	Mean (SD)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q28	1.61 (0.75)	49.5%	45.0%	0.0%	5.5%	0.0%
Q27	1.55 (0.53)	46.5%	52.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Q26	3.27 (1.36)	19.0%	13.0%	2.5%	53.0%	12.5%
Q25	1.30 (0.46)	70.0%	30.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
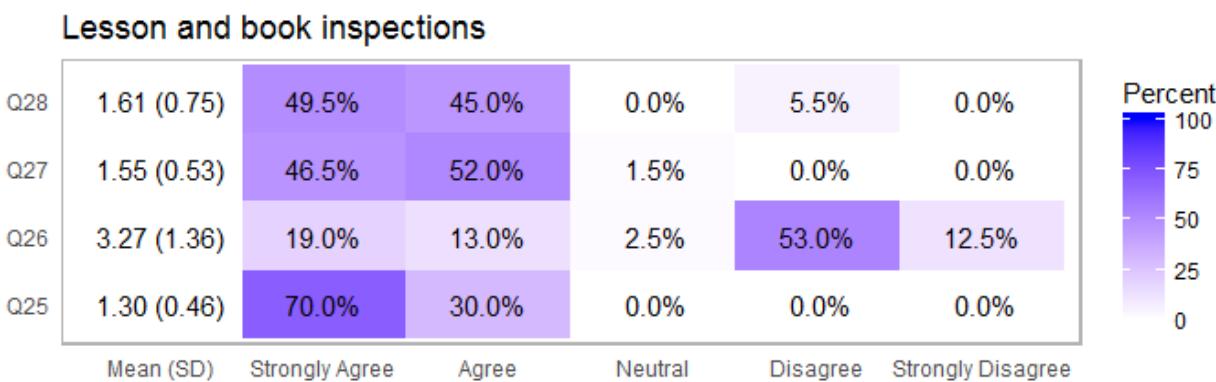
Table 4.9 shows a cumulative value of 100% for respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed with the sentiment that teachers benefit more from lesson observations done by leaders who share the same area of specialisation with them. This is represented in question 25 (Q25). None of the History teachers either disagreed or were uncertain. A mean value of 1.30 shows that responses are concentrated on the strongly agree side of the Likert scale, which is also supported by a standard deviation of 0.46 which shows that there is less variation from the mean. Thus, it may be generalised that most History teachers share the belief that teachers benefit more from lesson observations done by leaders who share the same area of specialisation with them. This concurs with the argument of Chen and Cheng (2017) that given the distinctive nature of subjects offered in secondary schools and the clear-cut line between knowledge in different academic disciplines, teachers tend to believe in the capability of school leaders who share the same area of specialisation as them.

Responses to question 26 represented in Table 4.9 show that 65.5% of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree with the assertion that their school leaders do lesson observation in their own areas of specialisation. The table shows a mean value of 3.27, which indicates a negative skewness. This supports the idea that responses are

moderately concentrated towards the right side of the Likert scale. These results indicate that from the History teachers' experiences, instructional leadership is not subject-specific in most of the schools. This is contrary to teachers' expectations and Spillane's (2002) assertion that instructional leadership should be subject-specific.

From table 4.9 it can be observed that 98.5% of the respondents to question 27 strongly agree or agree with the proposition that post-lesson observational conferences are necessary. This is also supported by a mean value of 1.55 and little variation of responses away from the mean as evidenced by a standard deviation value of 0.53.Only 1.5% of the respondents were uncertain. This allows us to generalise that almost all the History teachers believe in the need for post-lesson observation conferences.

It could also be noted that 94.5% of the respondents to question 28 agree that exercise book inspections are necessary for the improvement of students' performance. Only 5.5% of respondents disagree with the proposition. This shows that we could generalise that the majority of the History teachers perceive exercise book inspections as necessary.

Syllabus coverage and interpretation are some of the indispensable aspects of the management of the school programme. The onus is on school leaders to ensure that teachers, as classroom practitioners, correctly interpret the syllabus and adequately cover it. Table 4.10 below gives a summary of results on History teachers' perceptions and experiences on this issue under review.

Table 4.10: Syllabus coverage and interpretation

Syllabus coverage and interpretation

	Mean (SD)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q31	1.92 (0.83)	29.0%	58.5%	3.5%	9.0%	0.0%
Q30	3.71 (1.34)	11.0%	12.0%	6.0%	37.0%	34.0%
Q29	1.78 (0.73)	34.5%	57.5%	3.0%	5.0%	0.0%
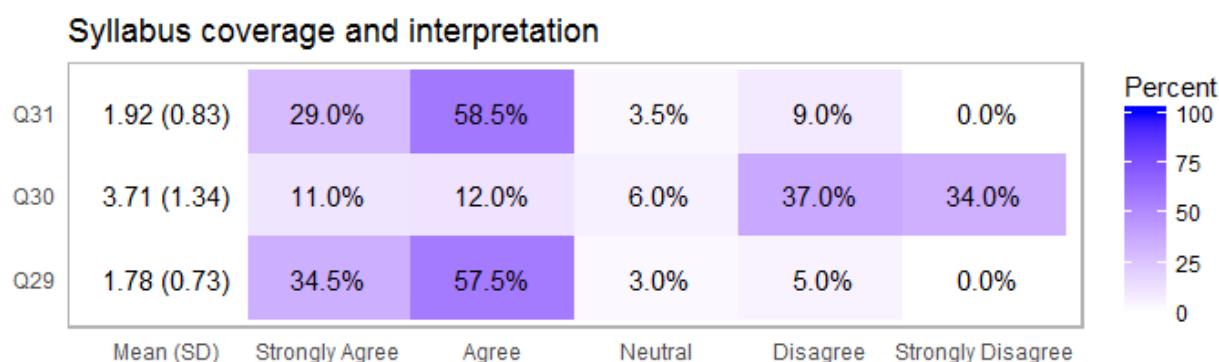
From table 4.10 it can be noted that 92% of the respondents to question 29 believe that leaders should sit down with teachers to assist each other in interpreting the syllabus. A standard deviation value of 0.73 shows a moderate spread of values away from the mean value of 1.78, which illustrates that most respondents agree with the proposition. Thus, it could be generalised that the majority of the History teachers understand the need for school leaders to help them in the interpretation of the syllabus. Similarly, Manaseh (2016) also emphasises the need for school leaders to help their teachers in interpreting the syllabus.

As a follow-up to the preceding question, teachers were asked if school leaders in their schools sit down with them to engage in syllabus interpretation. A summary of results in table 4.10 for question 30 shows that 71% of respondents either strongly disagree or disagree that their leaders sit down with them to engage in syllabus interpretation. A mean value of 3.71 also suggests that responses are concentrated towards the right side of the Likert scale and a standard deviation value of 1.34 suggests that responses are considerably spread away from the mean value. Based on this, it could be concluded that from most of the History teachers' perspective, school leaders are not assisting teachers in syllabus interpretation related matters.

The analysis of results for question 31 represented in table 4.10, shows that 87.5% of respondents either agree or strongly agree with the proposition that school leaders are expected to supervise teachers to cover the syllabus adequately. A mean value of 1.92 in the same table clearly illustrates that most respondents agree as it is clearly close to

the Likert scale value of two. Results indicate that we could impose the belief or perception to the entire teaching populace. This is not consistent with findings of Manaseh (2016), who observed that in Tanzania, school heads seem not to be concerned with ensuring that teachers cover the syllabus adequately.

Figure 4.8 below shows the research results on how History teachers perceive the notion of having school leaders ensuring that learners are given adequate and quality assignments.
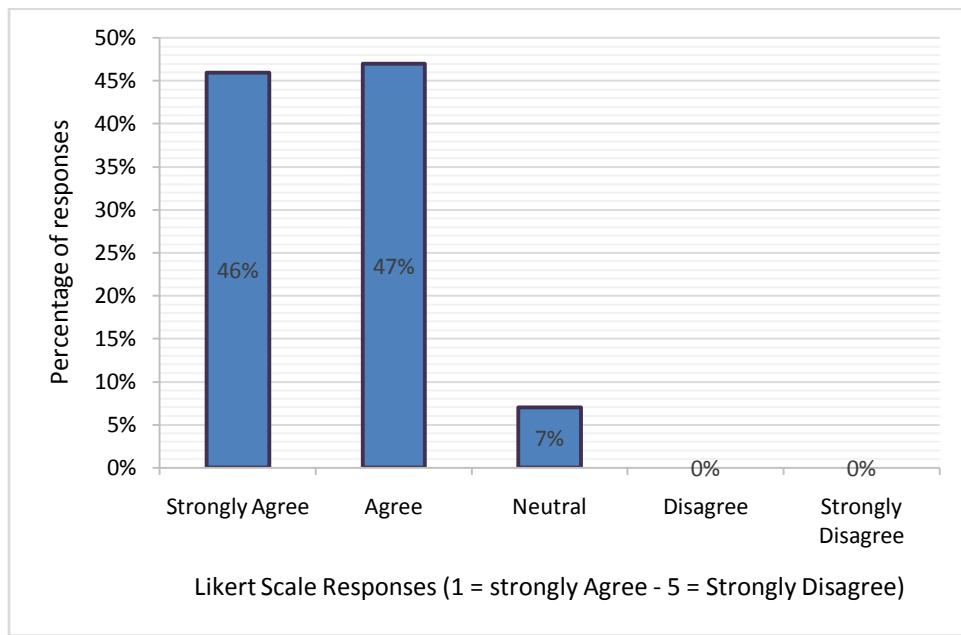
Figure 4.8: Graph on whether school leaders should ensure that pupils are given adequate and quality assignments

From the graph above, it can be noted that 93% of respondents agree to the proposition that school leaders should ensure that learners are given adequate and quality assignments. No respondents disagreed with this line of thinking and only 7% of the respondents opted to be neutral; hence, we can generalise that all teachers believe in leader participation in ensuring that pupils receive adequate and quality assignments. This is in line with the stipulations of the Ministry of Education and Culture Zimbabwe (1993), that it is the mandate of the school leaders to ensure that teachers give learners adequate and high quality work.

Participants were also asked to indicate what they think on the importance of school leaders convening regular meetings to discuss students' performance and achievement. The details are presented in Figure 4.9 below.
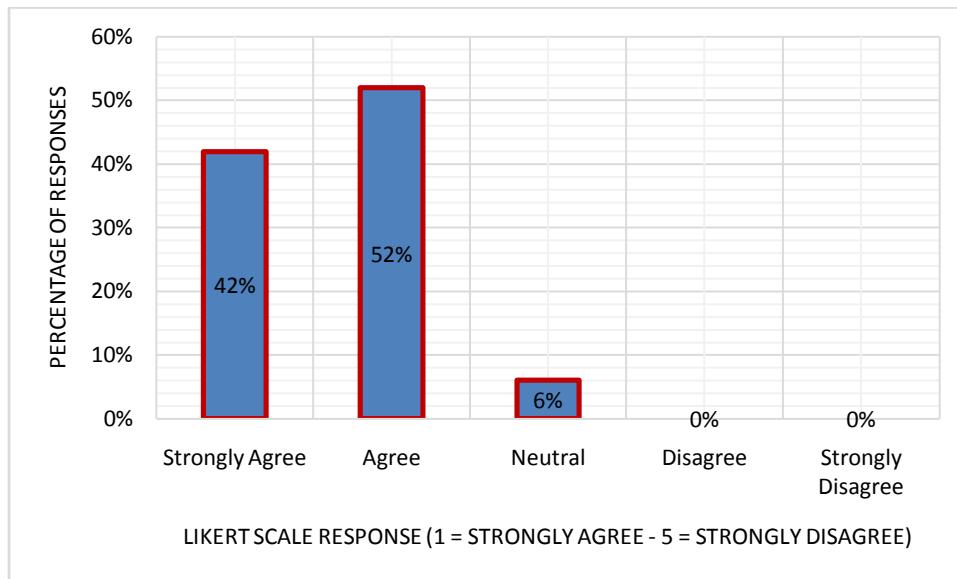
Figure 4.9: Importance of regular meetings on students' performance by leaders and teachers

From Figure 4.9 below it can be observed that 94% of the respondents to question 33 believe that regular meetings on students' performance and achievement by teachers and leaders are critical. Only 6% of the respondents chose to be neutral. Given these results, it could be easily concluded that History teachers understand the importance of regular meetings with leaders to discuss student performance. Therefore, they perceive such meetings as valuable. This concurs with the argument of Isaiah and Isaiah (2014), that meetings should be convened regularly to discuss the performance and achievement of learners.

Table 4.11 below provides a brief statistical analysis of research results on how the issues related to the provision of curriculum materials are perceived by teachers in various schools.

Table 4.11: Provision of curriculum materials

Provision of curriculum materials

	Mean (SD)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Percent
Q35	3.74 (1.15)	7%	8%	16%	41%	28%	
Q34	1.90 (0.69)	29%	52%	19%	0%	0%	
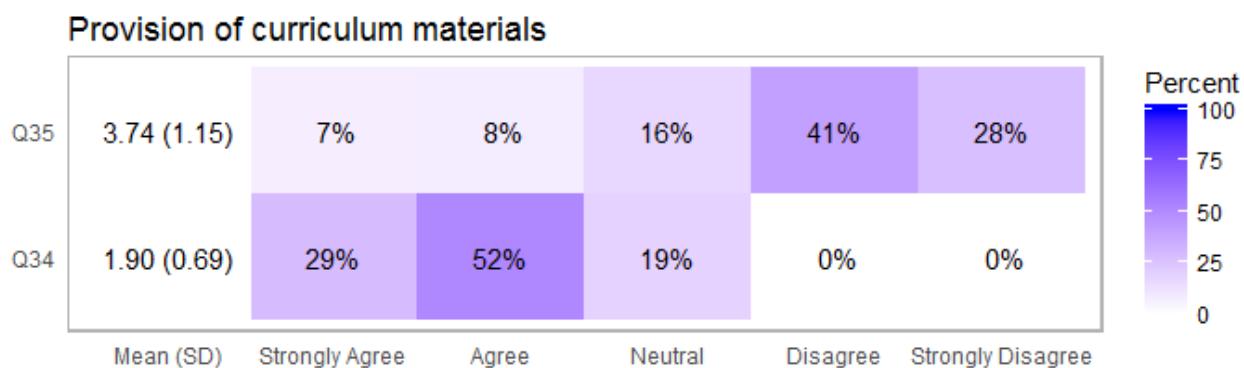
From table 4.11, it could be noted that 81% of the respondents either strongly agree or agree that the head and other leaders are responsible for making the curriculum materials available to teachers. This is further supported by a mean value of 1.90, which is close to the agree value of the Likert scale (2). A standard deviation value of 0.69 suggests that responses are rather spread close to the mean value. A substantial percentage of respondents (19%) are uncertain. Therefore, the majority of History teachers perceive school leaders as responsible for making curriculum materials available in the school. This perception of the majority of History teachers agrees with the expectation of Robinson *et al.* (2008) that instructional leaders need to play a part in strategic resourcing. This expectation emanates from the realisation that for the teachers to conduct their core business of teaching smoothly, it is imperative for the instructional leaders to make the required teaching and learning resources available, even under difficult circumstances.

A follow-up to the preceding issue was aimed at establishing if the school head is inclined to favour his or her subject of specialisation in the procurement of curriculum materials. Table 4.11 shows that 69% of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree with the proposition that school heads are inclined to favour their own area of specialisation in the procurement of curriculum materials. This is further supported by a mean value of 3.74 and a standard deviation of 1.15 that shows substantial variation away from the mean. A percentage value of 16 for uncertain respondents may reveal that some teachers are either unaware of procurement procedures or are rather

ignorant of the concept. Thus, History teachers perceive most of the heads as very professional in the procurement of materials.

4.4.1.6 DEVELOPING A CONDUCIVE LEARNING CLIMATE

This segment focuses on the analysis and interpretation of research results on teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understandings on issues to do with the business of enacting an enabling learning climate in schools.

Table 4.12 below gives a summary of results on teachers' perceptions on school leaders' twin responsibility of protecting instructional time and maintaining visibility in the classroom and the school.

Table 3: Protection of instructional time and maintenance of visibility

Protection of instructional time and maintenance of visibility

	Mean (SD)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q40	1.62 (0.55)	41.0%	56.0%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q39	1.58 (0.53)	43.5%	54.5%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q38	3.15 (1.18)	6.5%	34.5%	5.0%	45.0%	9.0%
Q37	3.83 (1.28)	7.0%	11.5%	15.0%	25.0%	41.5%
Q36	1.45 (0.55)	57.5%	40.0%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%

Percent: 100, 75, 50, 25, 0
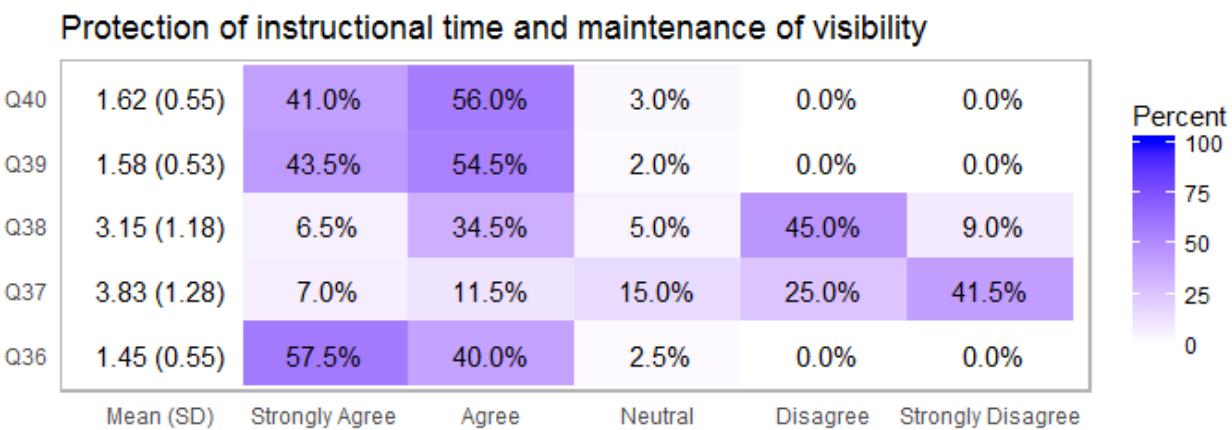
From Table 4.12 it can be observed that 97.5% of the respondents to question 36 agree or strongly agree with the proposition that school leaders should ensure that instructional or learning time is protected. This is further supported by a mean value of 1.45 and a standard deviation value of 0.55. Hence, the History teachers' perception that school leaders should ensure that learning time is protected could be generalised to the entire teaching population. Similarly, Hallinger and Murphy (1987) emphasise the need to protect instructional time.

Question 37 sought to establish whether school leaders in the schools ensure that meetings and other activities do not take time meant for lessons. From table 4.12 it can be observed that 66.5% of the respondents believe that their school leaders are not

doing enough to preserve lesson time and ensure that it is not allocated for other activities or meetings. A mean value of 3.83 shows that responses are fairly concentrated towards the disagree side of the Likert scale. Results reveal that approximately 18.5% of the teachers perceive the school heads and leaders as strict when it comes to protecting instructional time. Thus, most of the History teachers share the belief that school leaders are not doing enough to protect instructional time. This concurs with the argument of Manaseh (2016) and the World Bank (2010) that in Tanzania most of the school heads are not doing enough to protect instructional time.

It has been noted that 54% or respondents to question 38 disagree or strongly disagree and 41% either agree or strongly agree with the notion that school leaders take action against learners and teachers who abscond from lessons. A mean value of 3.16, as shown in Table 4.12, reveal that responses are tilted slightly towards the disagree side of the Likert scale. These results reveal that there are almost 50:50 chances that action is taken or not taken by leaders on those students and teachers who abscond from lessons. Thus, it could be argued that History teachers have mixed perceptions on the notion that school leaders take action against those teachers and learners who deliberately miss lessons.

Question 39 was geared towards ascertaining whether the head is expected to move around the school campus in order to instil discipline. From the results in table 4.12, it can be observed that 98% of respondents either agree or strongly agree with the idea of the school head moving around the school campus and learning venues in order to instil discipline. The mean value of 1.58, which shows that the distribution is strongly skewed towards the strongly agree or agree side of the Likert scale, further supports this observation. The standard deviation of 0.53 proves that there is less variation from the mean. Therefore, almost all History teachers believe that the school head should maintain visibility in the school. This belief of History teachers could be generalised to the entire population. Similarly, Hallinger (2009) contends that the principal should be highly visible on the school campus and even in the classrooms.

As a follow-up to the preceding question, the respondents were asked whether their school heads move around school campus frequently. From the results in table 4.12 for

question 40, it can be discerned that 97% of the History teachers perceive their school heads as frequently moving around the school campus.

Issues to do with motivation and staff development should be taken seriously. Table 4.13 dwells on research results obtained from the History teachers related to these issues.

Table 4.13: Motivational and staff development issues

	Mean (SD)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q45	1.57 (0.54)	45.0%	53.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q44	1.34 (0.47)	66.0%	34.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q43	3.85 (1.08)	0.0%	20.0%	7.0%	41.0%	32.0%
Q42	3.87 (1.42)	10.0%	16.0%	0.0%	25.5%	48.5%
Q41	1.25 (0.53)	78.0%	20.5%	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%
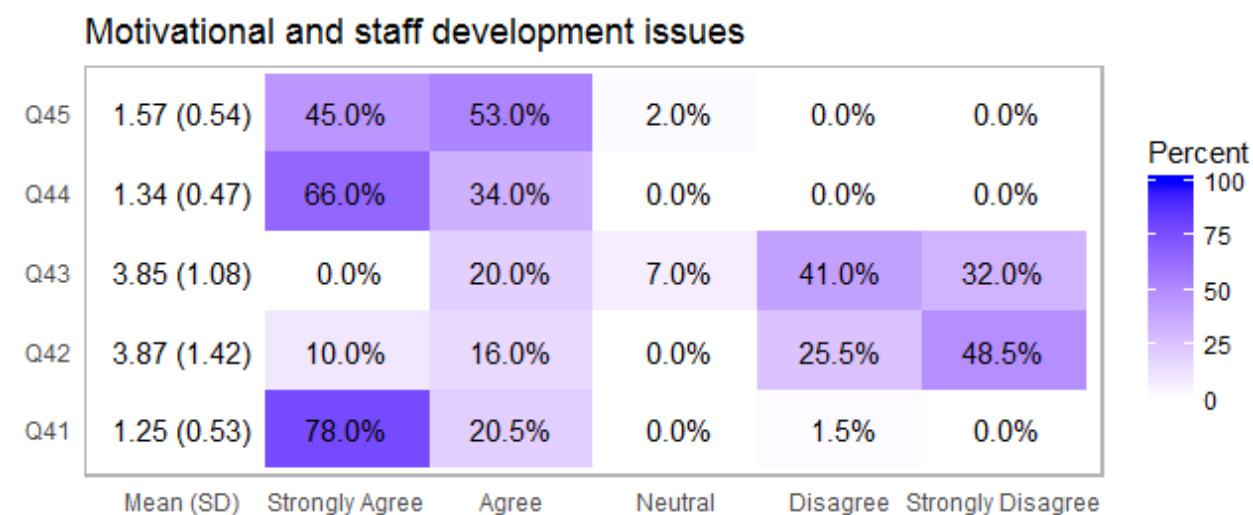
From Table 4.13, it can be noted that 98.5% of the respondents to question 41 either agreed or strongly agreed to the proposition that hard working teachers should be rewarded in order to motivate them. This is further supported by a mean value of 1.25, which is very close to the strongly agree response and a standard deviation of 0.53, which suggests that there is minimum deviation of responses away from the mean value. From these findings, it could be noted that History teachers' perception that teachers need rewards in-order to boost their motivation can be generalised to all History teachers.

However, although teachers believe that hard working teachers should be rewarded, responses to question 42 show that what is happening in practice is contrary to teachers' expectations. The results in table 4.13 show that 74% of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree with the notion that hard working teachers in their schools are recognised and motivated. This was further supported by a mean value of

3.86 that suggests that responses are tilted to the right side of the Likert scale. These results show that only a quarter of the respondents perceive that hardworking teachers are recognised for their efforts in their schools. Thus, teachers perceive their school leaders as not doing enough to motivate them. This is an area of concern since workers tend not to perform optimally when they are demotivated.

In question 43, teachers were asked whether school leaders in their school give professional assistance to teachers who are struggling with their work. From table 4.13, it can be observed that 73% of respondents do not believe that leaders in their schools provide professional assistance to struggling teachers. The mean value of 3.85 in the same table shows that responses are concentrated towards the disagree side. From these results it can be concluded that only a paltry figure of 20% of the respondents believe that leaders in schools are providing professional assistance to struggling teachers. The remaining 7% of the teachers preferred to be neutral on the issue. This outcome is quite disturbing because if struggling teachers are not rendered with the necessary support systems, the chances are high that they will continue to misfire.

From the responses to question 44, it could be noted that 100% of the respondents agree with the proposition that it is necessary for the school to have staff development workshops at departmental and school levels; hence, we can assume that all History teachers perceive staff development workshops as are important and necessary. This History teachers' perception is consistent with the conclusion of Blasé and Blasé (2000) that one of the key responsibilities of instructional leaders is the act of promoting teachers' professional growth.

Results for responses to question 45 in table 4.13 illustrate that 98% of respondents believe that staff development activities should be closely linked to other instructional leadership functions such as lesson observations or book inspections. A mean value of 1.57 in the same table also indicates that responses are concentrated on the agreeing side of the scale. A standard deviation value of 0.54 in table 4.12 shows that responses are concentrated around the mean score. From these results, it could be noted that History teachers believe that staff development functions should be closely linked to one another. This History teachers' belief concurs with the argument of Bellibas (2016) that

different leadership activities should inform one another. For instance, teachers' professional development opportunities should emanate from data gathered from classroom observations.

The honouring of outstanding learners is considered essential in the instructional leadership matrix. Figure 4.10 summarises the results of the History teachers' perceptions on the issue.
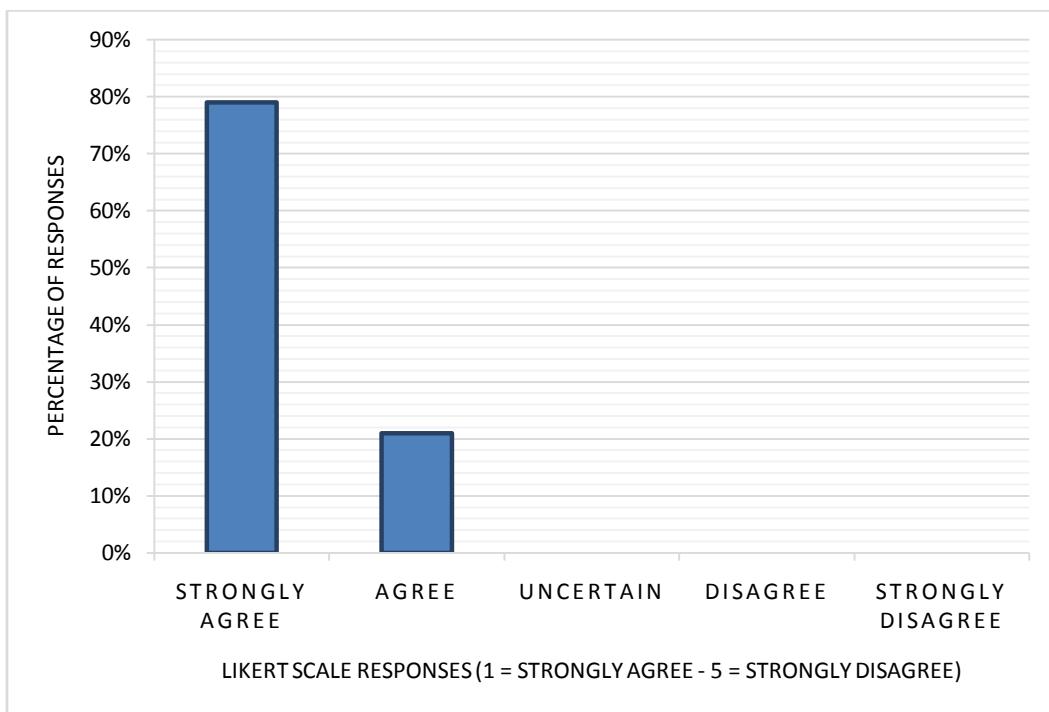
Figure 10: The need to honour outstanding pupils

From Figure 4.10 it can be observed that 100% of the respondents to question 46 believe that it is important to honour outstanding learners. This History teachers' perception might be generalised to the entire History teaching population.

The researcher found it necessary to further explore the relationship between questions 41, 42 and 46 as all three questions focus on the recognition and motivation of teachers and learners, which are critical issues in the creation of an enabling learning climate. The issue of motivation was accorded thorough consideration, as it is also critical in

understanding the phenomenon under investigation. The correlation analysis details are presented in table 4.14 below.

Table 4.14: Correlation analysis to evaluate the relationship between responses given by respondents on issueswith regard to reward, motivation of teachers and honouring of outstanding pupils

Correlations

		Q41: Hard working teachers should be rewarded to motivate them further.	Q42: In my school hardworking teachers are recognised and rewarded.	Q46: It is good for the school leaders to honour outstanding pupils.
Q41: Hard working teachers should be rewarded to motivate them further.	Pearson Correlation	1	.380**	.874**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	200	200	200
Q42: In my school hardworking teachers are recognised and rewarded.	Pearson Correlation	.380**	1	.413**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	200	200	200
Q46: It is good for the school leaders to honour outstanding pupils.	Pearson Correlation	.874**	.413**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	200	200	200

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the correlation matrix, it can be noted that there is a strong positive correlation between Q46 and Q41 (0.874). What this positive correlation coefficient (0.874) shows is that there is a strong linear relationship between Q41 and Q46, which in practical terms indicates that History teachers who believe hard working teachers should be rewarded also believe or are more likely to believe that learners should be rewarded. The converse is also true. The correlation coefficients between Q41 and Q42 (0.38), and Q42 and Q46 (0.41) are moderate correlations. In practical terms, the correlation coefficients indicate that the relationships between the questions are positive, although not as strong as the relationship between Q41 and Q46. This moderate relationship suggests that teaching professionals are not quite happy with the reward systems in

place in the school system. Therefore, this has the potential to lower their motivation levels.

4.5 FINDINGS FROM THE QUALITATIVE PHASE

The second phase was a typically small qualitative component of the study that used observations and focus group discussions to help explain or elaborate on teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understandings of instructional leadership. The findings in this section were geared towards answering the study's second research question and partly answer questions 3 and 4, which demanded the mixing of quantitative and qualitative data.

In the interest of ensuring confidentiality of the participants and schools involved in the study, pseudonyms and codes were utilised in this report as shown in table 4.15 below.

Table 4.15: Focus group participants' details

School	Focus group number	Number of participants	Participants' pseudonyms
Blue	1	5	B1, B2, B3, B4, B5
Red	2	4	R1, R2, R3, R4
White	3	4	W1, W2, W3, W4

I conducted three focus group discussions with History teachers from three different secondary schools. Two observations per school from where the participants were drawn were also conducted as part of the qualitative data collection process. The observations were conducted at the end of term one and at the beginning of term two. Departmental meetings in the sampled schools were observed. Initially, I had the desire to observe one professional development session at each of the sampled schools; however, no staff development workshops were conducted at the sampled schools during the tenure of data collection for the study. Hence, I had to settle for end of term and beginning of term departmental meetings. The data from focus group discussions and observations were analysed in an integrated manner for themes that were later

described and illustrated with examples and quotations, capturing respondents' personal perspectives and experiences.

4.5.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 2

The findings in this section were geared towards answering the question:

- How do the teachers experience the practice of instructional leadership in a selected subject within the schools?

4.5.1.1 PROVISION OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

In line with the second research question, it was deemed necessary to establish the extent to which History teachers are experiencing the practice of instructional leadership. In the focus group discussions, the respondents were asked to comment on the extent to which their school leaders provide leadership aimed at improving teaching and learning of History. The general feeling amongst the teachers was that the school leaders were not doing enough as far as the provision of leadership aimed at improving the teaching and learning of History was concerned. Respondent R4 was blunt enough to say:

> Most of the school leaders at this school do not take that type of leadership seriously. Schemes of work are usually checked twice, at the beginning of the term and towards the end of the term. Book inspections are usually done once per term. This is not enough to say the least.

The same sentiments were echoed by respondent W3 who said that:

> At our school this kind of leadership is taking place but I doubt very much if our school leaders are doing enough and if they are really concerned about it. I have seen some school leaders, particularly heads of department writing fake supervision crits. What can you make out of this my good brother?

The teachers' remarks suggest that from their perception, instructional leadership is taking place in schools although to a limited extent. It could also be argued that some of the school leaders carry out certain instructional leadership activities not because they attach greater importance to instructional leadership, as evidenced by cases of cheating in writing supervision reports noted by respondent W3. They do so because they know

that it is a policy requirement. Manaseh (2016) echoes this line of thinking, contending that heads of schools in Tanzania at times insist on the filling in of schemes of work, lesson plans and log books for the sake of formality and they also know that these documents are part of the documents required by the school inspectors when they visit schools for supervision. This is in tandem with the conclusion made by Isaiah and Isaiah (2014: 119) in their study in Botswana, "that almost all teachers' perceived school heads as not doing enough on issues which are aimed to address student performance".

From the focus group discussions, it was noted that most of the teachers perceive the majority of the instructional leadership functions as being undertaken by formal school leaders such as the school head, deputy head and heads of department. Respondent B5 had this to say:

> In our school most of the school based leadership that is aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning is provided by the headmaster, deputy head and heads of department. However, it seems as if most of the supervision is done by the HOD because he is the person we interact with most of the time.

The majority of the teachers expressed the same thought. They indicated that most of the time their HODs supervise them. Therefore, it could be argued that the respondents were experiencing instructional leadership undertaken by official school leaders, particularly the heads of department, in their schools. The emphasis on the head of the department as the official who conducts most of the instructional leadership activities in the teaching and learning of History concurs with the survey results in the quantitative phase of the study. This finding is in tandem with the remark that instructional leaders have been broadened to encompass others besides the school head, such as deputy heads and heads of department (Marks & Printy, 2003). This is also consistent with findings from a study by Taole (2013), who noted that most of the South African rural high school principals feel that their instructional leadership responsibilities should be carried out by the heads of department.

It should be noted that all 13 respondents (100%) who participated in the three different focus group discussions never mentioned the role that is played by the informal school leaders in instructional leadership in their schools. When asked what role informal

leaders play in their school, respondent R2 frankly said, "Such leaders have no role to play at our school". Findings from the observations support this. All the meetings I attended were presided and dominated by heads of department who are official school leaders. There was visibly no place for informal leaders in all the proceedings. The findings contradict the findings from the quantitative phase where most of the respondents (65%) agreed with the idea of having teachers who are not in formal positions of authority engaging in instructional leadership activities within the school. The same findings also do not concur with the assertion by Sun *et al.* (2013) that instructional leadership also involves informal leaders such as teacher leaders who are instrumental in assisting their colleagues in the implementation of the newly introduced practices in schools. Thus, it could be argued that the perception shared by most of the History teachers in the quantitative phase of the study that informal leaders should be accorded a place in executing instructional leadership functions does not correspond with the reality they are experiencing in the schools where this group of leaders is not undertaking any instructional leadership functions.

4.5.1.2 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS UNDERTAKEN IN SCHOOLS

Table 4.16 below shows some of the instructional leadership functions experienced by the History teachers in the schools drawn from the focus group discussions.

Table 4.16: Instructional leadership functions undertaken in schools

Instructional leadership function	Frequency of responses	Percentage
Lesson observation	13	100
Book inspection	13	100
Provision of material resources	13	100
Induction of new teachers	4.0	30.8
Organising staff development workshops in the school	4	30.8

A summary of the findings from focus group discussions have revealed that although the majority of the History teachers felt that the leadership that focuses on teaching and learning was not getting the attention it deserves, as noted in Section 4.5.1.1, a number of instructional leadership functions were performed in the schools. These included lesson observation, book inspection, provision of material resources and induction of new teachers and organisation of staff development workshops. However, some of the noted instructional leadership activities were not taking place at some of the schools where focus group discussions were done. Only four teachers from one school (school Red) indicated that induction of new teachers and staff development workshops were taking place at their school. Therefore, based on the research findings, it can be noted that at two of the three schools where focus group discussions were conducted, new teachers were not being inducted and school-based staff development workshops were non-existent. The absence of staff development workshops in two of the three schools where focus group discussions were conducted could be taken to mean that from the teachers' experience, the majority of school leaders are not taking heed of the argument of Blasé and Blasé (2002). Blasé and Blasé (2002) argue that one of the key responsibilities of instructional leaders is the act of promoting teachers' professional growth.

The observations I made at the end of term and beginning of term departmental meetings in the sampled schools revealed that issues or activities to do with instructional leadership were discussed in such meetings. The issues that were quite common in all the meetings are shown by excerpts extracted from the observation protocols used for the study represented in table 4.17.

Table 5: Observed instructional leadership activities

Name of school	Details of instructional leadership activities discussed	
	Beginning of term meeting	**End of term meeting**
Blue	The HOD told the members of the	The HOD reminded the teachers to

		submit their fully evaluated schemes of work and records of marks on or before closing. The HOD expressed that he did not observe lessons for one or two teachers since he had a tight schedule. He promised to do better during the next coming term. Teachers were encouraged to create schemes for next term over the holiday since teaching should start on the first day of opening.
	department to submit their schemes of the work by Friday of that first week of opening. The teachers were advised that their departmental policy stipulate that they should create schemes up to the end of the term. Teachers were told to follow the national and school syllabi and to make sure that they cover all the topics that should be covered for that term. The HOD indicated that the lesson and book inspection timetable was already in place. Teachers were told to give learners adequate and quality work.	
Red	The HOD instructed teachers to submit their schemes any day of that opening week. The lesson observation supervision timetable was to be made available by the end of first week of opening. The HOD emphasised the need to give learners at least one assignment every week and a test after every two weeks. He promised to carry out book inspections to ensure that this is done. Teachers were challenged to be thorough in their marking.	Some of the teachers complained that some of the learners were not writing the given work and the school authorities were not taking action against such learners. The HOD asked the teachers whether they managed to cover all the topics designated for the term. Those who failed to cover some of the topics explained the challenges they encountered. The HOD complained that some of the teachers were not evaluating their schemes of work regularly. Teachers indicated that the teaching timetable was fully loaded and they were finding it

		difficult to give remedial work to learners.
White	The HOD emphasised the need for teachers to make sure that professional records such as schemes of work and records of marks are up-to-date. Teachers were told that it is a policy requirement for them to create schemes for the whole term and to submit their schemes before the end of the week. Teachers were encouraged to cover the syllabus adequately. Teachers were encouraged to use past examination papers for assessment. The need to prepare marking guides and to be thorough when it comes to marking was emphasised. The HOD appealed to the teachers to give remedial work to the academically challenged learners. Teachers were told to be geared for lesson observations and book inspections.	The HOD indicated that some of the teachers were not doing their work as expected as evidenced by their failure to give learners adequate work and to cover the topics scheduled for the term. The HOD highlighted that he did not manage to have two lesson observations and two exercise book inspections per teacher because he has a demanding teaching load. Teachers were told to maintain records that show that they are giving remedial work to their learners.

Table 4.17 above shows that assessment is one of the instructional leadership activities taking place in the schools sampled for the qualitative phase of the study. The heads of department emphasised the need to give adequate work to the learners in line with the stipulations of their departmental policies. The need to compile records of marks and mark the work of the learners was emphasised. This observed emphasis on

assessment is in line with the claim by Lingam and Lingam (2016) that assessment has a critical role to play in the teaching and learning matrix.

The instructional leadership function of ensuring adequate syllabus coverage was discussed in almost all the meetings observed by the researcher. At all three secondary schools the teachers were told the need to cover the syllabi fully. Furthermore, at all three institutions observed, the heads of department informed the teachers to create schemes for the whole term and submit their schemes of work to the head of department by the end of first week of opening. Lesson observations and book inspections attracted a lot of attention in these meetings as well. However, evidence from the extracts in table 4.16 shows that by the HODs at Blue and White Secondary Schools' own admission such lesson observations and book inspections were not being done regularly. This is contrary to the assertion of Kruger (2003) that teaching and learning should be closely supervised for best instructional practices and students' results to be realised.

Based on these observations, it can be concluded that teachers are experiencing instructional leadership activities. However, these activities are not being carried out to their logical conclusion as evidenced by the teachers' general perception in the focus group discussions that the school leaders were not doing enough as far as leadership aimed at improving teaching and learning is concerned. To support this, it was observed with great concern that in all the meetings attended by the researcher, no mention of staff development workshops was made. Seemingly, staff development as a leadership activity is not getting the attention it deserves. Possibly this is the reason why no staff development workshops were conducted at the sampled schools during the tenure of data collection for the study. The absence of staff development activities runs parallel with the advice of Ghavifekr *et al.* (2015) that teacher professional development activities should be prioritised for the sake of school improvement.

Furthermore, no particular attention was paid to school and departmental goals and the mission statement during the deliberations in all the meetings. The school and departmental mission statements were not displayed in the heads of department's offices where the meetings were convened. Therefore, an explanation of teachers'

experience of the practice of instructional leadership that can be given is that the teachers are not experiencing the practice of instructional leadership in its totality as some of its key aspects are being disregarded in the sampled schools.

In general, the research findings have revealed that the majority of teachers perceived most of the leadership activities as unhelpful to them. From the observations done, the general position was that the majority of teachers did not express great zeal in the discussion of instructional leadership related issues. Members of focus group discussion 3 concurred that they have little to benefit from class observations done by their school leaders, as none of them is a History specialist. They revealed that their head of department specialised in Religious Studies and Geography and as such they have very little to learn from him. Respondents B2 and R4 were of the opinion that schemes and exercise book inspections are valuable as they help in ensuring that the teachers are following the syllabus and giving learners work of high quality. However, teacher B2 highlighted that:

> As a History teacher I am likely to benefit more from lesson observations and book inspections done by a school head or head of department who majored in History. This business of being supervised by a non-history specialist is not very beneficial for some of us. In all fairness what do I learn from a person who specialised in Agriculture at college?

This finding tallies quite well with what was noted in the survey results. The survey results revealed that teachers usually prefer to be supervised by school leaders who share the same area of specialisation with them.

4.5.1.3 THE NATURE OF LEADERS CONDUCTING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS

The overall experiences of the respondents in relation to the nature of the people who are conducting instructional leadership in their schools reflect some discontent. It was noted that formal leaders such as the school head, deputy head and heads of department execute instructional leadership functions. This finding is in line with the Zimbabwean literature. As a case in point, the Ministry of Education and Culture (1993) identifies the above-mentioned officials as the principal instructional leaders in the

school. Whilst the respondents acknowledged that these official school leaders have the mandate to supervise them, they expressed their own reservations. Respondent W2 was actually bitter and had this to say:

> Personally, I think the people who are in positions of leadership at this school are not the right people for the job. All our school leaders are not in possession of qualifications in school leadership. To make the matters worse, our head of department is not a History specialist and is less qualified and junior to some of us.

Participant B1 echoes these sentiments, saying that:

> At this school it is only the head and the deputy head that are qualified for the job. These other handpicked officials are not well qualified and they lack in terms of experience. I strongly question the criterion that is used to appoint the heads of department at this school.

If this is anything to go by, it can be argued that the general perception amongst the majority of teachers involved in the study is that the people who are in positions of leadership in their schools may not be of the right calibre, as the majority of them do not have qualifications in school leadership. The subordinates reject some of the leaders, especially the heads of department, because they are less qualified and experienced. Based on this, it can be ascertained that teachers prefer school leaders who are experienced and who have professional qualifications in the area of school leadership. Survey results have also confirmed that most of the respondents prefer school leaders with formal training in instructional leadership. However, research in Zimbabwe has shown that most of the school leaders lack training in that critical area (Mapolisa & Tshabalala 2013; Zikhali & Perumal, 2014).

The participants in all three schools that were involved in the qualitative phase of the study clearly demonstrated that leadership aimed at improving teaching and learning in their departments was mostly provided by heads of department that did not share the same area of specialisation with them. Respondent W2 remarked that:

> This situation whereby we as History teachers we are made to work under the head of department who is not from the history subject is totally unacceptable. However, we have no choice except to work with that HOD imposed on us although we [are] not happy at all.

A close analysis of the scenario in the schools involved in the study revealed that History as a subject in these schools fall under the Humanities Department. The department comprises Geography, Religious Studies (Divinity) and History most of the time. Thus, the History teachers grudgingly accepted heads of department from other areas of specialisation than theirs.

Participant W3 was of the opinion that History should be a standalone department headed by a History specialist for them to benefit from the leadership that is provided by the head of the department. The same participant also suggested that it was much better for the school head to delegate someone who specialised in History to observe their lessons if they are to benefit from such lesson observations. The findings are in line with a popular position in the surveyed literature. For instance, Chen and Cheng (2017) acknowledge that given the distinctive nature of subjects offered in secondary schools and the clear-cut line between knowledge in different academic disciplines, it is an insurmountable task for a school leader to be an effective instructional leader in all areas of the curriculum. Jita (2010) noted that schools that were able to provide effective instructional leadership for the improvement of science and mathematics did not rely on a single leader. Several leaders played a part in leadership within a given subject area. For instance, one successful institution had numerous leadership posts such as departmental heads, heads of subjects, grade leaders and curriculum leaders. Therefore, the same can be done for history in Zimbabwean secondary schools.

4.5.1.4 THE PRIORITY GIVEN TO THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF HISTORY BY THE SCHOOL LEADERS

The participants expressed mixed feelings on the question: In your own opinion, do you think the teaching and learning of history is receiving adequate attention from your school leaders? Such mixed feelings revealed that instructional leadership is not being experienced in the same manner in the schools that were purposively sampled for the qualitative component of this study.

Some of the respondents are of the view that their school leaders are not prioritising the teaching and learning of history. Respondent W4 did not mince his words. He said "to be honest with you History is not enjoying the same playing field compared to other subjects in the curriculum such as science and mathematics. Few lessons are allocated for the subject and not enough resources are allocated for the subject". Contrary to this, the participants at Blue Secondary School indicated that the teaching of History is prioritised at their school, as the subject is compulsory for all the learners from forms 1 to 4. However, when the same participants were asked to compare the time spent by their head on directly supervising teaching and learning in the school and the time he spends on other administrative and management functions, they all concurred that the pendulum was swinging in favour of administrative and management functions. Respondent B1 had this to say:

> It is quite obvious that our school head just like many of the school heads I have worked with spends most of his time in his office doing administrative work. Here and there, he moves around the school to find out if things are in order. He rarely conducts lesson observations. Lesson observations are usually done by the deputy head and heads of department.

The same sentiment was shared by most of the respondents. The findings agree with the vast body of literature on educational leadership. For instance, it has been established that most of the school heads spend only about one-tenth of their time on instructional leadership (Jenkins, 2009; Taole 2013). Most of their time is consumed by managerial and administrative activities. Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013) also noted that in Zimbabwe, most of the school heads engage in issues such as financial management, sport and ground development at the expense of instructional leadership. Thus, from the teachers' experience, the school heads are abrogating their instructional leadership duties. This has led the majority of teachers to think that this is how things should be, as is evidenced by the fact that the majority of respondents (79%) in the quantitative phase either strongly agreed or agreed with the proposition that the school head should focus more on administrative and managerial roles than on instructional roles.

4.5.1.5 BENEFITS OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

When asked on how they are benefitting from the leadership that focuses on teaching and learning, the participants' responses showed that they lack a deep understanding of the value of instructional leadership in their work. The participants from Red and White secondary schools showed little appreciation for instructional leadership. Participant R1 dismissed instructional leadership as a routine exercise of little benefit to the teachers. He remarked:

> I am a professional who knows his job. To be frank with you I have very little to gain from activities such as lesson observation and book inspection. After the exercise you are not told anything meaningful to improve your practice. I am of the feeling that teachers should do their work the way they were taught at college.

Such a comment clearly shows the limitations on understanding the significance of instructional leadership as a powerful weapon for improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Participant R3 dismissed some of the activities associated with instructional leadership at his/her school as witch-hunting exercises meant to settle old scores.

> Some of the classroom visits are as good as witch hunting errands that are meant to silence those teachers who are vocal and who are considered to be radicals who criticise the policies of those who are in the corridors of power at the school. I do not attach any importance to such classroom visits.

All the participants at White Secondary School concurred that they are not benefitting from the activities of their school leaders that focus on teaching and learning. The participants' sentiments were that after lesson observation and book inspection, most of their school leaders do not sit down with them to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their work. Respondent W1 was emphatic, saying "there is no way I can benefit from lesson observations that are not followed by post-lesson observation conferences". The way these teachers perceived instructional leadership activities, particularly lesson observations, revealed that they somehow do not agree with the claim that the amount of time spent on the observation of classrooms and instruction is a key determinant in teachers and learners' achievement (Manaseh, 2016). Thus, the majority of teachers

are of the opinion that instructional leadership as practised in their schools has very little to offer them as far as the business of improving their practice is concerned.

On the contrary, the teachers at Blue Secondary School, which is famous for producing excellent results in public examinations in the province, generally felt that the activities of their school leaders that focus on teaching and learning are instrumental in helping them improve their teaching and ultimately, the results that are produced by their learners. Respondent B1 revealed that:

> I consider activities such as lesson observation and book inspection as of great value. They compel teachers to do their job in the expected way. Lesson observations force teachers to use the right pedagogy in their teaching. Exercise book inspections on the other hand help in ensuring that teachers give their learners adequate and high quality work.

Most of the respondents at Blue Secondary School also subscribe to the line of thinking that the work of their school-based leaders help them in diagnosing their areas of weakness and this is critical in assisting them to improve their practice. These teachers did not perceive instructional leadership activities of their school leaders as witch hunting exercises. Based on this research outcome, it can be argued that teachers' perceptions of instructional leadership vary depending on how that type of leadership is carried out in schools. In instances where instructional leadership is well executed, teachers stick to the appropriate pedagogy in their teaching. They also give their students adequate and high quality work. It has also been noted that instructional leadership has the capacity to help teachers to improve their practice by highlighting their weaknesses. This research finding is in tandem with the notion that Instructional leadership is the cornerstone of effective curriculum implementation (Taole, 2013).

4.5.1.6 THE INFLUENCE OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

The respondents were asked to respond to the following question: "How does the leadership from your school leaders influence your classroom practice?" Findings show that from the way the participants were experiencing instructional leadership, it was influencing their classroom practice directly. The school leaders were monitoring and

supervising their classroom teaching through lesson observations, inspection of schemes of work, record of marks and learners' exercise books. The respondents revealed that although such monitoring and supervision is not done regularly, it has the effect of influencing them to ensure that their work is always up-to-date. The inspection of schemes of work had the effect of compelling them to satisfy the requirements of the syllabus when creating schemes and delivering their lessons.

The respondents at Blue Secondary School indicated that their school head was very particular about syllabus coverage. This is clearly supported by the remarks made by respondent B3:

> Our head is very serious about syllabus coverage. In all the staff meetings he convene, he always emphasise the need to adequately cover the syllabus in time before the students sit for their final examinations. Teachers with examination classes are always asked in staff meetings how they are progressing as far as syllabus coverage is concerned. Whenever he is doing a lesson observation, he asks you to give him both the school and national syllabuses.

Based on this remark, it can be ascertained that instructional leadership is directly influencing some of the teachers' classroom practice by ensuring that they adequately cover the syllabus in time. This is in line with the findings made by Manaseh (2016), who found out that the school leaders, particularly school heads, have the tendency of holding meetings with subject teachers and learners to establish the extent of the syllabus coverage. Plewis (2011) also holds the practice of emphasising the importance of syllabus coverage in high esteem and considers this as key to learners' academic achievement. However, it should be noted that the teachers from the other two secondary schools involved in the study did not perceive their school leaders as doing enough to ensure that teachers cover their syllabi adequately.

In general, the research findings have revealed that almost all the participants are of the opinion that if lesson observations are properly done, they have the effect of improving their classroom practice by empowering them with the knowledge on appropriate pedagogy to use in their subject area. The participants indicated that all things being equal, their school leaders should sit down and discuss with them after lesson

observation pointing to their strengths and weaknesses. The consensus among the teachers is that this practice has the potential to improve their classroom practice though making recommendations on suitable pedagogy to use in the teaching and learning of History.

The potential of instructional leadership to improve the pedagogy of History teachers and other teachers in general was reiterated by Participant R4 who said that:

> In the past we used to have demonstration lessons. One of the teachers would deliver a real lesson in front of other teachers. After the lesson we would discuss the appropriateness of the teaching methods and teaching and learning aids used by the teacher. In general, the strengths and weaknesses of the delivered lesson were discussed in a friendly manner. To say the least, this was quite educative.

From the participants' experiences, it can be discerned that instructional leadership has the capacity to improve teachers' classroom practice by influencing them to use appropriate pedagogy in the teaching and learning of History. Similarly, Neumerski (2012) found out that the effective use of instructional leadership was frequently related to the use of learner-centred teaching and learning approaches; hence, one of the major benefits of instructional leadership lies in its strength in promoting teachers' use of appropriate pedagogical practices.

The findings from the discussions with the teachers revealed that the school heads are influencing classroom practice by taking it upon themselves to ensure that teachers utilise the time that is allocated for lessons. The teachers at all three schools that were involved in this second segment of the study revealed that it is mandatory for them to fill in the check-in and check-out register on every working day. At Red Secondary School, the participants indicated that class monitors at their school were given attendance registers by the school head that are signed by the teachers as they come for lessons and at the end of their lessons. These measures are tailor-made to protect instructional time. That way the school leaders are influencing teachers' practice by ensuring that they always attend to their classes. However, at White Secondary School, some of the participants felt that not enough was being done to protect instructional time. As unplanned meetings and other activities consumed time meant for lessons.

The findings tended to suggest that the participants perceived their school leaders as making an effort to influence the learning and performance of their learners. From the focus group discussions, it can be noted that the school leaders were influencing the learning and performance of their learners through employing the following measures:

- Protection of instructional time
- Instilling discipline in the school
- Procuring the curriculum materials required for effective teaching and learning
- Lesson observations, inspection of schemes of work, records of marks and learners' exercise books
- Staff meetings that discuss issues to do with teaching and learning such as syllabus coverage
- Facilitating consultation days to discuss the performance of learners with their parents and guardians
- Incentivising the learners through monthly top ten awards and annual prize giving ceremonies

When asked whether the influence of their school leaders on learning was direct or indirect, most of the teachers expressed that their influence was indirect. Most of the participants felt that their school leaders, particularly the school head, influenced the learning and performance of the learners indirectly through the creation of enabling conditions that facilitate teaching and learning as well as academic excellence. This is in line with the conclusion made by Leithwood *et al.* (2014) who noted that most of the time school leaders contribute to students' learning indirectly, through the influence they exert on teachers or through the features of their organisation.

It was disheartening to note that most of the participants were not experiencing school-based staff development workshops. One of the participants had this to say:

> I have been at this school for over five years but to say the truth I have never witnessed any workshop that is directly on teaching and learning. It appears like staff development is not part and parcel of the culture of this school. If I say at this school only it will be an understatement. I have been to two schools before being deployed here and my experience of staff development at all the schools is the same.

The absence of staff development workshops is quite disturbing because in the survey part of the study, History teachers perceived that such workshops have a lot to offer them. There is a need to sensitise the school leaders, particularly the school heads, on the significance of staff development workshops as a vehicle through which student learning and achievement can be improved. Based on their study, Blasé and Blasé (2002) concluded that one of the key responsibilities of instructional leaders is the act of promoting teachers' professional growth.

4.5.1.7 TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND THE INTEGRATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Responses to the question: "To what extent are your school leaders creating conditions that enable teachers to learn from one another?" revealed that from their experience, the participants perceived their school leaders as not doing enough to create conditions favourable for classroom practitioners to learn from one another. The consensus among the respondents is that at a theoretical level, their school heads encourage them to learn from one another through group sharing of ideas and team teaching. However, this encouragement is not translated into reality as no action was being taken to promote group sharing of ideas and team teaching. Respondent W3 aptly said:

> It is a misrepresentation of the truth to say that our school leaders are putting in place measures that make it possible for us to learn from one another. Of course in staff meetings they preach the gospel of sharing ideas and team teaching, but in reality this is not implemented. Teachers are operating as individuals and they are not helping one another.

Respondent R3 echoes these sentiments remarking that:

> In almost every staff meeting, our school head encourages us to share ideas and to learn from one another. This is a brilliant idea; however, the unfortunate part of it is that this is not what is happening on the ground. As teachers we are not consulting one another and the school administration is not taking any action to make sure that teachers consult one another as they do their work.

Judging by these responses, it can be argued that the school leaders acknowledge the importance of teacher collaboration but by the respondents' admissions, they do not

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create conditions necessary for collaboration. Thus, the idea of teacher professional learning communities is not being fully harnessed to improve teaching and learning in schools where the respondents were drawn from. This is contrary to the thinking of Goddard *et al.* (2010), who believe that teachers should refine their practice in collaboration with close teaching colleagues.

It is also the respondents' general perception that although the school leaders are not doing enough to ensure that teachers share ideas and learn from one another, the teachers themselves are not prepared to learn from one another. From all three focus group discussions, it was noted that the teachers were not observing each other doing the actual teaching. One of the respondents actually said, "I am not comfortable to teach in the presence of another teacher. I prefer to deliver my lessons in private". Therefore, the teachers' mentality that the classroom is their private domain is partly negating efforts by school leaders to create conditions that enable teachers to learn from one another. The findings are in line with the literature; for instance, Bellibas (2016) has established that some teachers have a strong sense of classroom privacy. The same line of thinking is also supported by Hallinger (2012), who posits that most of the classroom practitioners conduct their teaching business behind closed doors and this militates against effective use of instructional leadership in the schools.

Respondents were asked to respond to the question: "What steps are taken by your school leaders to deepen teachers' motivation, commitment and dedication to organisational goals". Findings reveal that the perceptions of respondents are such that school leaders rarely make a serious effort to motivate teachers and enhance their commitment and dedication to organisational goals. All 13 participants (100%) concurred that during the tenure of the inclusive government between 2008 and 2013, they were receiving monetary incentives from their schools as part of the efforts to augment the salary they were getting from the government. However, this policy was abandoned after 2013. The teachers were of the view that these monetary incentives were motivating them and spurring them on to operate optimally. With the scrapping of the monetary incentives, the respondents expressed that their motivation levels declined. The respondents also indicated that they used to get monetary awards from

their schools for producing good results in public examinations. However, this is also now a thing of the past as this was also outlawed. From the respondents' perspective, the school leaders are not in a position to motivate them using monetary incentives and awards as their hands are somehow tied by statutory requirements.

The findings also tended to suggest that the school leaders, particularly most of the school heads, are also not making efforts to use non-monetary incentives to motivate their subordinates. Respondents at two institutions revealed that it was not the habit of their school heads to praise them when they produce outstanding work. Respondent W4 frankly said that:

> If you produce excellent results you are not recognised. Our school head only praises those teachers who are in good books with him. If you are not in good books with him he always remains silent as if nothing significant happened.

This finding corresponds with what was noted in the survey part of the study in which the majority of teachers indicated that their school leaders are not doing enough to motivate them (See Section 4.4.1.5 in this chapter).

Contrary to this, respondents from one of the three schools from where the respondents were drawn were of the opinion that their school head was doing his best to utilise non-monetary incentives to motivate them. They indicated that they are praised for outstanding performance and those teachers who produce excellent results in public examinations are given certificates on speech and prize giving day. Therefore, it can be argued that although the majority of the school heads are not making an effort to motivate their teachers using non-monetary incentives, a few are doing that.

In general, the research findings have shown that the majority of the respondents are of the opinion that their school leaders are not making an effort to deepen their commitment and dedication to organisational goals. Almost all the respondents indicated that they are not involved in the business of creating institutional goals. From the teachers' experience, the creation of institutional goals is a preserve of school heads and a select group in formal positions of leadership. This is contrary to the advice given by Goddard *et al.* (2010) that the principal should create the mission of the school

in liaison with the other members of staff to ensure that the mission is widely known and supported by all members of the school community. Based on the survey results, which show that most of the teachers perceive the creation of institutional goals as a shared function, it could be argued that there is a gap at times between what teachers expect and how they are experiencing the practice of instructional leadership.

4.5.1.8 BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Respondents' responses to the question: "What are some of the challenges that inhibit your school leaders, particularly the school head, from concentrating on leadership functions that focus on teaching and learning?" revealed that teachers perceived their school leaders as being hampered by a multiplicity of factors in the execution of their instructional leadership mandate. The most common barrier that appeared quite frequently in all three focus group discussions that were conducted was a lack of leadership knowledge on the part of the school leaders. Participant B5 aptly remarked:

> Most of our school leaders are not in a possession of qualifications in educational administration and management. In my own opinion this is what makes it difficult if not impossible to embark on the type of leadership under discussion. So the bottom line is that they are not well equipped for the job of school leadership.

Participant R3 echoes these sentiments, saying that:

> These school leaders are as good as Kombi drivers who drive without drivers' licenses. They are bound to crash because they are not qualified for the job.

Similarly, Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013: 354) have observed that in Zimbabwe, "heads of schools emerge from the teaching population and have had little or no training for the job. This might be because heads are promoted as teachers straight from the classroom without any prior training for taking up the headship post". Therefore, without the requisite instructional leadership skills, the general results have shown that the majority of the respondents perceived their school leaders as not well equipped for the job.

Almost all the respondents perceived that their school leaders had too many responsibilities to focus on leadership functions that emphasise teaching and learning. Respondent R1revealed that:

> Heads of department, senior teachers and deputy heads have their own heavy teaching loads that at times make it practically impossible for them to concentrate on the supervision of teaching and learning in the school.

It was also noted that school heads have plenty of administrative and management tasks to execute that demand most of their attention. Some of the tasks that consume most of the school heads' time included attending meetings, writing reports, maintenance of school grounds, managing the finances of the school and disciplining students. This finding is in tandem with the observation made by Jenkins (2009) that most of the school heads do not have the time required for instructional leadership and in the face of numerous competing and conflicting responsibilities, school heads tend to focus more on administrative and managerial tasks at the expense of instructional leadership.

The perceptions of almost all the History teachers involved in the focus group discussions portray a rather common scenario as in the literature. The teachers were of the opinion that most of their school leaders were finding it very difficult to supervise the teaching and learning of history because they lacked subject content knowledge for the subject. This line of thinking is clearly represented by the words of Participant R2:

> At this school we offer about 15 subjects in total and therefore there is no way the school leaders, particularly the school head and deputy head can offer expert advice to the teachers who are teaching these diverse subjects.

The findings are in line with the literature surveyed. As a case in point, Stein and Nelson (2003) established that the principals, particularly of secondary schools, are considered to be lacking the relevant content knowledge regarding specific subject matters.

One of the barriers to effective instructional leadership that I deduced from discussions with the participants is the lack of familiarity and appreciation of the concept of instructional leadership on the part of the school leaders and the teachers themselves. All the respondents in the focus group discussions indicated that their school heads do

not have any teaching loads. If this is anything to go by, it could be said that such school leaders are far removed from the classroom experience. Some of the respondents who are teachers themselves perceived instructional leadership functions, such as lesson observation and exercise book inspection, as of no benefit to them, as they are fully qualified classroom practitioners. Based on these findings, it can be ascertained that the teachers and the school leaders were not familiar with the concept of instructional leadership. This dovetails quite well with the conclusion reached by Manaseh (2016), that heads of secondary schools and their teachers in Tanzania were not familiar with the idea of instructional leadership.

From the research findings, it was also observed that some of the teachers perceived their school leaders' neglect of leadership functions that focus on teaching and learning because of a lack of motivation. Respondent W2 revealed that, "everyone including those who are in the positions of authority is demoralised although they try to downplay that by not expressing it publicly". Judging by this remark, it can be noted that a lack of motivation is one of the factors hampering the practice of instructional leadership in Zimbabwe. From the research findings, it has been observed that not only the teachers are in need of motivation but also the school leaders as well.

The overall perception of teachers in relation to barriers to effective instructional leadership portrays that the conduct of some of the school leaders is obstacle to effective instructional leadership. The teachers revealed that some of the school leaders were unprofessional and unethical as they were using leadership functions such as lesson observation to achieve other goals besides the improvement of teaching and learning. The teachers perceived school leaders as using some of the leadership functions to settle old scores with the teachers who dare to challenge some of their decisions and policies.

4.5.2 SYNTHESIS OF MAJOR QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESULTS

As part of answering the second research question, this subsection briefly explores, consolidates and relates the major quantitative and qualitative findings of the study.

Results from the quantitative phase clearly demonstrate that the majority of the teachers perceive that the school head should provide leadership aimed at improving teaching and learning. The qualitative results from the focus group discussions and observations confirm that school heads and other school leaders are undertaking some instructional leadership functions in schools. However, these leadership functions are usually not carried out regularly and some of the heads of department do not attach a lot of importance to them as evidenced by the scenario of writing fake supervision reports.

From the survey results, it has been ascertained that the majority of the History teachers feel that the school head should share instructional leadership duties with other formal school leaders such as the deputy head, senior master/senior woman and heads of department. Focus group discussions confirmed that other formal leaders are indeed assisting school heads in executing some of their instructional leadership functions. However, most of the focus group discussion participants expressed the view that the heads of department perform most of the instructional leadership duties.

On the contrary, although the survey results clearly revealed that teachers support the idea of having informal leaders engaging in instructional leadership, the qualitative results seem to suggest something else. Results from the focus group discussions and observations established that informal leaders almost have no instructional leadership role to play in the Zimbabwean school system.

Contrary to the popular position in the literature that the school head should prioritise instructional leadership roles, survey results have shown that the majority of the respondents subscribe to the thinking that the school head should concentrate more on administration and managerial roles. The results from the focus group discussions suggest that this view stems from the fact that most of the school heads are not involved and often delegate most of their instructional leadership functions to other formal leaders as they focus more on administrative and managerial roles. This status quo in schools may have led teachers to think erroneously that school heads should focus more on the administrative and managerial roles at the expense of the instructional leadership roles.

From the survey results, it may be argued that almost all the History teachers prefer to be supervised by school leaders who share the same area of specialisation with them and who possess formal training in the area of school leadership. However, these expectations by the teachers are not met by the reality on the ground. The focus group discussions have confirmed that History specialists and school leaders with formal training in school leadership do not supervise the majority of the History teachers. This possibly explains why some of the teachers shun and resent instructional leadership.

From the quantitative results, it can be discerned that the majority of teachers support the idea of a school having a vision on student learning as well as mission statement. The respondents were of the opinion that the school head in consultation with other staff members should create the vision and mission statement of the school. Contrary to this, the results from the focus group discussions have revealed that the business of creating the vision and mission statement is a preserve of the school head and other formal leaders as teachers are often side-lined. More so, research results have revealed that in the communication of the school vision, mission statement and goals, only formal channels of communication are utilised. The non-use of informal channels of communication runs parallel with the expectations of the majority of the teachers.

The survey results point to the fact that some of the teachers acknowledge that instructional leadership is immensely beneficial, as it enhances school effectiveness and improves student attainment. The qualitative results showed that from the History teachers' perception, some of the anticipated benefits of instructional leadership are not being realised in schools because instructional leadership activities are not conducted regularly. However, it is quite refreshing to note that the focus group discussion results support the view that instructional leadership has the capacity to improve teaching and learning if it is appropriately carried out. As a case in point, History teachers acknowledged that if instructional leadership is well conducted it could help them to improve their pedagogical practices.

It was noted in the quantitative phase of the study that History teachers expect school leaders to play a part in ensuring that the syllabus is interpreted appropriately and is adequately covered. However, the same teachers also expressed that school leaders

are not playing their part in assisting teachers as far as the interpretation of the syllabus is concerned. The qualitative results also confirmed that the majority of teachers perceive the school leaders as not committed to ensuring that teachers interpret the syllabus correctly and adequately cover it.

It is rather disturbing to note that the quantitative and qualitative results confirm that although teachers expect their school leaders to play a part in motivating and staff developing them, this is not what is happening on the ground. The majority of teachers perceive most of the school leaders as proving to be non-committal to the motivation and staff development of their subordinates.

The quantitative and qualitative results have revealed that the idea of professional learning communities (PLCs) is not receiving the much-anticipated attention. The survey results showed that the majority of the teachers did not support the notion of encouraging teachers to share their practice and utilise feedback from each other to improve their practice. From the qualitative results, it was noted that school leaders acknowledge the importance of teacher collaboration but by the respondents' admissions, they do not create conditions necessary for such collaboration. This is quite unfortunate because professional learning communities are considered an indispensable component of instructional leadership practice (Van Lare & Brazer, 2013).

4.5.3 KEY FINDINGS ON PERCEPTIONS

After having synthesised the major quantitative and qualitative results of the study, the key findings on perceptions may be summarised as follows:

- School heads are crucial in providing leadership on instructional leadership in schools; however, the current reality is that most school heads are not involved substantially with this task or simply delegate it to other formal leaders in the schools. Where it happens, it is rather sporadic and less important than administrative and management duties.

- When instructional leadership happens in schools under the leadership of the school head, it tends to be generic, sporadic, not subject-specific and not focused on key activities. For these reasons, the dominant finding was that such

a generic approach was ineffective and was perceived as a "witch hunt" instead of a developmental process.

4.5.4 RESEARCH QUESTION 3

The quantitative and qualitative phases of the study sought to answer the question:

- How can the teachers' perceptions and practices be understood and/or explained?

This third question, which is an analytical one and which can only be answered by making inferences to the responses given by the respondents in the two phases of the study, will be answered in Section 5.3.3 in Chapter 5.

4.5.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS 4

Finally, the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study also sought to answer the fourth research question:

- What recommendations can be made from the study of teachers' perceptions and experiences to improve the practice of instructional leadership in Zimbabwe in general?

This final research question is addressed in the final chapter of the study under the recommendations section. The question will be answered using a combination of data arising from the quantitative and qualitative analyses of data.

4.6 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

In summary, it may be said that the main focus of this chapter was the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the findings of the study gathered through quantitative and qualitative methods as per the requirements of the mixed-methods research inquiry and the explanatory sequential design, which was the guiding framework for the study. The initial section focused on the presentation of quantitative data that was gathered using the questionnaire instrument during the first phase of the study. The second section focused on the presentation of qualitative data collected using observations and focus group discussions. A strong attempt was made to link the findings to the research problem, sub-problems and the reviewed literature. The results suggest that teachers perceive leadership aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning of History

as not receiving adequate attention in the schools. Some measures have to be adopted if the quality of instructional leadership in schools is to improve. The last chapter of this thesis will give an overview of the entire study, present the main research results, shed light on the limitations faced during data gathering and draw the conclusion to the study. It will also suggest recommendations arising from the experiences and findings of the study and suggest potential areas for further enquiry in the area of instructional leadership.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This last chapter summarises the entire study, provides a discussion of the findings, implications of the findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations with respect to the findings and experiences of the study. The findings of the study are discussed in light of the themes and issues arising from the literature reviewed in chapter 2. The primary goal of this research study was to inquire how Zimbabwean secondary school History teachers understand, conceptualise and experience instructional leadership. The conclusions drawn from the research findings were handy in helping the researcher to evaluate how successful he was in answering the research questions and achieving the research objectives. Recommendations have been made with the motive of improving the practice of instructional leadership in schools. An attempt has also been made to highlight the limitations of the study and the areas that may warrant special attention of future researchers in the sphere of instructional leadership.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The current study was geared towards exploring Zimbabwean teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership. The study was premised on the primary question: How is instructional leadership perceived and experienced by Zimbabwean teachers? To unpack the research problem fully and address the concerns of the study, the primary research question was further delineated into the following sub-problems:

- What are the teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understandings of instructional leadership in Zimbabwe?
- How do the teachers experience the practice of instructional leadership in a selected subject within the schools?
- How can the teachers' perceptions and practices be understood and/or explained?

- What recommendations can be made from the study of teachers' perceptions and experiences to improve the practice of instructional leadership in Zimbabwe in general?

The first chapter of the thesis critically explored the background to the study, problem statement and significance of the study, research questions as well as the, as well as the, aims and objectives of the study. A summary of the theoretical framework and methodology used for the study was also discussed. Delimitations and limitations of the study were also articulated. In the last segment of the chapter, terms central to the study were defined.

Chapter 2 interrogated literature related to the research topic with the deliberate intention of providing a theoretical base for the research. The main themes that emerged from the literature review that are linked to the study's research problem and that were discussed in the second chapter of the study are as follows:
- Definitions of the concept instructional leadership
- The historical background of instructional leadership as an educational leadership paradigm
- Sources of instructional leadership
- Priority is given to instructional leadership in schools
- Instructional behaviours or practices associated with instructional leadership
- Skills required for effective instructional leadership
- Benefits of instructional leadership in the schools
- Problems associated with the absence of instructional leadership in the schools
- Factors militating against effective use of instructional leadership in schools
- Weaknesses of instructional leadership as a leadership paradigm
- Integrating instructional leadership with transformational leadership (TL)
- The impact of instructional leadership on classroom practice

It should be noted that in the process of reviewing the literature with specific reference to the above-mentioned themes, the researcher made an effort to pinpoint the gaps in scholarship that are the focus of this current study.

In the same chapter, the theoretical framework that undergirded the study was explored at length. The study was rooted in the principal instructional management rating scale (PIMRS) framework or model proposed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). The PIMRS model was used as the basis for formulating question items for determining teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership in the current study.

The literature review chapter also articulated how the theoretical framework for the study was underpinned by using a single paradigm of social constructivism. The proponents of this paradigm regard knowledge and truth as developed by the interactions of individuals within a given society (Andrews, 2012).The underlying assumption is that knowledge is created through social interaction and is a consequence of social processes and diversity within a group. Furthermore, it results in multiple meanings, interpretations and perceptions of the same phenomenon. It was noted that social constructivism is relevant for this study because the teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership are a consequence of social construction and they are bound to differ.

Chapter three was centred on describing the research design and methodology. The research study drew on the mixed-methods research inquiry with the explanatory sequential design as the guiding framework (Creswell, 2012; Gay *et al.,* 2011). The researcher collected quantitative and qualitative data sequentially. In this two-phase study, the researcher first collected quantitative data through the survey instrument to explore research question 1 on the teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understandings of instructional leadership. The second phase was a qualitative study that employed observations and interviews to help explain or elaborate on teachers' experiences as proposed in question 2. Questions 3 and 4 were answered by mixing quantitative and qualitative data. The rationale for using the mixed-methods approach was to build on the strengths of each approach to understand the phenomenon that was under investigation more fully than is possible using either paradigm alone (Chen, 2005; Yin, 2012). Therefore, the mixed-methods study provided a broad understanding from

survey results and a deep understanding from the focus group discussion data, one that would not be possible using either design by itself.

The researcher used a blend of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. Three data gathering instruments, the questionnaire, the focus group discussion and observation, were used to tap teachers' perceptions and experiences of the central phenomenon. The chosen research design afforded the researcher the opportunity to explore the research problem in context using a variety of data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This promoted triangulation of the findings. Through triangulating data and/or perspectives, it was possible to gain an adequate and more robust picture of the phenomenon, enhancing claims to quality and validity (Hamilton, 2011).

The population comprised all secondary school History teachers in Zimbabwe's educational province of Mashonaland Central. The sample included rural and urban schools to facilitate exploration into whether the central phenomenon was context specific.

For the quantitative phase of the study, a survey questionnaire was circulated to a sample of 200 secondary school teachers. For the qualitative phase, three secondary schools, an urban, rural and missionary school were selected. One subject group per school, namely History teachers, was subjected to focus group discussions about their experiences and observation of some of their instructional leadership activities. Three focus group interviews and two observations per school, choosing a representative activity such as a departmental meeting, were conducted.

The research participants were selected through what Onwuegbuzi and Collins (2007) term multi-stage purposeful random sampling. The first phase involved simple random selection of schools and participants and the following phase involved purposive selection of participants.

Chapter four focused on presenting and analysing the data collected from the study. The collected data was analysed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis as per tradition of the mixed-methods research design. The first phase was characterised by quantitative analysis of data collected through the

survey instrument using the computer package of SPSS to explore descriptive and inferential statistics. For the qualitative phase, the data was analysed qualitatively through thematic analysis. The data was organised, coded and analysed for themes, patterns and trends. Later, the data was presented as summaries and narratives and illustrated with examples and quotations, capturing respondents' personal perspectives and experiences.

Chapter five, which is the final chapter of this thesis, summarises the entire study, provides a discussion of the findings, implications of the findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations with respect to the findings of the study.

5.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.3.1 TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS, BELIEFS AND UNDERSTANDINGS OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

The findings of the study under this sub-section are geared towards addressing the study's first research question:

- What are the teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understandings of instructional leadership in Zimbabwe?

The quantitative analyses in this study reveal that most of the teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understandings of instructional leadership are not off the mark and concur with the description and explanation of instructional leadership given by the leading scholars in that area such as Hallinger and Murphy (1985), Jenkins (2009), Jita (2010) and Grisson and Loeb (2011).

It was refreshing to note that the majority of the respondents involved in the study concur with the dominant position in the literature on instructional leadership that school heads should take the lead in providing leadership aimed at improving teaching and learning in the schools. Most of the respondents correctly believe that the provision of instructional leadership should not be a solo effort on the part of the school heads;

rather they should share this type of leadership with the hierarchy of the other school leaders in designated positions of authority. Similarly, Marks and Printy (2003) share this belief, contending that instructional leaders have been broadened to encompass others besides the school head, such as deputy heads and heads of department. I was intrigued to note that most of the teachers understand instructional leadership as a shared function, which is not a preserve for the school heads and other school leaders in formal positions of responsibility only. The majority of the respondents perceived that teachers who are not in formal positions of authority should also be involved in executing instructional leadership activities within the school. Sun *et al.* (2013) support this position.

The research findings show that a sizeable number of the respondents hold onto the belief that teachers should be encouraged to make decisions concerning teaching and learning. They also feel that it is vital to encourage teachers to share their practice and use feedback from each other to improve their classroom practice. This finding aligns with the remark made by Jita and Mokhele, (2013: 125) that, "…the view of principals as the primary instructional leaders in a school has been challenged with some research demonstrating the distributed nature of instructional leadership to include teachers". Thus, the majority of the respondents involved in the current study perceive instructional leadership as a shared function that involves school heads, other school leaders in formal positions of authority and informal leaders such as teacher leaders. What it entails is that when it comes to school leadership one should consider principals, assistant principals, HODs, teacher leaders and coaches.

It is disturbing to note that although the majority of the respondents involved in the study rightly believe that the school heads should provide leadership targeted at improving teaching and learning, the respondents still think that the school head should focus more on administrative and managerial roles than on instructional roles. The finding is not in line with the current dispensation in instructional leadership circles, which calls for the school head to prioritise teaching and learning (Jenkins, 2009). Based on the reviewed literature, it may be argued that this kind of thinking on the part of the respondents stems from the fact that most of the school heads prioritise administrative

and managerial roles at the expense of instructional leadership roles. It has been determined that most of the school heads spend only about one-tenth of their time on instructional leadership (Jenkins, 2009; Taole 2013). Most of their time is spend on managerial and administrative activities. A study conducted by Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013) in Zimbabwe, also revealed that most of the school heads engage in issues such as financial management, sport and ground development at the expense of instructional leadership. Because of this, most of the History teachers think that the situation obtained in their schools is the ideal one. This kind of perception is unfortunate because instructional leadership should be at the top of the priority list of any serious school head (Jenkins, 2009).

In addition to the perception that the school heads should concentrate more on administrative and managerial duties, most of the respondents also feel that it is not feasible for the school heads to strike a balance between administrative, managerial and instructional roles. This is contrary to the position that emphasises the need to attempt to maintain a balance between instructional leadership and other competing areas of attention such as administration and management supported in the literature by the likes of Joyner (2005) and Kruger (2003).

The quantitative phase of the study has demonstrated that the majority of the respondents are of the opinion that middle level school leaders, such as HODs should focus more on instruction than on administrative and managerial roles. This research finding may be taken as an admission that some History teachers think it may be impossible for the school heads to strike a balance between administrative, managerial and instructional roles and the school heads are not doing enough as far as their instructional mandate is concerned; therefore, HODs should step in to take those instructional leadership responsibilities.

The research findings have shown that leadership for instruction should be subject-specific, as teachers prefer to be supervised by school leaders who share the same area of specialisation with them. The need for instructional leadership that is subject-specific has also been supported by Spillane (2002) and Spillane *et al.* (2003).

However, it should be noted that although the majority of the respondents perceived that they prefer to be supervised by the school leaders who share the same area of specialisation with them, in actual fact the majority of them were not being supervised by such leaders. In addition to their preference of school leaders who share the same area of specialisation with them, the respondents preferred school leaders with formal training in instructional leadership. However, again the results from the qualitative phase of the study have demonstrated that most of the school leaders lack such training. This gap between teachers' expectations and the actual situation on the ground has the potential of creating negative perceptions towards instructional leadership on the part of teachers.

The research findings from the quantitative phase of the study have clearly established that the respondents perceive instructional leadership as instrumental in enhancing school effectiveness and improving student attainment. This perception on the part of the respondents aligns well with the dominant position in the vast body of literature on instructional leadership. This is typified by the assertion by Leithwood *et al.* (2014: 5) that, "leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school". Bas (2012), DeMatthews (2014), Hallinger (2009) and Louis *et al.* (2010) echo these sentiments.

Quantitative data were collected to determine teachers' perceptions, beliefs and experiences of instructional leadership in relation to the dimension of defining the school's mission, proposed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). The research findings demonstrated that most of the respondents subscribe to the line of thinking that it is of utmost importance for the schools to have a clear vision and mission statement. The majority of the respondents thought that the responsibility of creating the school's vision and mission statement should not be a solo effort on the part of the school head. The school head should execute this instructional leadership function in consultation with the other members of staff. The respondents were also of the perception that the school's vision, mission and goals should be communicated to the school's key stakeholders such as learners and parents. Al-Mahdy and Al-Kiyumi, (2015) share this kind of

thinking, stipulating that the school's vision and mission should be communicated widely to the school's stakeholders to have a significant impact.

It was refreshing to note that most of the questionnaire respondents perceived that their school vision, mission and goals were clearly articulated. The majority of the respondents agreed to the need to formally communicate the school's vision, mission and goals. This shows that in most of the schools, the school vision, mission and goals are communicated formally. However, the majority of the respondents indicated that informal channels of communication were not being utilised. This finding is not in line with the common position in the reviewed literature. Hallinger and Wang (2015) encourage the use of formal and informal channels in communicating the school's vision, mission and goals.

The research findings showed interesting teachers' perceptions, beliefs and experiences on the management of the instructional programme dimension of instructional leadership (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). This dimension specifically deals with the coordination and control of instruction and the curriculum (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). The respondents felt that the school head should have a teaching load. Numerous scholars share this perception. The crux of the matter is that if school heads are directly involved in teaching they will have first-hand experience of the problems that are faced by teachers in the classroom.

It was noted with, great excitement, that the majority of teachers support classroom supervision. This is refreshing since supervision is an indispensable component of the teaching and learning process; hence, there is a need for it to be welcomed by all the classroom practitioners. Only a few teachers expressed resentment towards classroom supervision. Possibly those teachers who are against classroom supervision have been forced to do so by the fact that most of the school leaders are not doing lesson observations in their own areas of specialisation as shown by the research results. This is in sharp contrast with the expectations of the majority of teachers. From this research finding, it can be argued that teachers are of the opinion that they benefit more from lesson observations conducted by school leaders who share the same area of

specialisation with them. Therefore, it may be said that the way instructional leadership is executed in some of the schools brings resentment on the part of some teachers.

From the research findings, it was noted that the respondents were in support of several functions associated with instructional leadership. The majority of the respondents supported book inspections geared toward ensuring that students are given quality work, the need for school leaders to convene regular meetings to discuss students' performance and achievement, the need for school leaders to sit down with teachers to engage in syllabus interpretation and to supervise teachers to cover the syllabus adequately. The teachers also believe that the school head in consultation with the other school leaders should procure the curriculum materials required in schools. More so, the majority of the respondents indicated that their school heads do not favour their areas of specialisation in the procurement of instructional materials. This demonstrates that most of the school heads are very professional in their execution of the duty of procuring curriculum materials. However, what is confusing is the fact that although teachers expect their school leaders to assist them in syllabus interpretation, in reality the school leaders are not doing this, as shown by the research findings.

The study also sought to find out teachers' perceptions, beliefs and experiences on the dimension of instructional leadership to do with developing an enabling climate for teaching and learning (Horng & Loeb, 2011). It was noted that respondents' perceptions, beliefs and understandings of instructional leadership in relation to the creation of an environment that is suitable for teaching and learning concur with the expectations of Hallinger and Murphy (1985). Most of the respondents voiced the need for school leaders to ensure that instructional time is protected. However, it is disappointing to note that some of the respondents felt that some of the school leaders were not doing enough to protect instructional time. A significant number of the respondents expressed a view that in their schools, teachers and learners who abscond from lessons did not face the consequences. This observation is a cause for concern because if instructional time is not protected, the dream of achieving adequate syllabus coverage may not be realised. In the end, the performance and achievement of students will be compromised.

The majority of the respondents were of the view that it is within the confines of the duties of the school head to move around the school visiting the learning venues. As far as this instructional leadership function is concerned, it seems as if most of the school heads are doing well as the respondents gave them their approval. The majority of the respondents indicated that most of the school heads were maintaining visibility by moving around the school campus. This research finding is in tandem with the observation by Isaiah and Isaiah (2014). The duo noted that most of the school heads in Botswana were perceived by the majority of the teachers as good at maintaining visibility in the school in an attempt to instil discipline in the learners. Thus, it may be argued that generally History teachers perceive school heads as not finding it difficult to maintain visibility in the school.

Still on the same dimension of developing a conducive climate for teaching and learning, the respondents were of the opinion that it was important for the school leaders to reward hardworking teachers and learners. The majority of the respondents supported the idea of staff development workshops to improve the competencies of classroom practitioners. The same respondents also expressed the feeling that these staff development workshop should be linked to other instructional leadership functions. This is not a trivial position as it enjoys the support of numerous scholars in the literature on instructional leadership. Bellibas (2016) argues that different leadership activities should inform one another. However, it should be noted that some of the expectations of the respondents are being frustrated by the reality on the ground. For instance, the majority of the respondents noted that in most cases, hardworking teachers are not being recognised and rewarded and no meaningful help was being extended to teachers struggling to cope with their work. Therefore, the emerging position from the research findings is that the teachers' expectations on instructional leadership may be spot on. However, these expectations are at times unfulfilled by how the practice of instructional leadership is performed in some of the schools.

5.3.2 HISTORY TEACHERS' EXPERIENCE OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE SCHOOLS

This section presents research findings that address the following sub-question:

- How do the teachers experience the practice of instructional leadership in a selected subject within the schools?

From the focus group discussions, it appears that most of the school leaders were not doing enough as far as the provision of leadership aimed at improving the teaching and learning of History is concerned. The most commonly cited instructional leadership functions such as checking schemes of work, exercise book inspections and lesson observations were not carried out as frequently. Each of these leadership functions was not conducted more than twice per term for example. To make matters worse, there was a view that some of the school leaders, particularly HODs, may have been writing fake lesson observation reports as noted in chapter 4. All this may be an indication that instructional leadership is not getting the attention it deserves in the schools. The element of cheating in compiling supervision evaluations accentuates the claim made by Manaseh (2016), that some of the school leaders, at times, insist on the filling in of schemes of work, lesson plans and log books for the sake of formality. They also know that these documents are part of the documents required by the school inspectors when they visit schools for supervision.

From the History teachers' experiences of instructional leadership, it was noted that leadership aimed at improving teaching and learning is considered the prerogative of formal leaders such as school heads, deputy heads and heads of department in most of the schools. The HOD was cited as the formal leader who does most of the instructional leadership duties in the teaching and learning of History. This arrangement enjoys the support of the majority of the respondents since most of them indicated the HOD as their preferred instructional leader. However, on a sad note, it may also be argued that the fact that the HOD executes most of the instructional leadership duties may suggest that school heads do not prioritise their role in instructional leadership. This is contrary to the findings of Jenkins (2009) that instructional leadership should be at the top of the priority list of school heads.

The History teachers' experiences also suggest that informal leaders were not being accommodated within the instructional leadership structures. All 13 respondents (100%) who were involved in focus group discussions highlighted the fact that informal leaders were not given space to undertake instructional leadership functions. In all the observation meetings I attended, heads of department, who are official school leaders, ran the show. These findings on informal leaders contrast with Sun *et al.* (2013) who noted that instructional leadership should also involve informal leaders.

The findings from this study support the view that a number of instructional leadership activities do take place in the schools. However, these activities may not be getting the attention they deserve since they are not carried out regularly. The most neglected instructional leadership function proved to be the school-based staff development. Only four teachers from one school (school Red) indicated that staff development workshops were a common feature at their school. To support this, it was observed that in all the meetings attended by the researcher, no mention of staff development workshops was made. Similarly, no particular attention was paid to school and departmental goals or the mission statement during the deliberations.

Based on their experiences, most of the History teachers do not seem to hold the practice of instructional leadership in high esteem. In the meetings I attended, the observation was that the respondents were not too enthusiastic in the discussion of instructional leadership related issues. In the focus group discussions, a recurring theme was that the respondents were not satisfied with the instructional leaders who were non-history specialists and as such, had little to offer to them as far as the improvement of teaching and learning of History is concerned. The teachers took the issue of subject specialisation seriously. In the quantitative phase of the study, the majority of the respondents also expressed their preference for school leaders who share the same area of specialisation with them. The practice of instructional leadership may be getting poor reviews in part because teachers see it as a terrain of leaders who do not share the same area of specialisation with them.

Furthermore, the qualitative research findings point to the fact that in most cases instructional leaders who lack formal training in the area of instructional leadership supervised the History teachers. The use of school leaders who lack formal training in instructional leadership also creates challenges and resentment. The survey results also confirmed that teachers usually prefer school leaders with formal training in instructional leadership.

The respondents expressed mixed feelings on the priority given to the teaching and learning of History by the school leaders. Some of the respondents were of the view that the subject was secondary to subjects such as Mathematics and Science, as evidenced by the number of lessons allocated to it per week. On the contrary, some of the teachers were of the opinion that the subject was being given the attention it deserves as it was considered as one of the core subjects in their school curriculum. However, the common position shared by all the respondents was that generally the business of teaching and learning, irrespective of which subject was not receiving most of the school heads' attention, compared to management and administration.

From their experience, some of the teachers did not consider instructional leadership as beneficial to them. Their explanations suggest that the negativity towards instructional leadership stems from the fact that instructional leadership is not done properly in schools and at times is done by the wrong people who lack the appropriate qualifications and/or requisite leadership skills. Some of the respondents dismissed instructional leadership as nothing more than a witch-hunting exercise at the disposal of school heads that is used to settle old scores. However, it is interesting to note that respondents at a school with the tradition of producing excellent results in public examinations considered instructional leadership as a valuable tool for improving teachers' pedagogy and classroom practice and ultimately the learners' quality of work and achievement. Thus, where it works, instructional leadership may be immensely beneficial in improving actual practice.

The research findings revealed that the respondents were of the opinion that instructional leadership was somehow influencing their classroom practice directly. From the focus group discussions, it was noted that school leaders were seldom monitoring and supervising teachers' classroom teaching by mounting lesson observations, inspection of schemes of work, record of marks and learners' exercise books. The respondents felt that although such monitoring and supervision is not done regularly, it has the capacity to influence them to ensure that their work is of high quality and up-to-date. The inspection of schemes of work had the effect of ensuring that they stick to the requirements of the syllabus when creating schemes and planning for their lessons. On the other hand, based on their experiences of instructional leadership, the respondents indicated that it was influencing learning indirectly through the creation of enabling conditions that facilitate teaching and learning and academic excellence. Therefore, it can be argued that from the History teachers' experiences, instructional leadership by school leaders may have a double impact as discussed by Leithwood *et al.* (2014).

The History teachers' experiences of instructional leadership suggest that school leaders are not doing enough to promote the development of teacher professional learning communities as well as the integration of instructional leadership and transformational leadership. The teachers perceived school leaders as not creating conditions that permit teachers to learn from one another. Although some of the school leaders encourage teachers to work together and share ideas, it appears as if this is only at a theoretical level, as this encouragement is not often followed up by real action in practice. The blame for this, however, should also be apportioned to the teachers themselves as it was noted in the focus group discussions that most of them are not prepared to open up their classroom practice to their counterparts. Bellibas (2016) also argues the same point that teachers have a strong sense of classroom privacy.

It is believed that instructional leadership produces the best results when integrated with transformational leadership. However, from the experiences of the History teachers who were involved in the qualitative phase of this study, nothing seems to be done to deepen their commitment and dedication to organisational goals. Almost all the

respondents indicated that they are not involved in the business of constructing institutional goals. Only respondents from one school indicated that non-monetary incentives were employed in their school to motivate them. The ineffective use of professional learning communities and transformational leadership in schools may be a flow in the quest to promote instructional leadership.

Most of the History teachers thus felt that numerous factors combine to prevent their school leaders, particularly the school heads, from effectively carrying out their instructional leadership mandate. The inhibiting factors cited by the respondents included school leaders' lack of leadership knowledge, lack of subject content knowledge for the History subject and a lack of motivation and lack of familiarity and appreciation of the concept of instructional leadership on the part of the school leaders and the teachers themselves. It was also highlighted that school heads are usually overwhelmed by administrative and management tasks. This makes it difficult for them to concentrate on leadership aimed at improving teaching and learning. Thus, any serious bid to improve the practice of instructional leadership in Zimbabwean schools should begin with an appreciation of the factors that conspire against this type of leadership.

5.3.3 EXPLANATION OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES

The findings in this section sought to answer the question:

- How can the teachers' perceptions and practices be understood and/or explained?

The third research question is an analytical one and can only be answered by making inferences to the responses given by the respondents in the two phases of the study. During the course of addressing the question, reference will be made to Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) principal instructional management rating scale (PIMRS) framework or model and the literature on instructional leadership in order to establish the theoretical lenses for explaining the findings presented and analysed in chapter 4.

The perceptions and practices of the History teachers involved in the study can mainly be understood and/or explained by judging them against the following two theoretical

positions derived from research studies on instructional leadership, including by the World Bank (2010) and Bellibas (2016) in Tanzania and Turkey respectively:

1. School teachers are not familiar with the education leadership paradigm of instructional leadership.
2. Most of the teachers are not familiar with the formalised concept of instructional leadership but understand most of the leadership functions associated with it.

In contradiction with the first theoretical claim, the majority of the History teachers supported the idea of school heads providing instructional leadership in the schools with the assistance of other formal and informal leaders. This perception by History teachers aligns well with the thinking of Hallinger and Murphy (1985) and Spillane's distributed or shared leadership perspective (Neumerski, 2012). This alignment provides support to the idea that teachers are somehow familiar with the education paradigm of instructional leadership. This is, in spite of the fact that at times their expectations on instructional leadership do not match the reality on the ground. For instance, from the qualitative phase of the study it was noted that although History teachers perceive informal leaders as having an important role to play in instructional leadership, in practice the teachers did not experience any instructional leadership activity from the informal leaders.

The findings that a majority of History teachers in the sample support for subject-specific leadership and the need for school leaders to have formal training in school leadership can be explained and/or understood as evidence that shows that teachers understand the practice of instructional leadership and how it should be carried out. This is consistent with the arguments of Spillane (2002) and Blasé *et al.* (2010) respectively. Thus, the claim that teachers are not familiar with instructional leadership is questionable.

It is evident from the qualitative phase of the study that although History teachers in Zimbabwe perceive the instructional leadership provided by the school leaders who share the same area of specialisation with them and who have formal training in school leadership as more suitable, in actual practice these teachers are often led by school leaders who do not meet these expectations. These research findings can be

interpreted as an indication that Hallinger and Murphy (1985; 1987) may have missed something in their PIMRS model, the prerequisite for school leaders, particularly school heads, to have subject content knowledge and/or formal training in school leadership.

The teachers' perceptions on the dimension of defining the school's vision, mission and goals (Hallinger, 2009), suggest that although they might not have officially read on the PIMRS model, they understood and appreciated the leadership functions associated with it. Evidently, most teachers expressed the need for the school to have a clear vision and mission statement created by the school head in consultation with other staff members. From the teachers' perception, the school vision, mission and goals should be communicated to other stakeholders such as parents and learners using formal and informal channels of communication. However, from their experiences, the teachers noted that school heads were not involving teachers in creating the school's vision, mission statement and goals. Furthermore, the school heads also seemed not to utilise informal channels of communication. Thus, although many of the teachers were not familiar with the formal concept of instructional leadership as represented by the PIMRS model, they seemed to appreciate most of its elements as described in the findings.

The perceptions of most of the History teachers on issues concerning to the management of the teaching programme (Hallinger & Wang, 2015) confirmed that the theoretical claim that teachers are unfamiliar with the instructional leadership paradigm is questionable. Most of the teachers expressed their desire to see the school head taking up a teaching load. Many scholars share this view as this might help the school heads have first-hand experience of the challenges faced by the teachers and learners in the classroom. However, the findings from the qualitative phase of the study show a mismatch between teachers' perceptions and the practices in schools. For instance, whilst the teachers expect the school head to have a teaching load, in reality the school heads from the sampled schools had no teaching loads.

On the dimension of developing a conducive teaching and learning climate (Hallinger, 2009), the thinking displayed by a sizeable number of teachers seem to reject the hypothesis that teachers are unfamiliar with the education paradigm of instructional leadership. The majority of teachers expressed the opinion that instructional time should

be protected while the school head should maintain a visible presence in the school. Furthermore, hardworking teachers and students should be recognised and rewarded, staff development workshop should be carried out at school and departmental levels and these staff development workshops should be linked to other instructional leadership functions such as lesson observation and book inspection. Such perceptions, in tandem with the thinking expressed by Hallinger and Murphy (1987) in their PIMRS model, may be described as agreeing with the theoretical claim that although most of the teachers are unfamiliar with the formalised concept of instructional leadership, they understand most of the leadership functions associated with it.

However, if the teachers' responses are anything to go by, the school leaders are challenging their positive perceptions. The majority of the teachers believe that school leaders should play a significant part in protecting instructional time, as proposed in the PIMRS model (Al-Mahdy & Al-Kiyumi, 2015). However, the results of this study show that most of the school leaders are perceived as not doing enough to ensure that meetings and other activities do not take away time meant for lessons and failed to take action against teachers and learners who deliberately abscond from lessons.

It may also be argued that the perceptions and practices of the majority of teachers could be judged as an indication that most of the teachers are not familiar with the formalised concept of instructional leadership as represented by the PIMRS model. For instance, the majority of the respondents held the perception that the school head should focus more on administrative and managerial roles. Most of the teachers also challenged the possibility for the school head to strike a balance between administrative, managerial and instructional roles, as advocated for by Kruger (2003). That kind of thinking does not correspond with the current trends on instructional leadership represented by the PIMRS model and thus partly gives credence to the perspective that most teachers are not familiar with the formalised concept of instructional leadership but understand most of its leadership functions.

In view of the discussion above and findings of the study, Table 5.1 below shows the gap between teachers' perceptions of instructional leadership and their experiences of this type of leadership in schools.

Table 5.1: The gap between teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership

Instructional leadership aspects and functions	Teachers' perceptions on various instructional leadership aspects and functions	Teachers' experiences of various instructional leadership aspects and functions
Officials responsible for the provision of instructional leadership	School heads should provide instructional leadership in the schools with the help of other formal and informal leaders.	No place for informal leaders in the provision of instructional leadership
Subject-specific leadership	School leadership should be subject -specific.	Teachers being supervised by school leaders who do not share the same area of specialisation with them.
Formal training in school leadership	School leaders should have training in school leadership.	Most of the school leaders do not have formal training in instructional leadership
Framing and communication of the school goals	Formal and informal channels of communication should be utilised	Informal channels of communication are not utilised
Teaching loads	School heads should take up teaching loads	School heads not taking up teaching loads.
Protection of instructional time	School leaders should ensure that instructional time is protected	Meeting and other activities take time meant for lessons and some school leaders do not take action against teachers and learners who abscond from lessons
Motivation	School leaders should motivate teachers and learners.	Most of the school leaders do not motivate teachers and learners.
Staff development workshops	There is a need for staff development workshops.	Staff development workshops appear to be neglected in schools.

Clearly, there are gaps between teachers' perceptions of instructional leadership and the way they experience this type of leadership in their schools. The present study helped to shed light on various understandings and perceptions held by teachers on

instructional leadership and the way this differs with how they experience instructional leadership in reality. This gap may be attributed to the school leaders' lack of formal training in school leadership and/or lack of necessary instructional leadership skills. As noted by Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013), in Zimbabwe, school leaders are usually recruited based on their teaching experience without prior formal training in school leadership and the country does not have mandatory school leadership programmes. Furthermore, the handbook for school administrators (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993) does not make the situation any better for school leaders who lack formal training in instructional leadership, as it is silent on the broader theory of instructional leadership. More critically, it says nothing on subject-specific leadership and the place of informal leaders in school leadership.

This largely explains why the school leaders fail to understand some key aspects of instructional leadership; hence, the gap between the teachers' perceptions of instructional leadership and their experiences of it.

The findings arising from this current study add to the existing body of literature on instructional leadership by exposing the gap between teachers' perceptions of instructional leadership and the way they experience this type of leadership in practice. The study has also established that it is not entirely correct to say teachers are unfamiliar with the instructional leadership paradigm. What they may be unfamiliar with is the formalised concept of this leadership type. However, they seem to understand most of the leadership functions associated with it.

This study is unique in Zimbabwe as it has attempted to link instructional leadership to teachers' perceptions and experiences in schools. To date, I have not come across any study in the country that has attempted to explore the perceptions and experiences of teachers with instructional leadership in the context of Zimbabwe. For this and other reasons, the current research study may be a ground breaker in the scholarship on instructional leadership in the country.

5.3.4 RECOMMENDATIONS MADE FROM THE STUDY OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

The last research question of the study sought to address the following:

- What recommendations can be made from the study of teachers' perceptions and experiences to improve the practice of instructional leadership in Zimbabwe in general?

The recommendations drawing on the whole study are discussed in the section on recommendations in this chapter.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

The study was geared towards exploring Zimbabwean teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership. The following conclusions are drawn from the findings:

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Firstly, a sizeable number of Zimbabwean teachers consider leadership that focuses on teaching and learning as a shared function and not the responsibility of the school head only. School heads, in conjunction with an array of other formal leaders such as deputy heads, senior teachers and heads of department, should provide leadership aimed at improving teaching and learning in the schools. Informal leaders should also be co-opted in the provision of instructional leadership as they are instrumental in assisting their colleagues in the implementation of newly introduced practices in schools (Sun *et al.,* 2013).

It should be emphasised that although the teachers felt that informal leaders should be involved in carrying out instructional leadership duties, the research findings strongly showed that from the History teachers' experience, informal leaders were not given the platform to exercise instructional leadership functions. Thus, it can be concluded that instructional leadership duties are largely carried out by formal leaders in Zimbabwean schools.

The research study has established that middle level school leaders such as HODs should focus more on instruction than on administrative and managerial roles. Furthermore, it was noted that the school heads were not doing enough as far as their instructional mandate is concerned as they were overstretched by administrative and managerial roles. History teachers were generally of the opinion that HODs should therefore step in to take those instructional leadership responsibilities.

The research study has noted with great concern that although most of the teachers prefer instructional leadership to be subject-specific and to be conducted by school leaders with formal training in school leadership; this is not what is transpiring in schools. This gap between what teachers expects and the actual situation on the ground partly explains why some of the teachers did not consider instructional leadership as beneficial to them.

It was established that numerous instructional leadership activities were taking place in the schools. However, these activities were not getting the attention they deserve, as they are not carried out regularly.

It has been noted that although instructional leadership is not being performed regularly in schools, teachers perceived it as having the potential to improve their classroom practice. It has been noted that instructional leadership encourages teachers to use sound pedagogy, to cover the syllabus adequately, to give learners adequate and quality work and to make adequate use of the time allotted for lessons. In turn, this results in learners' improved performance and outcomes.

Finally, the benefits of instructional leadership highly depend on how this type of leadership is practised. Where it is properly carried out, meaningful benefits are realised. More so, positive attitudes towards instructional leadership are linked to positive student achievement as evidenced by the fact that teachers at a high performing school in the study perceived instructional leadership positively.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS
The following recommendations arise from the experiences and findings of the study.

5.5.1 PRACTICE AND POLICY

The school heads are encouraged to tap the expertise of informal leaders to enhance the effectiveness of instructional leadership in the schools. The responsibility for instructional leadership is not a prerogative for formal leaders only. Research has shown that instructional leadership produces better results when it is widely distributed. School heads are also encouraged to use teacher leaders as this has the effect of strengthening teachers' commitment to school programmes and at the same time, cultivate a sense of ownership over those programmes in the teachers.

The school heads should prioritise instructional leadership. It is commendable for the school heads to delegate some of their instructional leadership duties to other school officials. However, delegation of duty should not be used as an excuse for the school heads not to do their instructional leadership duties.

The school leaders, particularly the school heads, are encouraged to delegate people with strong content knowledge to observe lessons in their particular subjects. This recommendation stems from the fact that History teachers who were involved in the study felt that professionals who specialised in History have so much to offer them in terms of improving their practice compared to professionals who specialised in other disciplines. Chen and Cheng (2017) acknowledge that given the distinctive nature of the subjects offered in secondary schools and the clear-cut line between knowledge in different academic disciplines, it is an insurmountable task for a school head to be an effective instructional leader in all areas of the curriculum. To overcome this challenge, school heads are advised to create a position of subject heads in their schools. The subject heads, who are subject specialists, may be tasked to execute some of the instructional leadership functions in the school. The school heads should also take it upon themselves to embark on programmes that help them to grasp how teachers teach and how students learn various subject matters (Stein & Nelsons, 2003).

There is also a need for school leaders to be serious and professional in the execution of their leadership duties.

School leaders, particularly school heads, are encouraged to undertake educational leadership courses to improve their leadership skills for them to undertake their instructional leadership duties effectively. The findings from this study have clearly revealed that teachers have doubts and question the leadership capabilities of school leaders who have no formal training in school leadership.

School heads should be encouraged to popularise the use of staff development workshops in the schools as an effective tool for improving teachers' competencies and classroom practice. These workshops can be conducted at departmental and school levels. More so, school heads should attempt to integrate instructional leadership with transformational leadership, which is known for deepening teachers' motivation and commitment to organisational goals.

There is also need for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to launch staff development workshops and seminars for teachers and school leaders. These should be aimed at popularising and encouraging the wide adoption and use of instructional leadership to promote effective teaching and learning in the schools.

In the same light, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should prioritise the appointment of school leaders with formal qualifications in school leadership. School leaders with no formal qualifications in school leadership should be encouraged to acquire such qualifications.

5.5.2 RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
The researcher recommends further research in the following areas:

- Subject-specific leadership

Most of the teachers involved in the study expressed their desire to be supervised by school leaders who share the same area of specialisation with them because they are content knowledge specialists. As such, it is critical to carry out an enquiry on the impact of subject-specific leadership in the teaching and learning of various subjects in the school curriculum.

- Formal training in school leadership

The research study has established that most of the teachers prefer to be supervised by school leaders with formal training in instructional leadership. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out a research study aimed at establishing the effect of formal qualifications in school leadership on the effectiveness of school leaders.

- The present study recommends that similar research be carried out focusing on what the school leaders say about teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this segment of the study, some of the shortcomings of the current study are articulated.

The research study only focused on History teachers' experience of the practice of instructional leadership within the schools. History is not the only subject in the Zimbabwean secondary school curriculum and therefore there is need to verify the research findings of this study with findings from other subject areas.

The data collection period was somehow limited. It could have been ideal to collect data for the research study in a period of no less than a year. Initially, the researcher had planned to conduct two observations per school, choosing a representative activity such as a departmental meeting or professional development session. However, the researcher had to settle for end of term and beginning of term meetings as no professional development sessions were conducted during the tenure of data collection. Possibly, had the tenure of data collection been prolonged, one or two staff development sessions could have been observed. It should be noted that this shortcoming did not seriously compromise the outcome of this study.

Attempts to generalise the findings of the study to all the ten provinces of Zimbabwe may prove to be a challenge as the study was restricted to only four districts that are

found in one province. It is feasible for a study in the districts of another province to yield uniform or different results.

5.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study sought to explore and establish how Zimbabwean teachers understand and experience the practice of instructional leadership. It was also within the framework of this study to provide an empirical base for claims about the teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership. The results suggest that teachers perceive that leadership aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning is not receiving adequate attention in the schools. School heads prioritise administrative and managerial tasks at the expense of instructional leadership. The need to make instructional leadership more subject-specific and to ensure that officials in charge of instructional leadership in the schools have the requisite skills is quite noteworthy.

The critical insight I acquired from the study is that generally Zimbabwean teachers perceive most of the aspects of instructional leadership positively. However, their positive perceptions are hampered by how the practice of instructional leadership is carried out. There is a wide gap between what teachers expect from the practice of leadership aimed at improving teaching and learning and how this type of leadership is actually executed in the schools.

The study has taught me that the benefits of instructional leadership are premised on how this type of leadership is carried out. Where it is carried out properly, positive results are realised and where it is not carried out properly, the opposite is true. It has to be emphasised that teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership are also linked to the way it is practised in the schools. Therefore, for instructional leadership to be perceived positively by the Zimbabwean teachers there is a need for the refinement of the practice.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire for teachers

My name is Musandu, Cosmas, a PhD student at the University of the Free State. I am currently working on a research thesis in the area of instructional leadership. The topic is "Zimbabwean teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership".

You are kindly asked to fill in the questionnaire. The questionnaire will take approximately 45 minutes to complete. All your responses will be treated confidentially.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA AND ORGAISATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Please show your response by putting a tick in the appropriate box

a) Your gender

Male	
Female	

b) Your age group in years

20-25	
26-30	
31-35	
36-40	
41+	

c) Your highest professional qualification

C. E/ Dip Ed	
B.A only	
B. Ed	
Grad. D.E	
M.Ed	
Any other (specify)	

d) Your number of years in the teaching field, including the years in this current school.

0-5	
6-10	
11-15	
16-20	
20+	

e) Did you major in History at college or university level?

Yes	
NO	

f) Any experience as a school leader?

Yes	
NO	

g)Classification of your school

Rural	
Urban/suburban	

f) Number of teachers at your school

Below 10	
11-20	
21-30	
31-40	
41+	

g) Number of pupils at your school

Below 100	

1o1-200	
201-300	
301-400	
401+500	
501+	

SECTION B

Select the most appropriate response to the following questions by putting an X in the correct box. The abbreviated responses stand for**: A**-agree; **S.A**-strongly agree; **N**-neutral; **D**-disagree; **S.D**-strongly disagree.

Please tick only one box per question. Try to respond to every question.

Teachers' conceptualization of instructional leadership

		S.A	A	N	D	S.D
1	School heads are expected to provide leadership aimed at improving teaching and learning in their schools.					
2	It is good for the school head to share leadership functions related to teaching and learning with other school leaders in designated positions of authority.					
3	Teachers who are not in formal positions of authority should engage in leadership activities within the school.					
4	Teachers should be encouraged to make decisions concerning teaching and learning.					
5	It is essential to encourage teachers to share their practice and use feedback from each other to improve their practice.					

6	The school head should focus more on administrative and managerial roles than on instructional role.					
7	It is possible for the school head to strike a balance between administrative, managerial and instructional roles.					
8	The middle level school leaders such as heads of department should focus more on instruction than on administrative and managerial roles.					
9	Leadership aimed at improving teaching and learning should be subject-specific rather than general.					
10	I prefer to be supervised by a school leader who shares the same area of specialization with me.					
11	I prefer school leaders, particularly the school head with formal training on how to improve teaching and learning.					
12	Instructional leadership enhances school effectiveness and improves student attainment					

Teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understandings of various instructional leadership dimensions and functions.

A) Defining the school's vision, mission and goals

		S.A	A	N	D	S.D
13	It is necessary for the school to have a clear vision on student learning.					
14	It is the responsibility of the school head to formulate the school vision in consultation with all the other staff members.					
15	It is necessary for the school to have a mission statement.					

16	All the members of staff are expected to be involved in crafting the mission statement.					
17	My school's vision, mission and goals are clearly articulated.					
18	My school's vision, mission and goals need to be formally communicated to all staff members.					
19	My school's vision, mission and goals are communicated via formal communication channels.					
20	My school's vision, mission and goals are communicated via informal communication channels.					
21	It is necessary to inform the pupils about the school's vision, mission and goals.					
22	My school's vision, mission and goals should be communicated to key stakeholders such as the parents.					

B) The management of teaching and learning programmes

		S.A	A	N	D	S.D
23	It is important for the school head to have a teaching load to fully appreciate the classroom challenges faced by teachers and pupils.					

24	As a teacher, I often ask for help from the following school leaders to improve my classroom practice.
	    a. School head
	    b. Deputy head
	    c. Senior master/ lady
	    d. Head of department					

25	Teachers benefit more from lesson observations done by leaders who share the same area of specialization with them.					

26	School leaders in my school do lesson observations in their own areas of specialization.					
27	Post -lesson observation conferences are necessary.					
28	Exercise book inspections are necessary for improved student performance.					
29	School leaders should sit down with teachers to engage in syllabus interpretation.					
30	School leaders in my school do sit down with teachers to engage in syllabus interpretation.					
31	School leaders are expected to supervise teachers to cover the syllabus adequately.					
32	School leaders should ensure that pupils are given adequate and quality assignments.					
33	It is important for school leaders to convene regular meetings to discuss students' performance and achievement.					
34	The school head in liaison with all the other school leaders should avail the required curriculum materials.					
35	The school head is inclined to favour his subject of specialization in the procurement of curriculum materials					

C) Developing a conducive learning climate

		S.A	A	N	D	S.D
36	School leaders should ensure that instructional time or time allocated for learning is protected.					
37	School leaders in my school ensure that meetings and other activities do not take time meant for lessons.					
38	School leaders in my school take action against pupils and teachers who abscond lessons					
39	The school head is expected to visit learning venues					

	and move around the school campus as this helps in instilling discipline in learners.					
40	My school head visits classrooms and moves around the school campus quite frequently.					
41	Hard working teachers should be rewarded to further motivate them.					
42	In my school hardworking teachers are recognised and rewarded.					
43	School leaders in my school give professional assistance to teachers who are struggling with their work.					
44	It is necessary for the school to have staff development workshops at departmental and school levels.					
45	The staff development workshops should be closely linked to other leadership functions such as lesson observation and book inspection.					
46	It is good for the school leaders to honour outstanding pupils.					

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix 2: Focus group discussion protocol for history teachers

1. Introductory remarks (The researcher introduces himself and asks the participants to introduce themselves, giving background information about their qualifications, experience and current designation).

2. Let us talk about the extent to which your school leaders provide leadership aimed at improving teaching and learning of history in the school? (Probe on who is undertaking leadership for improving teaching and learning in the school)

3. What leadership functions that focus on teaching and learning are executed by your school leaders? (Probe on leadership functions they find to be more useful and the reasons for that…if not mentioned above).

4. To what extent do you consider the people who are executing leadership functions that focus on teaching and learning at your school as the right people for the job? (Probe on the leaders' positions, qualifications, experience and area of specialistion).

5. In your own opinion, do you think the teaching and learning of history is receiving adequate attention from your school leaders? (Probe on the non-instructional functions that are getting more attention from the school leaders particularly the school head).

6. As a teacher how are you benefitting from the leadership that focuses on teaching and learning provided by your school leaders?

7. How does the leadership from your school leaders influence your classroom practice?

8. In what ways is your school leadership influencing the learning and performance of your pupils? (Probe on whether the influence is direct or indirect. Ask for specific examples and details).

9. To what extent are your school leaders creating conditions that enable teachers to learn from one another? (Listen for in-depth stories and details…probe on who, when, how, why, etc.)

10. What steps are taken by your school leaders' to deepen teachers' motivation, commitment and dedication to organizational goals?

11. What are some of the challenges that inhibit your school leaders, particularly the school head from concentrating on leadership functions that focus on teaching and learning?

12. What measures do you recommend to be adopted to improve the practice of instructional leadership in your school?

NB: The researcher may ask any other question depending on the issues of interest that may emerge during the course of discussion.

Appendix 3: Observation guide for teachers in a representative activity such as a departmental meeting or staff development session.

1. Date---
   Setting---
   Time--
2. Nature of activity (meeting or workshop)---

   ----
3. Description of participants---

   ----
4. Convener/Facilitator---

   ----
5. Purpose of activity--

   ----
6. Details of instructional leadership issues or activities discussed
   a. Descriptive notes---

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b. Reflective notes---

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7. Evidence of leadership distribution exhibited---

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8. The teachers' level of participation in issues to do with instructional leadership

a. Descriptive notes--

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b. Reflective notes---

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9. The kind of reaction shown by the teachers in the instructional issues discussed.

    a. Descriptive notes--

        ----

    b. Reflective notes---

        ----

10. Explanation of teachers' experience of the practice of instructional leadership

    a. Descriptive notes--

        ----

    b. Reflective notes---

Appendix 4: Letter to the Permanent Secretary

Belvedere Technical Teachers' College

P. Box BE 100

Belvedere

Harare

28 February 2017

The Permanent Secretary

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

P.O.Box 121

Causeway

Harare

Dear Sir/ Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I hereby request permission to conduct research with teachers in one of your provinces, Mashonaland Central.

My name is Cosmas Musandu, and 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 our knowledge and understanding of the issues under study. The title of my research project is:

Zimbabwean teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership.

The purpose of the study is to investigate teachers' perceptions and understandings of instructional leadership in Zimbabwe. I am particularly interested in how History

teachers' perceive and experience the practice of instructional leadership within the schools they are teaching. The study has the potential to benefit teachers, heads of department, school heads and other school leaders by pointing out teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understanding of instructional leadership. This study will enhance the participants' knowledge on the role of instructional leadership in improving the quality of teaching and learning. The involved schools will benefit from this study since they are directly involved in the study and the research findings are going to be shared with these schools. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education will also benefit as the findings will be shared with its authorities for possible policy making and amendments.

The study will involve: 1) Circulating 200 questionnaires to secondary school teachers, 50 from each participating district;2) Subjecting History teachers to focus group interviews about their experiences, in a way that does not disturb the classes; and 3) Two observations per school at three chosen schools, choosing a representative activity such as a departmental meeting or professional development session will be conducted in order to determine their perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership. The focus group discussions are expected to last no more than 1 hour 30 minutes.

A total of 200 teachers, 50 from each district will be involved.

I undertake to observe confidentiality and to protect participants from physical and/or psychological harm. No names of the schools and/or persons shall be used in any reports 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 the schools under study (and possibly other schools) as necessary.

If you need any further information and/or have suggestions, please contact me and/or

my research supervisor Professor Loyiso C Jita at jitalc@ufs.ac.za or +2751 401 7522.

I hope my request will reach your favourable consideration.

Yours sincerely

Cosmas Musandu

Cell: +263 0772736740 (E-mail: cosmasmusandu@gmail.com)

Appendix 5: Invitation letter to teachers

Belvedere Technical Teachers' College

P. Box BE 100

Belvedere

Harare

18 August 2016

The History Teacher

………………………………....

…………………………………

Dear Sir/ Madam

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

I am presently studying for a PhD degree with the University of the Free State. As part of my programme, I am conducting a research study entitled:

Zimbabwean teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership.

The purpose of the study is to investigate teachers' perceptions and understandings of instructional leadership in Zimbabwe. I am particularly interested in how History teachers' perceive and experience the practice of instructional leadership within the schools they are teaching. The study has the potential to benefit teachers, heads of department, school heads and other school leaders by pointing out teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understanding of instructional leadership. This study will enhance participants' knowledge on the role of instructional leadership in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

The study will involve: 1) Circulating 200 questionnaires to History teachers, 50 from each participating district including you;2) One subject group, namely History teachers from three secondary schools will be subjected to focus group interviews about their experiences, in a way that does not disturb the classes; and 3) Two observations per school at three chosen schools, choosing a representative activity such as a departmental meeting or professional development session will be conducted in order to verify some aspects and to observe their instructional leadership practices. The focus group discussions are expected to last no more than 1 hour 30 minutes.

I undertake to observe confidentiality and to protect participants from physical and/or psychological harm. No names of the schools and/or persons shall be used in any report of the research. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time should you wish to do so.

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 the history teachers under study(and possibly other) teachers as necessary.

If you need any further information and/or have suggestions, please contact me and/or my research supervisor Professor Loyiso C Jita at jitalc@ufs.ac.za or +2751 401 7522.

Thank you for your kind consideration of my request.

Yours sincerely

Cosmas Musandu
Cell: +263 0772736740 (E-mail: cosmasmusandu@gmail.com)

Consent Form

If you agree to participate in the study entitled:

Zimbabwean teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional.

Please complete the attached the 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: Request letter to the school heads to conduct the research

Belvedere Technical Teachers' College

P. Box BE 100

Belvedere

Harare

18 August 2016

The School Head

………………………………....

…………………………………

Dear Sir/ Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I hereby request for permission to conduct research with history teachers in your school.

My name is Cosmas Musandu, and 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 our knowledge and understanding of the issues under study. The title of my research project is:

Zimbabwean teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership.

The purpose of the study is to investigate teachers' perceptions, beliefs and understandings of instructional leadership in Zimbabwe. I am particularly interested in how History teachers' perceive and experience the practice of instructional leadership within the schools they are teaching. The study has the potential to benefit teachers, heads of department, school heads and other school leaders by pointing out teachers'

perceptions, beliefs and understanding of instructional leadership. This study will enhance participants' knowledge on the role of instructional leadership in improving the quality of teaching and learning. The involved schools will benefit from this study since they are directly involved in the study and the research findings are going to be shared with these schools. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education will also benefit as the findings will be shared with its authorities for possible policy making and amendments.

The study will involve: 1) Circulating 200 questionnaires to History teachers, 50 from each participating district;2) Subjecting History teachers to focus group interviews about their experiences, in a way that does not disturb the classes; and 3) Two observations per school at three chosen schools, choosing a representative activity such as a departmental meeting or professional development session will be conducted in order to determine their perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership. The focus group discussions are expected to last no more than 1 hour 30 minutes.

A total of 200 teachers, 50 from each district will be involved.

I undertake to observe confidentiality and to protect participants from physical and/or psychological harm. No names of the schools and/or persons shall be used in any reports 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 the schools under study (and possibly other schools) as necessary.

If you need any further information and/or have suggestions, please contact me and/or my research supervisor Professor Loyiso C Jita at jitalc@ufs.ac.za or +2751 401 7522.

I hope my request will reach your favourable consideration.

Yours sincerely

Cosmas Musandu

Cell: +263 0772736740 (E-mail: cosmasmusandu@gmail.com)

Appendix 7: Clearance letter from the Permanent Secretary

All communications should be addressed to
"The Secretary for Primary and Secondary
Education
Telephone: 732006
Telegraphic address : "EDUCATION"
Fax: 794505

Reference: C/426/3 Mash Central
Ministry of Primary and
Secondary Education
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
HARARE

2 March 2017

Cosmas Musandu
Belvedere Technical Teachers College
P.O Box BE 100
Belvedere
Harare

Re: **PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN MASHONALAND CENTRAL
PROVINCE: AT THE ATTACHED SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS**

Reference is made to your application to carry out research at attached schools in
Mashonaland Central Province on the research title:

**"ZIMBABWEAN TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ITS INFLUENCE ON CLASSROOM
PRACTICE"**

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial
Education Director, Mashonaland Central Province, who is responsible for the school
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 required to seek consent
of the parents /guardians of all the learners who will be involved in the research

You are also required to provide a copy of your final report to the Secretary for Primary
and Secondary Education by 31ST July 2017.

MIN. OF PRY & SEC. EDUCATION
POLICY PLANNING RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT
2 0 MAR 2017
P.O. BOX CY 121, CAUSEWAY
ZIMBABWE

Dr S.J Utete- Masango
SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
cc: PED – Mashonaland Central

APPENDIX 8: UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

UFS·UV

Faculty of Education

03-Nov-2016

Dear **Mr Cosmas Musandu**

Ethics Clearance: **Teachers' perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership and its influence on classroom practice.**

Principal Investigator: **Mr Cosmas Musandu**

Department: **School of Education Studies (Bloemfontein Campus)**

APPLICATION APPROVED

With reference to you 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-HSD2016/1000**

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. Juliet Ramohai

Chairperson: Ethics Committee