INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: CASE STUDIES OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS IN ZIMBABWE

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis, **INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: CASE STUDIES OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOL HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS IN ZIMBABWE,** hereby handed in for the qualification of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Free State, is my own independent work and that I have not previously submitted the same work for a qualification at/in any other university.

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N. Jinga

November 2015

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late mother

Mrs. Anna G. Jinga,

whose wish to celebrate my success in PhD studies was overcome by God's order. Your encouragement inspired me during the difficult times!

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To you all, I say: **May the Almighty God bless you abundantly**!

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Agric   Agriculture

HOD   Head of Department

ECD   Early Childhood Development

VTE   Vocational and Technical Education

Dip. Ed.   Diploma in Education

D/PED   Deputy Provincial Education Director

EO/Tech   Education Officer Technical Education

PED   Provincial Education Director

DEO   District Education Officer

PEO   Provincial Education Officer

B.ED.   Bachelor of Education

ZIMSEC   Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council

UNICEF   United Nations Children's Education Fund

F/F   Fashion and Fabrics

F/N   Food and Nutrition

B/S   Building Studies

ICT   Information Communication Technology

IL   Instructional Leadership

W/T   Wood Technology

T.G   Technical Graphics

H.E   Home Economics

L.E.As   Local Education Authorities

NCLB   No Child Left Behind

FGD   Focus Group Discussion

CRS   Church-run schools

RCS   Rural Council Schools

ARCS   School A - Rural Council School

BCRS   School B - Church-run School

CRCS   School C - Rural Council School

DRCS   School D - Rural Council School2

ECRS   School E- Church- run School

SUMMARY

This study sought to explore the policy and regulatory framework that guides instructional leadership, as well as the roles and expectations of the vocational and technical education (VTE) Heads of Department (HODs) in carrying out their instructional leadership mandate in schools. This thesis consists of five chapters which are outlined as follows: Chapter one presents the background which provides the overview of the research problem, research questions and objectives which the study sought to answer. It also gives a brief historical background of VTE as a way of shedding light on the instructional leadership challenge currently experienced in the teaching and learning of the practical subjects in Zimbabwe.

Chapter two reviews literature related to the study, but owing to the dearth of scholarship on instructional leadership for VTE, the chapter draws largely on the literature from other subject areas such as mathematics, science and literacy to inform the leadership approaches and frameworks for this study. In Chapter three, an account of the research methodology used in the study is provided. Multiple case-studies, in the qualitative approach, were used to understand the work of and expectation on the HODs in their natural work settings. 'Thick description' of stakeholder perceptions and narratives on how the HODs enact their instructional leadership practices in the various VTE departmental contexts are presented.

Chapter four discusses the emerging themes and data analyses from the interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis and observations. Chapter five summarises the major findings, from which recommendations are drawn. It also identifies knowledge gaps that suggest foci for future research.

The first set of findings on the skills and competences of VTE HODs uncovered the fact that there are no uniform criteria for employing HODs in the various schools within the Gutu district. The appointment decisions are made almost exclusively by the school principals, who may or may not consider the prospective leader's qualifications, experience and, in the case of church-run schools, church affiliation. Interestingly, it also emerged that some of the appointees were not even interested in the position when they were appointed and only accepted because they saw it as an instruction from the school head or out of fear of disappointing the head. The lack of public and

uniform criteria for appointing the subject leaders has in some cases resulted in strained relations between the teachers and their appointed leaders, with negative consequences for subject leadership in the schools. Not surprisingly, the teacher interviews reflected mixed feelings about the role enactment by the HODs, with many suggesting the need for improvement, especially around equitable resource procurement and distribution for the VTE subjects, distribution of leadership competence and guidance across the various subjects that make up the VTE departments, and clarity on the standards of expected practices and competencies for successful teaching of the VTE subjects. Furthermore, the findings uncovered the need for consistency and improved quality with respect to the enactment of the various practices of instructional leadership by the HODs. Data suggests that the variations in terms of the quantity and quality of supervision practices, such as the number of lesson observations conducted in each subject or for each teacher, and the guidance activities, including meetings with staff to discuss subject-related matters and the capacity-building practices such as the provision of subject-focused professional development opportunities across schools and sometimes within the same VTE department in one school by the HODs, made the practices look arbitrary and rendered them rather mute in terms of their potential to influence teachers' knowledge and classroom practices.

The study thus makes three critical recommendations to improve both the policy and practice of instructional leadership by the HODs in the Gutu district specifically and perhaps in Zimbabwe generally: first with respect to the recruitment and expectations for HODs, that the 1983 policy that seems to guide the principals in appointing these school-based subject leaders be updated and revised to shift focus away from 'heroic subject leaders' and instead to develop criteria for effective instructional leadership by the applicants. The policy should provide specific guidelines, for instance on the qualifications, knowledge competences, and experience of the appointees and the processes to be followed for appointment. Second, a clear definition of the required levels or standards of performance by the teachers is required to ensure that supervision and guidance practices are more focused and directed towards improving teaching and learning in the schools. A clear agenda for instructional improvement and/or reform and the required tools or artefacts for leadership are required to guide school-based subject leadership by the HODs. Finally, the quality and the quantity of supervision, guidance and capacity-building practices to be enacted for different groups of teachers (e.g. novices or experienced teachers) need to be defined a bit more clearly to ensure consistent and targeted performance by the HODs across different schools.

Induction and capacity building programmes for the HODs should be enacted to focus on clear areas of competence in terms of the knowledge required, the practices to be enacted and the expected outcomes.

Onderrigleiers vir beroeps- en tegniese onderwys: Gevallestudies van geselekteerde sekondêre skole in die Gutu-distrik van Zimbabwe

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie het onderneem om die beleids- en regulerende raamwerk wat onderrigleierskap begelei, te verken, asook die rolle en verwagtinge van die departementshoofde (HOD's) in beroeps- en tegniese onderwys (BTO) in die uitvoer van hul onderrigleierskapsmandaat in skole. Hierdie tesis bestaan uit vyf hoofstukke wat soos volg uiteengesit is: Hoofstuk Een bied die agtergrond, wat 'n oorsig oor die navorsingsprobleem en navorsingsvrae en -doelwitte wat die studie wil beantwoord, verskaf. Dit gee ook 'n kort historiese agtergrond van BTO as 'n manier om lig te werp op die onderrigleierskapsuitdaging wat tans in die onderrig en leer van die praktiese vakke in Zimbabwe ervaar word.

Hoofstuk Twee bied 'n oorsig van die literatuur wat op hierdie studie van toepassing is, maar a.g.v. die tekort aan navorsing oor onderrigleierskap vir BTO, steun die hoofstuk hoofsaaklik op die literatuur uit ander vakgebiede, soos wiskunde, wetenskap en letterkunde, om die leierskapbenaderings en raamwerke van hierdie studie te vorm. In Hoofstuk Drie word rekenskap oor die navorsingsmetodologie wat in die studie gebruik is, verskaf. Veelvuldige gevallestudies, in die kwalitatiewe benadering, is gebruik om die werk en verwagtinge van die Departementshoofde in hul natuurlike werkomgewing te verstaan. "Ryk beskrywing" van aandeelhouers se persepsies en narratiewe oor hoe Departementshoofde hul onderrigleierskapspraktyke in die verskeie BTO departementele kontekste uitvoer, word aangebied.

Hoofstuk Vier bespreek die ontluikende temas en data-analises uit die onderhoude, fokusgroepbesprekings, dokumentanalises en observasies. Hoofstuk Vyf som die hoofbevindings op, waaruit aanbevelings afgelei word. Dit identifiseer ook kennisgapings wat fokusareas vir toekomstige navorsing suggereer.

Die eerste stel bevindings oor die vaardighede en bevoegdhede van BTO-departementshoofde het die feit dat daar geen eenvormige kriteria vir die indiensneming van departementshoofde in die verskeie skole binne die Gutu-distrik is nie, ontbloot. Die aanstellingsbesluite word feitlik eksklusief deur skoolhoofde gemaak, wat die voornemende leier se kwalifikasies, ervaring en, in die geval van skole onder kerkbestuur, kerkverbondenheid, dalk kan ontsien. Dit is interessant dat sommige van die kandidate nie eens belang stel in die posisie waarin hulle aangestel is nie en slegs aanvaar het omdat hulle dit as 'n opdrag van die skoolhoof gesien of omdat hulle nie die hoof wou

teleurstel nie. Die tekort aan openbare en eenvormige kriteria vir die aanstelling van vakleiers het in sommige gevalle gespanne verhoudings tussen onderwysers en hul aangestelde leiers veroorsaak, met negatiewe gevolge vir vakleierskap in die skole. Dit is nie verbasend dat onderhoude met onderwysers gemengde gevoelens oor die uitvoering van departementshoofde se pligte weerspieël het. Talle het 'n behoefte aan verbetering genoem, veral t.o.v. billike hulpbroninsameling en -verspreiding vir BTO-vakke, verspreiding van leierskapsvaardigheid en begeleiding regoor die verskeie vakke wat die BTO-departemente beslaan, asook duidelikheid oor die standaarde van verwagte praktyke en bevoegdhede vir suksesvolle onderrig van BTO-vakke. Verder het die bevindings die behoefte aan konsekwentheid en verbeterde gehalte t.o.v. die uitvoering van die verskeie praktyke van onderrigleierskap deur departementshoofde ontbloot. Data suggereer dat die variasies in terme van die kwantiteit en kwaliteit van toesigpraktyke, soos die aantal lesse waargeneem in elke vak of vir elke onderwyser, en die begeleidingsaktiwiteite, insluitend vergaderings met personeel om vakverwante sake en kapasiteitbouende praktyke soos die verskaffing van vakgefokusde professionele ontwikkelingsgeleenthede regoor skole en soms binne dieselfde BTO-departement in een skool deur die Departementshoofde, die praktyke arbitrêr laat lyk en hulle ietwat sinneloos maak in terme van hul potensiaal om onderwysers se kennis en klaskamerpraktyke te beïnvloed.

Die studie maak dus drie kritiese aanbevelings om beide die beleid en praktyk van onderrigleierskap deur die departementshoofde in die Gutu distrik in besonder en miskien in Zimbabwe oor die algemeen te verbeter: eerstens, t.o.v. die werwing en verwagtinge van departementshoofde, dat die 1983-beleid, wat skynbaar hoofde begelei in die aanstelling van hierdie skoolgebaseerde vakleiers, op datum gebring word en hersien word om die fokus weg te neem van "heldhaftige vakleiers" en eerder kriteria ontwikkel vir effektiewe onderrigleierskap deur die kandidate. Die beleid moet spesifieke riglyne verskaf, byvoorbeeld oor die kwalifikasies, kennisbevoegdhede en ervaring van die kandidate en die prosesse wat vir aanstellings gevolg moet word. Tweedens is 'n duidelike definisie van die vereiste vlakke of standaarde van prestasies deur die onderwysers nodig om te verseker dat toesig- en begeleidingpraktyke meer gefokus is en gerig is op verbetering van onderwys en leer in die skole. 'n Duidelike agenda vir onderrigverbetering en/of hervorming en die nodige instrumente of artefakte vir leierskap is nodig om skoolgebaseerde vakleierskap deur departementshoofde te begelei. Laastens moet die kwantiteit en kwaliteit van toesig-, begeleiding-, en kapasiteitsboupraktyke vir verskillende groepe onderwysers (bv.

nuweling- of ervare onderwysers) ietwat duideliker gedefinieër word om seker te maak dat prestasie deur departementshoofde oor verskillende skole konsekwent en doelgerig is. Inhuldigings- en kapasiteitsbouprogramme vir die departementshoofde moet uitgevoer word om te fokus op duidelike areas van bevoegdheid in terme van vereiste kennis, die praktyke wat uitgevoer moet word en die verwagte uitkomste.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Accountability has become a common global term in public education (Rogers 2009). This reform has followed in the wake of improving national and international educational standards. Educational accountability, as Hallinger and Heck (2010) claim, has raised student achievement to a pre-eminent position in the administrative targets of many schools and educational leaders. As nations endeavour to re-engineer their education systems in order to keep pace with global standards, the school becomes increasingly accountable for every aspect of the education they provide. In recognition of such developments, most educational systems are decentralising in order to empower those directly involved in teaching and learning and vocational teaching is no exception (Hallinger and Heck, 2010). To satisfy the global demand for quality education, teaching and learning needs to be managed by the personnel who are directly involved in instructional and curriculum implementation (York-Barr and Duke, 2004). Bush, in Ngmenkpieo (2010), asserts that in the 21st century schools require effective leaders and managers in order to provide the best education to learners. The role of the head of department (HOD) in the decentralisation of educational leadership in schools has long been recognised but vocational and technical education has not received as much attention in this regard (Moss and Liang, 1995).

HODs do not voluntarily come into being; they need to be appointed (York-Barr and Duke, 2004). In this study the influence of provincial and district leaders, in conjunction with principals, in the selection and appointment of vocational and technical education HODs is considered because it is believed that their leadership collaboratively influences the recruitment of HODs, whose instructional leadership practices are in turn expected to enhance the accountability of the senior management. Hallinger (2012a) posits that principals have an indirect impact on students' learning. They may influence what transpires in classrooms through appointing subject leaders (HODs) who could engineer curriculum and instruction in subject departments and subject-unit sections of the school. It is important to note that HODs originate as instructional leaders in order to aid the instructional leadership goals of the senior management teams (i.e. principals, district and provincial officers). Rogers (2009) asserts that provincial and district officers are accountable for students' performance because they are responsible for monitoring all the schools within their respective school divisions.

In the Zimbabwean context, the provincial educational officers (PEOs) have the same influence in the recruitment of HODs because they themselves are appointed basing on subject specialisation. Therefore, these PEOs are in a better position to propose effective guidelines regarding the appointment of instructional leaders (HODs) who would spearhead the implementation of effective instructional practices for vocational subjects. However, Alger (2005) asserts that in terms of instructional practices in schools and subject departments, district leaders and principals have the most influence over decisions. Justifying district involvement in the recruitment of HODs, York-Barr and Duke (2004) state that the districts must decide on the instructional leaders who manage core instructional elements such as instructional strategies, assessment, resource allocation and many more. This is because the mounting pressure from the government also makes the districts accountable for the overall performance of the schools, which falls under their leadership (Firestone and Martinez, 2007).

Increasingly, the literature on instructional leadership conceives of instructional leaders as including provincial education officers (PEOs) and district education officers (DEOs), school principals and deputy principals (Firestone and Martinez, 2007). However, there is a tendency to overlook leadership that is directly involved in the actual teaching and learning processes, especially for vocational subjects. While the significance of EOs, local education administrators (LEAs) and school principals cannot be disputed, the pivotal instructional leadership role played by HODs towards improved student performance and the enhancement of accountability for top management is also crucial. The diagram below illustrates the middle-management instructional leadership position of HODs.

Provincial Education Director

District Education Officer

Principals   Principals

HOD   HOD   HOD   HOD

Tr   Tr   Tr   Tr   Tr   Tr   Tr   Tr

Student achievement   Student achievement
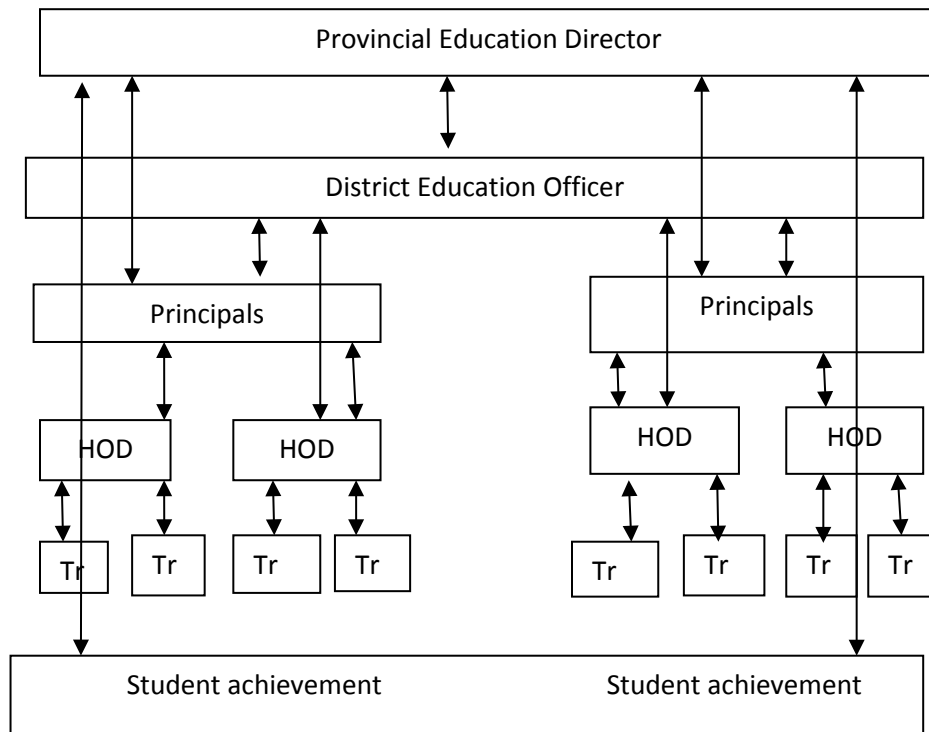
Fig 1.1: The HOD management matrix

Fig 1.1 shows the middle position played by HODs in promoting teaching and learning in schools. Although the school principals are eventually accountable to Provincial Education Officers, the structure reflects that the HODs have close interaction with the subject teachers and the learners. However this does not warrant them a superior position of the other school members when issues of subject leadership are being addressed.

In their instructional leadership practices, HODs work directly with the classroom teachers and top management, with the ultimate goal being that of providing quality student performance. Some scholars have studied the role of HODs as subject leaders for instance, Turner and Bolam (1998) looked at theoretical frameworks that guided the practices of HODs for English departments in England and Wales. However, their study did not provide specifics regarding the modes of interactions that promote effective instruction and there was no focus on vocational subjects. Brown, Rutherford and Boyle (2010), claim that HODs are the most appropriate and important agents of change compared to individual classroom teachers. Turner (2003) also looked at the HODs for English, mathematics, science and technology in Wales. Her findings were that different

subjects have different themes and content. Although some very important ideas have been raised in the numerous studies on leadership by HODs, it is unclear whether the findings of the studies carried out in developed countries may be applicable to developing countries such as Zimbabwe. Despite all these studies focusing on subject leadership in the school curriculum, none of them confronted the issue of the type of leadership that may enhance effective instruction and student performance for vocational and technical subjects.

There is a lack of information on how subject leaders (HODs) manage the quality of instruction in vocational education. This study, therefore, seeks to explore what HODs do for vocational subjects to influence quality instruction and how they interact with the teachers in their departments. The next section the background; will discuss the background to the study in more detail.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In Africa and the world over, countries are grappling with the question of how to provide skills and knowledge to enable school leavers to make a smooth transition to the world of work or self-help enterprises. Technical and vocational education has been found to be one of the most effective human resource development strategies that African countries need to employ in order to prepare and modernise their workforce for further industrialisation and national development (Afeti, 2013). Vocational education is a broad, federal concept that encompasses a wide range of subjects of a practical or technical nature. In Zimbabwe, for example, vocational education includes subjects such as agriculture, home economics, art and design, music, technical graphics, woodwork and information and communication technology (Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, 2009). This mode of education found itself in a predicament from its inception in the school system, as it has been rooted in a background of informal education, perpetuated by the colonial legacy, which has stigmatised it as inferior to academic education. Validating this observation, Maravanyika (1988) posits that the public tends to exclude vocational education from their definition of valid knowledge. Confirming Maravanyika's (1988) view, Lewis (1998: 284) asserts that, "…in the sociology of the curriculum, vocational education is treated in schools and in society as low-status knowledge, unlike academic knowledge, which is respected as high-status knowledge and is accordingly, privileged and dispensed." Although globalisation has prompted many governments to refocus their interest in vocational education, there are still some countries, which persistently perceive it as a second-class education (Commonwealth Finance Ministers, 2012-2013). Agreeing

with this view, Rao (2004) observes that in England, technical subjects have always remained the second-class choice for learners whose performance does not satisfy the requirements of the grammar schools.

In Africa, vocational education has been relegated to the periphery and its significance has not truly been embraced (Mureithi, 2009). In the western context Mayer (2001) asserts that vocational education was introduced in North America for example, as social education designed for society's outcast elements, such as orphans, young people with criminal records or slow learners. Mayer (2001) further notes that in Canada vocational education was introduced to rank people in social classes and was further meant to produce second-class citizens. However, a few countries have always prioritised vocational education, for example Japan and Germany (Jain, 1992) and this stance has taken both nations to great heights regarding technological advancement. Bacchus (1986) argues that development strategies for vocational education used by some economically less developed countries often do not fully recognise subject realities and resource utilisation and Zimbabwe is no exception to this observed pattern.

The worrying question that comes to mind regarding such unbalanced perspectives is whether vocational education constitutes worthwhile knowledge in terms of human development and educational returns, which schools are supposed to foster. If so, has vocational education been reassessed and the stigma ameliorated to ensure effective instruction? Furthermore, is anything being done to ensure effective school implementation of the vocational curriculum? Some research suggests that vocational education continues to be underrated. According to Mureithi (2009), for some schools in Africa, instruction in vocational education is handicapped by a lack of appropriate instructional resources. Mureithi (2009) laments the fact that resources are often concentrated on purely academic education. The same status quo exists in Zimbabwe (Nziramasanga, 1999). Evidence of this is the effort that Zimbabwe's government makes towards facilitating the effective implementation of the reforms of the science programme by providing ZIM-SCI kits to all rural secondary schools (Zvobgo, 1997). This provides much-needed resources to ensure the success of the initiated programme. Massive reforms were suggested for technical education soon after Zimbabwe attained independence (Zvobgo, 1986). Unfortunately, the schools were not assisted in any way and practical subjects were implemented in the absence of the necessary learning and

teaching materials. Practical subjects, which require the use of machinery and other equipment in addition to some consumables, are taught without these necessary resources.

Trying to balance the vocational and academic education equation, Munowenyu (1999) proposes that in the pursuit by schools to provide the skilled labour required by the economy, even academic subjects are studied with a belief for facilitating employment opportunities. Although vocational education may not have the full capacity to prepare school leavers for the world of skilled work, Lauglo (2010) suggests that it may be useful to instil the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values, which are required for the workplace. Thus, the need for effective instruction for vocational subjects and their leadership in schools becomes pertinent. Researchers need to adopt a relativist approach to education (Ornstein and Levine, 2003), so that schools may value the production of well-rounded individuals and active world citizens (Lee, Hallinger and Walker, 2012).

Rating academic subjects higher than vocational subjects may be attributed to the classical philosopher Plato, who believed that a good education was academic in nature (Mavhunga, 2002). A good education, he contended, does not serve an instrumental purpose; hence, vocational education has been rejected as a form of worthwhile knowledge. Contemporary educational reforms of the 21st century place increased value on improved school performance (Marks and Printy, 2003). To this effect, quality control, quality assurance and accountability have become key words in the new millennium (Brown *et al*., 2010). As quality education is considered for other subjects within the school curriculum, it is important to include vocational subjects as well. The question now is how can this be fostered in an atmosphere that may not support practical subjects? Adopting subject departments as the best units of quality measurement may be a better solution (Tymms, 1995). According to Siskin in (Brown et al., 2010)

> Subject departments are the preferred organizational unit of the secondary school, which defines who teachers are, what they do, where and with whom they work and how they and their work are perceived by others.

A focus on the subject departments for vocational subjects may help us understand how they are developed and pursued in schools. Hence, this research study was conducted with the purpose of eliciting the instructional leadership practices of the heads of the technical and vocational education departments. The practices of the head of the department (HOD) thus become important

in the context of a focus on departmental units. In this study, the term or phrase 'head of department' is used interchangeably with 'subject head', 'subject leader', or 'departmental head/manager'. The term 'vocational education' is also synonymous with 'practical subjects', 'vocational subjects', or 'technical education/subjects'.

Vocational or technical education as practical learning, which can best be acquired through 'hands-on' learning, requires appropriate human and material resources. Focusing on HODs for practical subjects would help ensure that the personnel with appropriate technical, conceptual and human skills would be employed in subject leadership positions. Subject heads occupy a middle position between administrators (e.g. for resource material acquisition) and their peer teachers (Weller, 2001). They are also important for facilitating orderly procurement and distribution of teaching and learning resources. Technical and vocational subjects require adequate, up-to-date equipment and other resources such as finance and time, to mention just two. By virtue of their position, subject heads enable the hierarchical procedure of acquiring the resources that would facilitate effective teaching and learning for practical subjects. They represent both the learners and teachers in sourcing the required facilities.

As a skills-oriented area, vocational instructional activities need to be supervised by an instructor who is technically and conceptually qualified; hence, subject leaders with a technical background and bias are essential. In terms of Brown *et al.*'s (2010) view, HODs are the driving force behind any school`s achievement, so studying the practices of vocational subject heads would help establish their effectiveness or shortcomings in regard to the overall performance of the school. However, Brabander, cited in Brown *et al., (ibid)* asserts that departmentalisation, which has become a global feature in secondary schools, has received little attention from researchers. The few researchers who have studied subject leadership tend to be skewed towards instructional leadership in areas such as mathematics, science, and reading. Focusing this study on instructional leadership for vocational subjects was found to be essential in providing information that may be vital for improving the students` learning experiences in the practical subjects.

The rapidly changing socio-economic global environment brings the need to reform national education systems into focus in order to prepare learners for the challenges of the changing and uncertain times we live in, through the provision of diverse skills (Nziramasanga, 1999). In an area that is characterised by dynamism and relativity of knowledge and skills, HODs become essential

as change agents and facilitators in resource acquisition and professional development for subject teachers (Marks and Print, 2003). This makes them key players in organising, coordinating, and improving instructional experiences for technical subjects. Familiarity with these ideas from a scholarly viewpoint may not be enough, thus it is crucial to study the actual operations or practices of vocational education heads.

Vocational education as a system of education whose rationale is to provide knowledge and skills that enable students to make a smooth transition to the world of work after their schooling deserves more attention. The 21st century brings with it the challenge of preparing school-leavers to fit into competitive global economies (Afeti, 2013). Hence, the HODs' key role in the improvement of instructional contact and student achievement should not be overlooked (York-Barr and Duke, 2004). On the other hand, efforts to improve the teaching and learning of vocational subjects are perceived within the purview of instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2012a). The definitions of instructional leadership by Greenfield (1993) and Blasé and Blasé (2000) are adopted to shed light on the nature of instructional leadership that may also be suited to vocational education. Greenfield (1993) describes instructional leadership as activities carried out with the intention of developing a satisfactory working environment for teachers and improved learning conditions and outcomes for learners. Blasé and Blasé (2000) on the other hand, regard instructional leadership as embedding activities such as the sharing of ideas, modelling or demonstrating effective instruction and collaboration among work mates and providing professional development and teacher motivation. As pointed out earlier, most studies on instructional leadership tend to concentrate on mathematics, science and literacy. A smaller amount is known about the nature of leadership that promotes effective instruction and improved performance in vocational education matters. There is therefore a need to focus specifically on studies about HODs of vocational subjects if significant instructional improvement is to be achieved in the area. Furthermore, vocational and technical education HODs are people with a clear understanding of the subject goals and are in a position to explain them to others in more direct and clear terms (Moss and Liang, 1995; Shaughnessy, 1994). In addition to the background of vocational and technical education and its effects to instructional practices, an understanding of the evolution of the post of HOD is crucial to this study. The next section, section 1.3 will discuss in more detail the evolution of the phenomenon HOD.

1.3 EVOLUTION OF THE PHENOMENON 'HEAD OF DEPARTMENT'

The concept 'head of department' (HOD) has developed as teacher leadership has evolved over time (York-Barr and Duke, 2004). Silva, Gimbert and Nolan (2000) describe the development in three 'waves' or phases. The first wave was characterised by teachers serving in formal roles such as departmental heads or union representatives, with their main purpose being to further the efficiency of school operations. This perception of leadership constituted a static or one-directional view of management in which the super-ordinate leader led an unquestioning group of subordinates or followers. This way, their role was not to promote teaching and learning but to serve as an extension of the administration structure to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing system (York-Barr and Duke, 2004). This view has been challenged in many respects, by a number of proponents of teacher leadership who argue for the concept of teacher leadership for learning (Hallinger and Heck, 2010; Spillane, Diamond and Jita, 2003).

The second wave saw teachers' appointment to the roles of curriculum leaders, staff developers and mentors of new teachers, based on instructional expertise. In many countries, significant attempts were made towards preparing teachers for the role of head of department.

The Teacher Training Agency (Hammond, 1999) in the United Kingdom (UK), for example, was set up to develop the national standards for subject leaders and an in-service programme was designed to provide the strategies and competences required for active subject instructional leadership. While many other countries followed the UK example in training subject leaders, very little is known in Zimbabwe about efforts to improve instructional leadership, especially for vocational education.

In the third phase, teachers have been centrally placed in the process of "re-culturing schools for the realisation of teachers' instructional expertise" (York-Barr and Duke, 2004). The third wave tends to be supportive of collaborative or shared leadership and continuous learning. The wave takes into consideration the limitations of the earlier phases by making subject leadership an open activity free to all participants involved. It also views teachers as being primary to creation and re-creation of the school culture (Silva *et al.*, 2000). Vocational education is not static but requires continuous revision of its knowledge and skills to suit the ever-changing needs of the economy and the learners (Dewey, 1932). This also necessitates continued professional growth of teachers so that their instructional practices are not threatened by change. Furthermore, this wave encourages the view that no single subject head can be an expert in the broad array of expertise

required by the different skills that vocational education offers learners. On this point Lee *et al.* (2012: 5), declare,

> The days of the lone instructional leader are over. We no longer believe that one administrator can serve as the instructional leader for the entire school… without the substantial participation of the other educators.

From such a proactive assertion, certain questions arise: how do vocational HODs enact their instructional practices? Is there collaborative leadership or self- centred leadership? Efforts to answer such questions will be made as this study progresses.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The global interest in educational reform and school level accountability has created a new global interest in instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2012b). This is seen in the large amount of research generated on instructional leadership in mathematics, literacy and science in the United Kingdom and United States' education programmes (Spillane *et al.,* 2001*).* It has been noted with concern that research studies on vocational education mostly focuses on the rationale of vocational education and/or vocationalisation of the secondary schools (King and Martin, 2003; Nkungula, 1990) as there is little research on instructional leadership for effective vocational curriculum implementation (Hallinger and Heck, 2010).

In the Zimbabwean context, policies for the compulsory inclusion of vocational education at both primary and secondary school levels have been designed and periodically revised but there seems to be nothing regarding needing instructional leadership for effective teaching and learning to occur (Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, 2001). It is therefore important to attempt to understand how vocational education is provided in terms of leadership in schools.

In the light of the above problems, the present study seeks to investigate how HODs influence improvement in the teaching and learning of vocational subjects in secondary schools. The researcher wished to explore the 'what and how' concerning the efforts of heads of vocational education subjects to enhance instruction in various areas of specialisation. Accordingly, I studied five secondary schools, which offered two or more vocational subjects. The study seeks to answer the following questions.

1.5 STUDY AIM

How does vocational and technical subject HODs enact leadership practices in their subject departments in order to improve instructional quality for vocational subjects?

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To elicit data for this study, which seeks to explore how HODs for vocational subjects were recruited, their roles and expectations and how they executed their mandates were investigated. Some major research questions were asked. The major questions are backed by sub-research questions given below:

1. What are the roles and expectations for HODs of vocational and technical subjects?

    ➢ What policies and regulations guide the recruitment and functions of HODs for vocational and technical subjects in the Gutu district?

    ➢ What are the recruitment practices and expectations from principals and district officials regarding the HODs for vocational and technical subjects?

    ➢ What are teachers' expectations regarding their HODs?

2. How do the HODs conduct their mandate of instructional leadership within the selected schools?

    ➢ What specific practices characterise their role as instructional leaders? What do they do? How often? How do they do it? Why and with what resources?

    ➢ What policies and guidelines do the HODs use to guide and structure their practices?

    ➢ What instructional tools do they use in their work of instructional leadership?

    ➢ What challenges and opportunities are embedded in their work as instructional leaders?

3. How can the work of HODs for vocational and technical subjects be understood and characterised?

From the data gathered in questions 1 and 2 above, I hope to formulate my own theory regarding how HODs for vocational and technical subjects manage to work successfully as

middle managers serving both the teachers and the management in their instructional leadership roles, as my contribution to scholarship.

1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Informed by the research questions, the study intends to achieve the following objectives:

➢ To explore the nature of roles and expectations of HODs for vocational and technical subjects

➢ To establish the policies and regulations which guide the recruitment and functions of HODs for vocational and technical subjects in the Gutu district of Zimbabwe.

➢ To identify the manner through which HODs conduct their instructional leadership mandate.

➢ To develop a theory that can help with the understanding of the work of HODs of vocational and technical subjects.

1.8 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

This study hopes to enable awareness of strategies that can be used to enhance teaching of vocational subjects to improve students' learning. Member-checks of observation field notes may help to instil in teachers and HODs the desire to strive for excellence in their instructional leadership practices and performance management in the execution of their duties. The research findings in conjunction with the literature used will help to influence policy makers to develop clearly defined instructional policies for vocational education and for selection of HODs for vocational subjects. The study would also benefit departmental heads and vocational subject teachers. As they read the report, it is hoped that they will relate the research findings to their known instructional experiences. The study focuses on HODs' instructional practices because their behaviour directly influences performance in their departments. Again, their work if properly done, will augment the principal's accountability on overall school performance. The study also intends to break new ground in the field of instructional leadership for vocational leadership and thus encourage other researchers to broaden their research focus.

1.9 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The heads of vocational educational departments were studied with the purpose of eliciting their views on the practices and roles they play in their departments towards improving students' theoretical and practical learning. The study also intends to investigate how subject heads influence the quality of teaching and learning in their vocational education departments.

1.10 RESEARCH APPROACH

The study used a qualitative approach through the case study method. This enabled a grounded study to be created based on complex human behaviours (instructional practices) (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). In this case, studying HODs' practices necessitates studying the practices of vocational subject leaders as they occurred naturally within the school context (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). The settings studied were five selected secondary schools in the Gutu district of Zimbabwe. The decision to study five schools was influenced by the contingency theory perspective, which criticises the universality of instructional leadership (Owen, 1981). Concurring with Owen, Brown *et al.* (2010), state that effective departmental heads enact the same basic leadership practices across school subject departments but in a manner that is responsive to their particular context. This suggests that HODs vary widely in the way they enact their leadership responsibilities and this influenced the choice of an in-depth study of five selected secondary schools to establish how different HODs for vocational subjects enacted their instructional leadership roles and how their enactment influenced student performance. Bogdan and Biklen's (2007) notion of regarding the researcher as the key data collection tool also inspired the researcher and this led to the decision to use the qualitative research paradigm in order to gather data through first-hand experience.

1.11 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research approach has been adopted and a case study design has been used. This enables the researcher to study the instructional leadership practices of vocational education HODs in a natural setting (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). Five secondary schools were conveniently and purposively sampled (Maree, 2008). The schools' convenience is considered based on their accessibility. The schools offering two or more vocational subjects constituted the study sample because they were potential sources of the required data. HODs leading one or more vocational

subjects were included in the study because they possessed rich data regarding the phenomenon being studied (Cohen *et al.,* 2011). The interviews, observations, focus group discussions and document analyses were used to solicit first-hand data. Data were analysed using Tesch's open coding method (Creswell, 2012; de Vos *et al.,* 2011).

1.12 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study is guided by two theories which share similar tenets; namely, the distributed leadership framework by Spillane (2005), and Fiedler's contingency theory framework (Owen, 1981). Both theories hold that leadership is fluid; hence, followers can lead in areas of expertise while leaders take a followers' position. Leadership is also believed to be situational as determined by factors such as the nature of the task to be performed in the subject area, the nature of followers and the nature of the external environment (Brown*, et al.,* 2010). Distributed leadership can be formal or informal (Spillane, 2005). It can take place with members leading others either in officially scheduled meetings and programmes, or unplanned discussions. Contingency theory propounds that there is no single best way of leading; therefore, it is against 'heroic' leadership (Hallinger and Heck, 2010; Owen, 1981). Furthermore, there is the contingency notion that leadership practices and outcomes may vary among departments pursuing the same goals (Owen, 1981).

These two theories conceptualise the HOD position as one that is not premised on one departmental member but shared among all teachers. The study thus advocates for the HOD who is more collegial than authoritative. The theories enable this study to explore how the HODs and the subject teachers in vocational and technical education departments enact instructional leadership. The contingency theory points to viewing HODs as leaders who should interact with various stakeholders to ensure effective teaching and learning of vocational subjects. This entails HODs, school principals, teachers, students and even the community. In this regard, there is no formal way of leading vocational education departments. Therefore, the study sets out to explore how teacher leadership roles are enacted in vocational and technical education departments. The decision to study five secondary schools to obtain an increased understanding of the nature of interactions driven by the HODs was inspired by the contingency perspective of different leadership practices that exist within different departments pursuing the same goals. The theories also helped establish the responsibilities of HODs in organising departmental instructional activities and in being followers. Sherer (2007) asserts that sharing leadership according to

expertise has the advantage of creating an opportunity for learners to experience quality learning. The theoretical framework is discussed further in chapter two.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine how HODs organise the departmental instructional activities, the nature of interactions and the kind of professional support they give fellow teachers to aid their instructional performance. However, the limitations of this study will be discussed in the next section.

1.13 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Owing to time and financial limitations, the research study was limited to only the secondary schools in one district. As a result, the research findings cannot be generalised because the studied population is too small to be representative of the large population from which it is drawn (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2003). Furthermore, being a study in an area where little was known about how teacher leadership practices influenced instruction, the study is open to further confirmation and debate as new or more studies are undertaken. The phenomenon has been explored through the case study method where only five secondary schools have been studied, which limited the study to a focus on contemporary HODs' practices. In addition, literature used to guide vocational education leadership practices is that which focuses on instructional leadership practices for other curriculum subjects because of the scarcity of research carried out on the specific phenomenon being examined; vocational education.

Before continuing with the literature review in chapter two, the key concepts used in this study are first defined in the next section (section 1, 14) followed by an overview of the layout of the remainder of the study in section 1.15.

1.14 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Instructional leadership: This constitutes actions taken to develop a productive and satisfying work environment for teachers and desirable learning conditions and outcomes for learners (Quinn, 2002)**.** Its major focus is improving student learning through improving teachers' classroom performance. In a department, instructional leadership would refer to those actions an HOD takes or delegates to someone else, in order to promote growth in student learning.

Distributed leadership: This constitutes a system of leadership practices comprised of interacting components in the form of leaders, followers and their situations. The interacting components must be understood in an integrated way because the system is more important than the sum total of its component parts and practices. Distributed leadership does not simply mean division of labour among departmental members (Spillane *et al.,* 2001).

Head of department: This is a senior teacher in a school with subject-specific knowledge and skills in terms of the methodology and procedure required to manage learning in a particular subject area (Elliotte and Clifford, 2014).

Subject department: This is an important organisational sub-unit in secondary schools, which bring together professional colleagues from similar educational backgrounds (e.g. academic, vocational or mathematics and sciences). There is collaborative planning and execution of duties in subject departments. Turner (2000) posits that subject departments essentially sub-divide secondary curriculum subjects for the effective implementation of the whole curriculum.

1.15 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Chapter one presents the background of the study, which reflects the problems surrounding the status of vocational education with regard to its instruction. It also highlights the rationale for vocational education. The limitations of research in the area of vocational education instruction are presented and an outline of the roles and responsibilities of heads of subjects form the background of the chapter.

Chapter two reviews literature related to the study. The literature review is largely based on instructional leadership practices as guided by the research questions. It also focuses on the dynamism of leadership in specific subject departments. Instructional guidance policies and systems are also explored. Finally, the theoretical framework for the study is also discussed.

Chapter three presents the research methodology where the research approach and design are highlighted. Data gathering tools, data collection procedures and data analysis are addressed. It also highlights the ethical considerations observed before and during data collection.

Chapter four presents the analyses and discusses data collected through interviews, observations and document analysis. Research questions and objectives determine the data presentation order.

Chapter five gives the overview (summary) of the research findings from which the conclusions are drawn. Recommendations are suggested based on the research findings.

The next chapter highlights literature related to the study.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Globally, the vocationalisation of the secondary school curriculum has been greatly debated (Lauglo, 2010; Mureithi, 2009; Bacchus, 1986), with the rationale for vocational education as the main focus. Very little research exists on the instructional practices that are necessary to foster improved performance in the vocational subjects. The aim of this study was to expand the research work in vocational education by focusing on instructional leadership issues that are related to vocational education in the school setting, paying special attention to the secondary school system. The literature for research on this study is drawn from established scholarly work on vocational education, teacher leadership, instructional leadership and distributed leadership. It is hoped that, although academic subjects and practical subjects may have somewhat different guiding philosophies, instructional leadership practices for technical subjects could largely benefit from

the available literature despite the fact that the latter is more focused on the teaching and learning of academic subjects, such as mathematics and science. The literature review will be organised under the following themes:

2.2   The history of vocational education

2.3   The vocational education concept

2.4   Teacher leadership

2.5   Instructional leadership

2.6   Instructional practices for vocational education

2.7   Policies for vocational education

2.2 THE HISTORY OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The history of vocational and technical education differs from country to country and across the globe. Before the 20th century, vocational education was largely concerned with the transfer of societal values from one generation to the next (Marjanee and Zeeba-Kalan, 2008). Children were expected to learn about jobs or work in the traditional apprenticeship fashion through imitation and informal instruction from a family member, farmer or craftsman (Castellano, Stringfield and Stone, 2003).

When vocational education was introduced into the school curriculum, students were screened according to performance and vocational and technical education (VTE) was prescribed for students of low aptitude (Castellano *et al.,* 2003). In the United Kingdom for instance, VTE was assigned to pupils who failed to qualify for entrance into grammar schools (Simsek and Yildirim, 2000). Lewis (1998) states that in the United States of America (USA), black, Native Americans and disabled students constituted the highest enrolment in vocational education. Prescribing vocational education for native students was part of the colonial mentality in many countries with a colonial background. In almost every situation, the rationale behind the nature of enrolment was to cater for students who were considered academically incapable of pursuing higher education, which would enable them to earn a decent living. This bares the saying that history repeats itself. The manner in which vocational education was introduced in the USA resembled developments in a number of countries.

When vocational education was introduced in Zimbabwe by the colonial regime, it catered for only 37.5 per cent of the native pupils who had the opportunity to pursue secondary education (Mungazi, 1990). The subjects were taught in F2 or junior secondary schools. In Zimbabwe, the Judges Commission (Atkinson, 1975) recommended the F2 education system in 1962. The F2 education system was a colonial education system, which was programmed to equip 37.5 per cent of secondary school students with basic VTE knowledge and skills so that they could provide cheap labour to their colonial masters. The F2 schools operated parallel to F1 or senior secondary schools, which catered for only 12.5 per cent of secondary school students. Contrary to the F2 system of education, the F1 system offered quality academic education to produce intellectuals who would occupy leadership posts and run the national economy (Mungazi, 1990). Kincheloe (1995) describes the colonial practice as offering vocational education as a 'dead end'. This gave the vocational education curriculum a sociologically low-status image and the reputation of being knowledge, which can be dispensed within both schools and society (Maravanyika, 1988). It is likely that this legacy has resulted in negative perceptions of the teaching and learning of VTE.

While instructional leadership has to do with teachers engaging in the best possible practices to improve student performances, the evolution of vocational education has the potential to affect teachers' commitment to teaching practical subjects negatively and teachers may feel trapped within the bounds of a worthless curriculum (Lewis, 1998). Some contradictory views in the context of vocational education have emerged where two schools of thought seem to dominate. Jain (1992) describes them as the pro-vocational and the anti-vocational groups. The differences between these two groups may have far-reaching effects on the teaching and learning of the subject. The anti-vocational group has prepared a strong case against vocational education through a number of empirical studies in some developing countries. For example, they have argued strongly against the ability of vocational education to develop a technologically skilled workforce (Mureithi, 2009). The pro-vocational group, on the other hand, has done very little to refute the arguments of their opponents. This background has prompted this investigation into the quality of instruction for practical subjects in secondary schools, under the auspices of the HODs.

Literature that focuses on Germany's vocational education reveals more positive than negative historical developments. Germany's vocational education system seems to have very little baggage attached to it and is characterised by a strong, positive attitude towards the entire education system

(Mayer, 2001). Out of all the European countries, Germany has the longest tradition of vocational education. By 2001, the revised model of the German education system was approximately 100 years old (Mayer, 2001). Germany offered vocational education in the form of apprenticeships, which has helped give it a strong economic position in Europe and the world (Benavot, 1983). Germany's vocational education seems to have grown from strength to strength primarily because it promotes relationships among all players who offer vocational education both in formal and informal institutions. Germany seems to be one of the few countries that offer a positive vocational programme, which promotes the teacher's motivation to provide successful and ever-improving instructional practices.

In their investigation into the history of vocational education in America, Cannon *et al.*, (2011) reveal that vocational education was introduced because of American students' low achievement scores in academic subjects. Realising that their nation was at economic risk, they published a book titled *A Nation at Risk*, and this marked the introduction of vocational education reforms in the American education system. The 'nation at risk' concept developed among politicians of the USA when the nation faced fierce technological competition from Germany, Sweden and China, among other dominant economies (Cannon *et al.,* 2011). There was a strong feeling that the academic curriculum was not imparting the requisite skills to students and it was necessary to reorient the curriculum. Academic education was found to be an ineffective and obsolete way of addressing the risk. Therefore, the emphasis in education was expected to shift from a theoretical orientation to a skills-development one. Education ceased to be pursued for its own sake but was pursued for the achievement of the national goals of development and the creation of employment.

In a bid to reinvigorate their education system, the American policy makers made up federal legislation which included the 'No Child Left Behind' (NCLB) initiative and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Cannon *et al.,* 2011). To improve the students' performance, emphasis was placed on higher standards in mathematics and science (Cannon, *et al.,* 2011), with the augmentation of vocational and remedial education to supplement academic education by developing technical skills. This development diminished the status and demand for vocational education (Lewis, 1994). It also influenced resource allocation in most schools by favouring academic subjects over their vocational counterparts. This development has had detrimental effects on the instructional practices of some stakeholders, including principals,

instructional leaders and the students themselves. It has also affected how they approach these subjects. Instead of stimulating research on how the teaching and learning of vocational subjects could be improved, the 'nation at risk' concept increased the risk of neglecting vocational education instructional leadership by renowned scholars whose studies focused more on academic subject instructional practices (Lewis, 1994). The teaching and learning of mathematics and science were prioritised over vocational education. The 1980s vocational education reforms saw the traditional forms of vocational education known as 'old vocatio- nalism' being transformed to what is called 'new vocationalism' (Lewis and Cheng, 2006). To get an insight into the re-envisioned nature of vocational education and how it is likely to influence instructional leadership practices, an overview of the 'new vocationalism' is given below.

2.3 THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CONCEPT

It is worth spending some time on clarifying what VTE is, in order to shed some light on the nature of leadership that is required to enhance the teaching and learning thereof. Vocational education is a federal (broad) concept, which encompasses a wide range of subjects of a practical or technical nature. In Zimbabwe, for example, vocational education includes subjects such as agriculture, home economics, art and design, music, technical graphics, woodwork and information and communication technology (Ministry of Education Sport and Culture 2009). This type of education is offered from primary school to tertiary levels. The current study is focused on studying the practices of instructional leaders for VTE in secondary schools. Vocational and technical education has a vital role to play in producing skilled and competent labour for economic, industrial and social development. This cannot be achieved if effective and efficient instructional leadership practices are not in place. As such, much needs to be known about leadership if effective instruction of vocational subjects is to occur. Although not articulate on how vocational instruction should operate, Idialu (2007) recommends instructional practices, which enable students to acquire and possess knowledge, skills and competences that are appropriate for a productive economy. Research has the prerogative to address this challenge. Unfortunately, very little research effort has been expended on instructional issues concerning vocational education, particularly in developing countries.

The rationale for vocational education is to equip learners with the skills and knowledge required in the job-market in addition to entrepreneurial skills for self-reliance (Boateng, 2012). There is

little consensus about the precise meaning of the term 'vocational education' but the global perspective is that vocational education gives educational opportunities that are related to the economic growth of individuals and communities. In India and many other countries, it is also a type of programme which is usually offered to students who have completed their secondary education and would qualify for certain skilled operations (Jain, 1992). Boateng (2012) perceives vocational education as an educational process that fosters the study of technology and related sciences for the acquisition of practical skills. The researcher of this study uses the term 'vocational education' to refer to practical subjects that are offered by the education system (in a school setting) with the objective of equipping learners with job-oriented and/or entrepreneurial skills.

The rationale behind vocationalising the secondary school curriculum is to prepare school leavers for paying and non-paying employment (Mavhunga, 2002; Jain, 1992). In Nigeria, vocational subjects are offered to develop the skills required to operate their various industries (Idialu, 2007). The Nigerian government believes that the objectives of job creation in industries would only be realised through an appropriate education system with the relevant skills (Osuji, 2004). In Zimbabwe, vocationalisation of the secondary schools has been studied with special emphasis on the importance of technical education (Munowenyu, 1999; Mavhunga, 2002). Currently, a serious shortage of studies focussing on instructional matters concerning VTE instructional leadership practices exists. More than thirty years after independence, the contestation between academic and vocational education continues in Zimbabwe. Coltart (2012) in his capacity as Minister of Education, Sports and Culture suggested the need to move from a heavily academic curriculum to one that includes more vocational education. When he suggested the inclusion of more vocational subjects, my understanding is that he did not mean that there were too few vocational subjects on offer because the option list of these subjects went beyond ten, but what may have been lacking was the effective implementation of the vocational curriculum. The latter includes the clear articulation of vocational education policy and instructional issues like teacher commitment to student learning, instructional support, collaboration, supervision and evaluation of both the programme and the students' progress, amongst other factors. Some of the questions that this study aims to answer are with so little value placed on the worth of vocational education, are the subjects leaders suitably qualified to provide the much-needed technical skills? They are expected to give instructional support to the group subject teachers but do the subject leaders have the necessary expertise and are they in turn given adequate support by top management, such as principals and

district officers? Timperley (2006) advances the view that success in students' learning is not the result of individual effort but of teamwork. This researcher felt compelled to conduct a study against this backdrop that seeks to break new ground by focusing on instructional leadership practices for practical subjects in secondary schools under the patronage of the HODs. This study focuses on the interactions among the subject leaders, their followers and their contexts in order to find out what constitutes optimal learning situations in VTE.

Furthermore, it is apparent that schools need to modify their vocational education instructional practices in order to equip students with work-related experiences (Dewey, 1984). The nature of vocational education again explicitly spells out the need for leaders who have appropriate knowledge and skills (Quinn, 2002). According to Mishra and Koehler (2009) VTE is a blend of technology, pedagogy and content knowledge (TPACK) that the teachers must master in order to use the technology effectively. The nature of VTE presents instructional leaders with a technological environment characterised by a wide range of cognitive and pedagogical challenges, which necessitate the need for instructors to pool their expertise in order to improve student performance (Mishra and Koehler, 2009). The interaction between the three TPACK components create seven forms of knowledge, which can help measure the influence of effective instructional interaction among the subject teachers. They can also assist in examining the teachers' ability to integrate pedagogical knowledge, technological knowledge and content knowledge (PK, TK and CK) effectively into their teaching (*ibid*). Knowledge of the TPACK is critical for HODs so that they are able to design instructional activities, supervise the practices and provide feedback to the teachers. Table 2.1 presents the seven types of knowledge that are essential for effective instructional leadership practices that influence effective teaching of vocational and technical subjects. The italicised words are remarks by the researcher.

Table 2.1: Seven forms of knowledge included in TPACK

Type of knowledge	Description
Content knowledge (CK)	This concerns knowledge of facts and proofs in vocational and technical subject matter.
Pedagogical knowledge (PK)	This has to do with the extensive knowledge of the teaching and learning methods and processes that include teaching aims, objectives and values. A teacher with thorough pedagogical knowledge understands how students construct their knowledge and acquire skills. This instructor also knows which methods to use to make students understand. *Pedagogical expertise is not a preserve of HODs hence teachers with more knowledge of some teaching methods should be allowed opportunities to lead while others, including HODs, follow.*
Technological knowledge (TK)	This is critical knowledge for vocational and technical education. It includes cognitive methods and working with technology, familiarity with the technological potential and the technical and pedagogical principles of the technology.
Pedagogical Content knowledge (PCK)	This knowledge embraces the core of teaching, learning, curriculum, evaluation and reporting. It requires flexible lesson planning and implementation.
Technological Content knowledge (TCK)	This knowledge is the understanding of the way in which technology and content are influenced by each other. Teachers should know which

	technologies are suitable for the skills and how the content is influenced or changes due to the technology.
Technological Pedagogical knowledge (TPK)	This is knowledge about the teachers' ability to see the pedagogical possibilities embodied in the technological tools originally developed for purposes other than education and to explore how they can be used to advance students. This is the understanding of how the use of technology can change learning and teaching.
Technological, Pedagogical Content knowledge (TPACK)	This knowledge is the basis for effective teaching, using technology. It is the understanding of the overall interaction between the technological knowledge when "the sum is greater than the parts" and differs from the knowledge of each part individually. (*The instructional situations for VTE should therefore be characterised by a combination of the three factors of TPACK (pedagogy, technology and content).*

Adapted from (Avidov-Ungar and Eshet-Alkalai, 2011: 293)

The diversity of knowledge and skills for vocational and technical education rules out solo teacher instructional practices and encourages collaboration in order to pool expertise for improved teaching and learning. This discards the naïve concept of 'heroic' instructional leaders, which has since been criticised by Hallinger and Heck (2010), among others. HODs are expected to manage all of the teaching and learning that transpires in the department and to understand the teaching and learning demands of the subjects. Instructional leadership will be discussed in more detail in the next section, section 2.4.

2.4 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Instructional leadership represents a move away from the traditional view of leadership, which is based on an assumption that the led are powerless, lack personal direction and cannot manage change (Senge, 2006). Traditionalists argue that the leaders' task is that of designing the learning so that teachers in the department can deal productively with the critical issues they face and develop their competence in teaching concepts and skills (*ibid*). In recent years, school leadership has been restructured to empower teachers and to implement school-based, shared decision making as a move away from bureaucratic control and toward the professionalisation of teaching (Blasé and Blasé, 2000). Rukanda *et al.* (1997) define instructional leadership as actions undertaken to develop a productive and satisfying work environment for teachers and desirable learning

conditions and outcomes for students. According to views expressed within Quinn (2002) instructional leadership as a series of behaviours that are designed to affect classroom instruction. Narrowly defined, instructional leadership thus focuses on leadership functions directly related to teaching and learning (Marks and Printy, 2003). From the perspective of Rukanda *et al.* (*ibid*) instructional leadership may refer to those actions that the HODs take or delegate to promote growth in student learning through the improved classroom performance of teachers. The purpose of the present study was to establish how HODs induced their followers to achieve the goals that represented the values and motivation of the leaders, followers and learners. Owen (1981) asserts that effective instructional leadership is inseparable from the followers' needs and goals.

Some vocational education scholars who have written about leadership are Moss and Liang (1995). Their cause of disagreement is that vocational education lacks adequate leadership to bring about change and safeguard the subject. They argue that having adequate leadership for vocational education may help to strengthen the curriculum relevance of the subjects whose existence is threatened by the new vocationalism and the call for higher standards of performance in mathematics and science, for example. Moss and Liang emphasise the need to put in place leadership specifically for vocational education. The concept of the leadership they propose for vocational education is guided by Jago's (1982) definition where leadership is perceived 'as both a process and a property' (Moss and Liang, 1995: 5). The process of leadership is the use of a non-coercive influence to direct and coordinate the activities of the members of an organised group towards the accomplishment of group goals and objectives. As a property, leadership is viewed as a set of qualities or characteristics attributed to those who are perceived to employ such characteristics successfully. Elements of leadership distribution and collaboration are inherent in this definition. The appointment and acceptance of leaders are also embedded in the idea of leadership as a property.

Moss and Liang's (1995) perspective of leadership for vocational education resonates with the focus of this study where HODs are appointed to coordinate and supervise subject departments. These scholars also encourage instructional leadership practices, which regard leadership and followership positions as necessary for the success of the vocational enterprise. The proposed kind of leadership draws on instructional leadership literature by scholars such as Spillane (2005),

Harris and Spillane (2008), Marks and Printy (2003), Hallinger and Heck (2010) and many others, to inform the practice of leadership for vocational education.

The above mentioned scholars also uphold similar leadership tasks for vocational education to those that are envisaged in contemporary literature on instructional leadership. The following are what they describe as the basic leadership tasks:

- Envision and instil goals and set high ethical standards that reaffirm shared basic values that maintain the organisation's viability in a changing context.
- Achieve workable, united personnel and motivate them towards the achievement of organisational goals.
- Plan and manage change and nurture the strength of followers to facilitate goal-directed efforts.
- Influence departmental members to achieve mutually workable arrangements (Moss and Liang, 1995: 6)

These outlines can also essentially be used as checks and balances of what is happening in the vocational education departments in the schools under study.

Furthermore, Moss and Liang assert that vocational subject leaders need to be personally developed to facilitate successful performance in their particular professional roles. Despite the fluid assumption of leadership and followership roles in departments, Moss and Liang argue that leaders in each position, such as HODs, need knowledge and skills that are unique in their given role. The available literature on instructional leadership tends to focus more on professional development of all instructional leaders (HODs and teachers) but is relatively silent on categorised professional development. Given that there is no specific qualification for one to become an HOD, there may be a need for such professional development to instil the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to practise from an informed position.

In support of shared instructional leadership, Simsek and Yildirim, (2000) shun bureaucratic leadership as hampering effective instructional leadership for vocational education, due to its top-down communication structure. They argue for effective implementation of a change- oriented educational system that is influenced by teacher involvement before and during curriculum implementation. Spillane *et al.* (2003) posit that leadership has to be seen as a collective set of

activities where multiple individuals enact particular leadership tasks together. In support of this view, Senge (2006) recommends decentralising the role of leadership in organisations to enhance the capacity of all people working productively towards common goals. He argues that goals become clear when people interact through talking. Although Moss and Liang (1995), Simsek and Yildirim (2000) and a few other vocational education scholars attempt to focus on shared leadership between leaders and followers, their literature tends to stop short of illuminating the actual instructional leadership practices of vocational education leaders. Therefore, this study has taken it upon itself to examine how VTE subject heads carry out their mandate as engineers of effective, active teaching and learning in their departments and across the school.

The HODs' roles, such as mentoring, setting and defining departmental goals, coaching, supervising teaching and learning and coordinating departmental activities (Brown *et al.,* 2010), are meant to influence the quality of teaching and learning as well as improve students' instructional experiences. In practical subjects, subject heads are responsible for informing teachers about new technologies, educational strategies and tools that apply to effective instruction. Quinn (2002) declares that instructional leaders must influence others to pair instructional practices with their best knowledge of the subject matter. Furthermore, in in Quinn (2002) the effective instructional leader is described as a principal performing at a high level in four areas. Similar practices are expected of effective subject heads (HODs) and these are diagrammatically represented as follows:

Induction and supervision

Visible presence ← **Vocational Education Head of Department** → Instructional resource

Professional empowerment
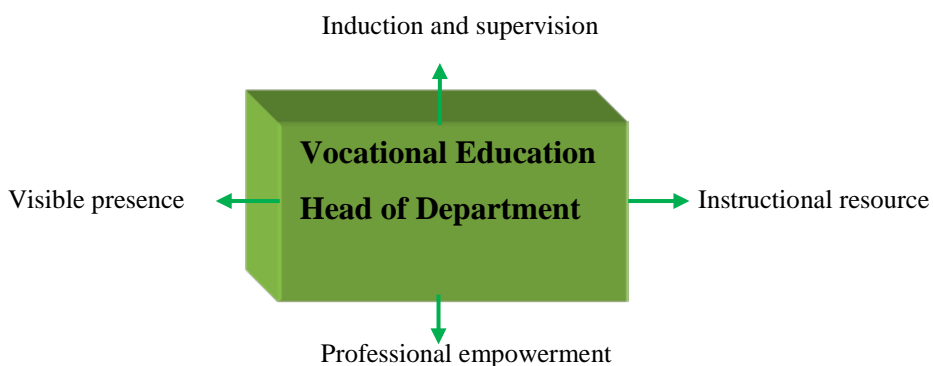
Fig. 2.1: Expected performance areas for HODs

Fig. 2.1 suggests that the HODs for vocational subjects have the responsibility of procuring and distributing resources equitably to all practical subject areas for the achievement of departmental

and the schools' vision and goals. The resources may be material, human, information or opportunities. As an instructional resource, the HOD sets improvement standards for the instructional programme. This may necessitate planning for professional development for teachers. HODs, as communicators, encourage teachers' commitment towards attaining school and departmental goals. They also communicate integration of instructional planning and goal attainment and classify performance standards for staff and students. The HOD needs to maintain a strong presence in the department, visiting classrooms, attending departmental meetings and having spontaneous conversations with staff and students. Echoing similar sentiments, Murphy (1997) emphasises four sets of instructional leadership activities, namely:

- Developing the departmental mission and goals;

- Coordinating, monitoring and evaluating curriculum, instruction and assessment;

- Promoting a climate for learning;

- Creating a supportive work environment

However, in their execution of duty, HODs need to be able to integrate teachers, students and situations to promote team spirit. Teamwork accords every teacher an opportunity to lead instructional activities. This teamwork, known as team teaching, can also be linked with team learning will be discussed in more detail in the following section, section 2.4.1.

2.4.1 TEAM TEACHING

Team teaching or learning is perceived as "the process of aligning and developing the capacities of a team to create the results its members truly desire" (Senge, 2006: 236). Teamwork provides a lens into instructional leadership where two or more leaders work together towards achieving the same goals (Spillane *et al.*, 2003). In any subject department, the critical desire is to obtain the best student performance, especially in examinations. In Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) examines vocational and technical subjects. Students who pass the General Certificate in Education (GCE) or Ordinary Level ('O' level) with grade A or B are allowed to proceed to lower and upper sixth forms and later on to university. Students with Grade C or better are allowed to pursue a Diploma in Education, either in Teacher Colleges, Poly-technical Colleges or any other institutions of higher learning. To obtain good departmental

achievements, teachers need to be able to work together. Spillane *et al.* (2003) use the term 'collective leading' to describe a situation where departmental members collaboratively perform particular leadership tasks.

Vocational and technical education is characterised by as much versatile knowledge and skills as there are social problems (Dewey, 1932). To address vocational education content satisfactorily there is a need for use of both simple and sophisticated technologies, requiring the acquisition of an array of skills, some of which may be too modern to be informed by previously acquired knowledge. The content may also require innovative pedagogy. Apparently, no single classroom practitioner can claim to be a master of all. As a result, departmental members should be interdependent in order to assist one another by sharing expertise (Senge, 2006; Spillane, 2005). An example would be a situation where teachers may have problems with the use of computers in designing and manufacturing in art and design or textiles and clothing. This scenario would require assistance from the information and communication technology (ICT) teacher who understands and is able to use computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing (CAD-CAM) software. The art and design and the textiles and clothing teachers would come in with the specific designs to be produced while the ICT teacher demonstrates the use of the computer to achieve the intended tasks. This is proof that teachers in a department need one another for the common good of the department. It also highlights that in a department, interdependency of members revolves around sharing different kinds of knowledge and expertise (Spillane *et al.,* 2003) in pursuit of common goals.

The departmental desire to improve teaching and learning for student achievement is one of the major educational goals expressed in current literature concerning instructional leadership. When everyone shares departmental goals, the resulting product will be goal congruence. HODs need to be aware of the effects of differences or unity of goal relationship between their leadership and subject teachers for successful leadership to be realised. The illustrations below highlight the different effects that may be experienced in learning organisations. Leadership goals are the operational goals for HODs while subordinate goals represent goals for the subject teachers.

Leadership goals

Departmental Goals
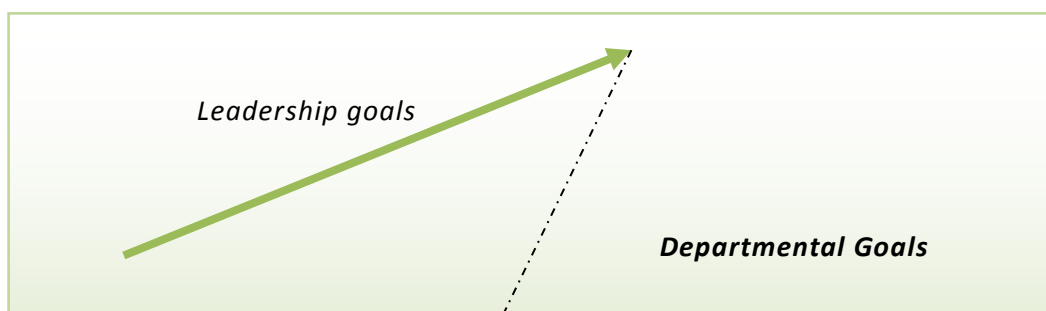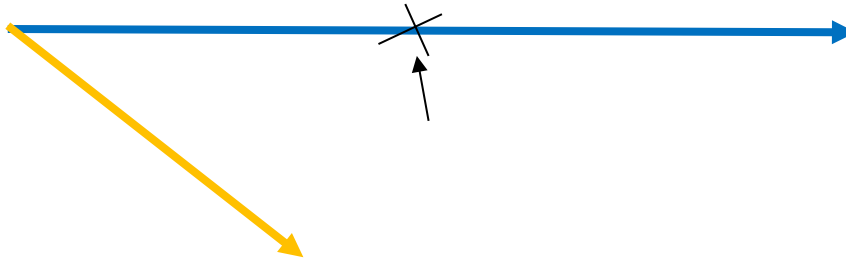
Fig 2.2: Direction of goals; moderate departmental goal accomplishment

(Adapted from www.change-management-consultant.com/force/field-analysis.html)

In fig 2.2, the goals of the instructional leaders are to some degree compatible with the goals of the department but they are not exactly the same. The goals of the teachers, on the other hand, are almost at odds with those of the department. The actual performance of a subject department is determined by the combination of the goals of the HODs and their peer teachers. The degree of goal achievement is depicted at a point where the relationship lines from the two curriculum implementation players cross the departmental goal line.

In some departments, leadership practices can be so opposed that no positive progress can be obtained. This happens when the team spirit is poor. Teacher morale and student performance will tend to be low and departmental achievements will be negligible. The department will be characterised by poor performance.
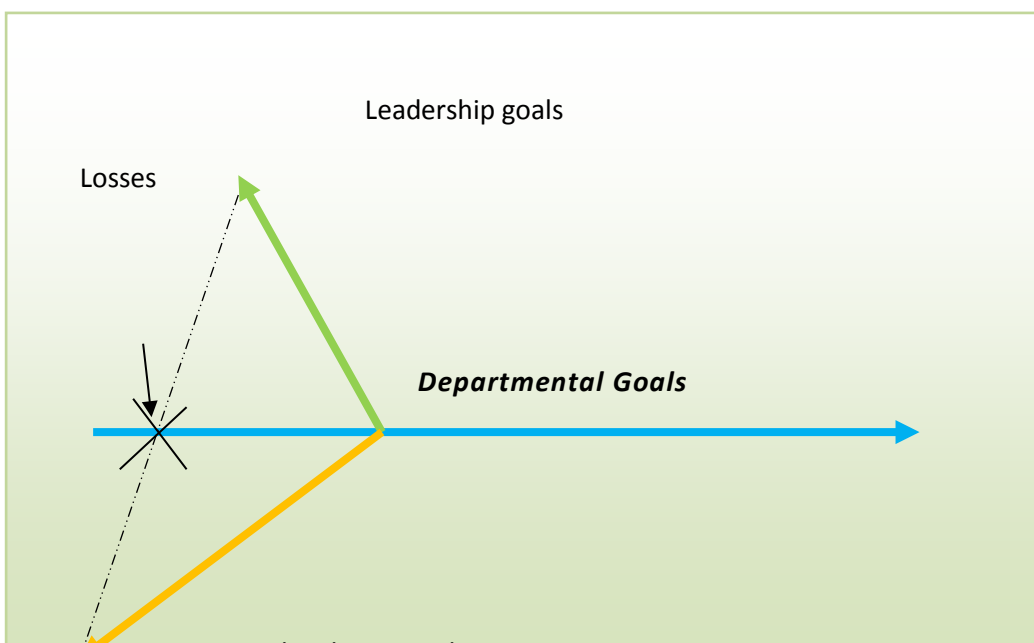
Fig 2.3: Direction of goals; no positive goal achievement

(Adapted from www.change-management-consultant.com/force-field-analysis.html)

When subject leaders and teachers have no unity of purpose, teaching and learning is negatively affected. Whereas the major goal of contemporary education is to improve student achievement as the scenario in fig 2.3 demonstrates, the opposite will be true. The effects of teamwork are manifested much better when the goals of the instructional leaders and their followers are closer to the departmental goals and effective departmental performance can be attained as illustrated below.
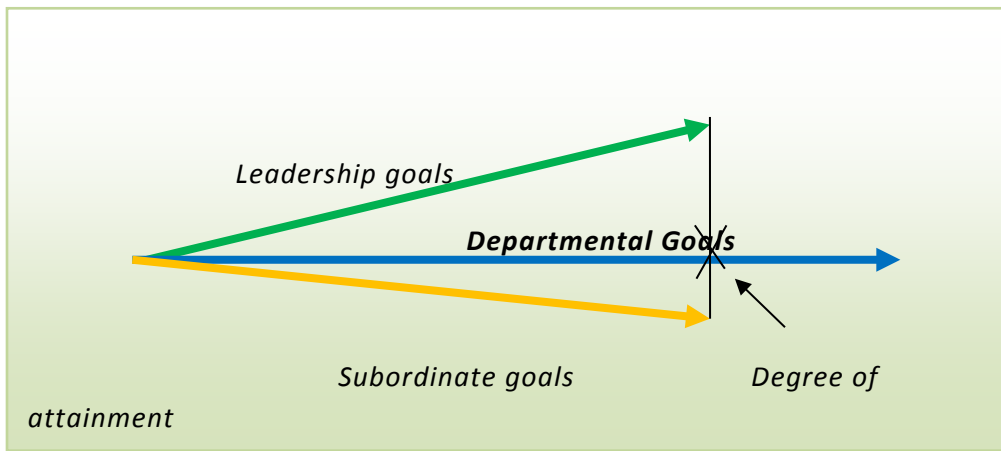
Fig.2.4: Direction of goals; successful goal congruency

(Adapted from www.change-management-consultant.com/force-fieldanalysis.html)

Fig 2.4 demonstrates effective instructional leadership where teamwork is the backdrop of departmental instructional practices. The directions of goals and their relationship illustrate a unity of purpose. For such relationships to prevail instructional leaders have to bridge the gap between the individual teachers and the departmental goals by creating a loyalty to themselves among their

followers. Senge (2006) asserts that they do so by being influential spokespersons for followers with top management. This kind of collective leadership is critical to this study because it gives insight into the expected nature of collaboration among subject leaders and peer teachers in a department.

2.4.2 TEACHER LEADERSHIP

'Heroic' leadership has become outdated in many schools and teacher leadership has also been increasingly recognised as a means of improving teaching (Neumerski, 2013). Lord and Miller (2000) point out that there is no consistent definition of what teacher leaders do, nor is there a comprehensive view of what teacher leadership is or how it works. However, Mangin and Stoelinga (2008) define a teacher leader as anyone who takes on non-supervisory, school-based instructional leadership roles. Senge (2006) contends that teacher leadership is not about teaching people how to achieve their vision but about fostering learning for every stakeholder. Teacher leadership is an educational leadership reform of the 1980s and 1990s, which promotes the decentralisation of decision- making in schools and their sub-units (Mangin and Stoelinga, 2008). The reform views teachers as a more legitimate force in school improvement (Mangin, 2007). In agreement, York-Barr and Duke (2004) affirm that the educational knowledge required for improvement must reside in the people who deliver instruction. In a similar vein, Nuemerski (2013) states the importance of involving teachers in instructional leadership because they have much of the required knowledge for the improvement of teaching and learning. In addition, Floden *et al.*, (1987) assert that teachers need to be involved in leadership because curriculum change works through and around them. Elmore (2000) also advises that if teachers' central role in curriculum implementation is neglected, reform efforts are likely to fail. It was because of the above observations that the researcher was inspired to study VTE leadership practices in Zimbabwean schools. This prompted the need to explore the instructional leadership practices of VTE-HODs in particular.

The work of teacher leaders varies across schools. Mangin and Stoelinga (2008) posit that the teacher leaders' work include being consultants, curriculum managers, departmental chairs, mentors, professional development co-coordinators, resource teachers, subject specialists, coaches and demonstration teachers. The range of tasks for the teacher leaders resembles those of HODs. Therefore, they can also be categorised as such.

Teacher leadership focuses on distributing leadership among all departmental constituencies (i.e. leaders, followers and situations) (Serrell-Cooke, 2011; Sherer, 2007). Its major focus is on how teaching can improve student learning. According to Sherer (2007), distributing leadership among teachers implies recognising the talents of all the educators in the department, which provides all the teachers in the department with opportunities to assume instructional leadership responsibilities. Therefore, teacher leadership increases teacher status (York-Barr and Duke, 2004). When studying the HODs' instructional leadership practices, efforts were also made to find out how the HODs interacted with one another throughout the school and how they collaborated with the group subject teachers. The holistic study of the interactions was pivotal for ensuring that the interactions were understood because the HODs do not operate in isolation. Hence, it was important to study them together with all other stakeholders involved in the teaching and learning of VTE in one way or the other (Spillane, 2005). As the HODs interact with the stakeholders, the manner through which they carry out their leadership mandate would determine how influential they can be in promoting effective teaching and learning. HODs display their qualities of leadership through interaction for instruction. Qualities of good instructional leadership will be discussed in more detail in 2.4.3.

2.4.3 QUALITIES OF GOOD INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Instructional leaders need to have a clear and informed vision of what a good subject department should be. The vision is a product of an understanding and commitment to high standards of good educational practices and teaching by the subject group teachers (Rukanda, *et al.,* 1997). These researchers go on to say that instructional leadership also requires a broader structure of leadership in which teachers are encouraged to work closely together and classroom practices are held open to scrutiny, discussion and refinement through collective action. Good instructional leaders therefore are not self-centred but regard improvement of instruction as a collective responsibility.

Rukanda *et al.* (1997) outline what they consider basic instructional leadership behaviour. These are found to be important in benefitting HODs and their peer teachers. These behaviours include:

- Observe teachers and give feedback. This is important for noting teachers' strengths and weaknesses so that necessary instructional support may be provided.

- Monitor pupils' progress by reviewing their work and the teachers' work. Assessment of practical work may be trivialised by using tests, therefore, some artefacts or assessment tools need to be designed rather than leaving assessment to the affective domain. If vocational education has to yield products with worthy technical skills, then a certain degree of accuracy and high quality work should be expected.

- Work with teachers in planning, implementing and evaluating the department's instructional programme. Involving teachers in planning and programme activities empowers them. This also instils teacher commitment a factor, which is pivotal to effective curriculum implementation. In addition, a sense of security is developed and teachers' confidence is not undermined by strange concepts (Bernstein, 2011).

- Communicate to teachers their responsibility for student achievement. Because the major focus of instructional leadership is student achievement (Spillane 2005), teachers' awareness needs to be raised at the outset so that they focus their instruction accordingly.

- Securing resources and finding opportunities for staff growth. Effective implementation of practical subjects is premised on availability of relevant resources and teachers' knowledge of the available equipment.

Rukanda *et al.* (1997: 19) state "to enable the heads to perform their supervisory functions more effectively, they should possess the requisite academic and more professional qualifications backed by practical experience, proven competence and high integrity". Section 2.5 will discuss in more detail the instructional leadership that are expected of VTE instructors.

2.5 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES FOR VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION LEADERS

The term 'instructional' refers to all functions that are focused towards teaching and student learning (Marks and Printy, 2003). Leadership is about influencing organisational members to achieve the set goals (Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach, 1999). Leadership is also viewed as an influential process that shapes the behaviour of individuals and groups towards the attainment of goals (Yukl, 2006). As can be seen in the definitions, leadership does not exist in a vacuum but operates where there is a purpose or goal. Bringing together 'instruction' and 'leadership',

Leithwood (1994:3) cumulatively defines instructional leadership as "a series of behaviours that is designed to affect classroom instruction". In respect of 'behaviours', Quinn (2002) affirms that leaders are expected to perform several roles (e.g. inducting and mentoring new teachers, steering departmental instruction activities, motivating teachers etc.), all of which are targeted at improving teaching and learning. Sources within Blasé and Blasé (2000), describe instructional leadership as the integration of the tasks of direct assistance to teachers, curricula development and staff development and action research.

The above scholars articulate all these notions in relation to what should happen in academic circles with reference to principals and local education authorities, for example district leadership. My contention is that instructional leadership is not the preserve of school leadership, local authorities and academic subjects only. Hence, using the same lenses as expressed above, this study focuses on the role and instructional leadership practices of HODs for vocational education. Like all other subjects, practical subjects need to be led or managed by competent subject heads. Brown *et al*. (2010) believe that the HODs are crucial agents in school improvement and their leadership is key to the development of successful subject departments and the schools. What is not clear at this point, however, is whether the heads of vocational education departments are aware of the mandate bestowed on them by the school leaders.

Quinn (2002) and Tunner (2000) agree that subject leaders are responsible for the following,

> ➤ mentoring new teachers;
> ➤ identifying staff development needs;
> ➤ setting goals;
> ➤ supervising teachers' and students' work;
> ➤ chairing departmental meetings;
> ➤ mobilising and allocating resources;
> ➤ Motivating teachers etc.

To elevate teaching and learning to greater heights, Davies and Ellison (1997) and Chi-kin Lee and Dimmock (1999) express the need for significant levels of leadership and management.

Gronn (2000) posits that leadership and management are synonymous. They argue that managers automatically carry leadership accountability. Sources within Gronn *(ibid)* also assert that

leadership and management of organisations are essential for their successful operation and there is a great deal of overlap between them.

Chi-kin Lee and Dimmock (1999) argue that considering leadership and management together will help develop and maintain world-class education. I am inclined to agree with the idea because their consideration of leadership and management is evidence of practices that complement each other for a common good, which is an outstanding performance/achievement. It is therefore essential that vocational and technical education instructional leaders have knowledge of scholarly views on leadership and management so that the departments can witness improved performances.

Table 2.2: Distinguishing between leadership and management

Leaders' task	Management	Leadership
Creating an agenda	Planning and budgeting; setting goals and timetable for achieving the required results. Allocating resources for goal achievement	Establishing direction: developing a vision of the future and planning the strategies needed to achieve the vision.
Developing a human network to achieve the agenda	Organising and staffing: • Establishing some structure for accomplishing plans, staffing, delegating responsibility and authority for carrying out the plans • Providing policies and procedures to help guide the teachers • Creating methods or systems to monitor implementation	Promoting collaboration between teachers: • Communicating decisions by words and deeds to all group subject teachers in order to influence the creation of teams and coalitions that understand the vision and strategies and accept their validity
Execution	Controlling and problem solving: • Monitoring results versus planning in detail • Identifying deviations and then planning and organising to solve those problems. • Producing a degree of predictability and order with the potential to produce consistent results as expected by various stakeholders	Motivating and inspiring: • Motivating teachers to overcome major political, bureaucratic and resource barriers Encouraging change by satisfying very basic human needs • Reducing change with the potential to produce extremely good results

 (Adapted from Davies and Ellison, 1997)

As reflected by the above table, the concepts of leadership and management tend to complement each other. Whereas for example in execution, the management aspect of monitoring is essential for effective leadership, the issue of motivation falls mainly under leadership. Broad knowledge

of what these two aspects (leadership and management) constitute would go a long way towards empowering subject heads and their departmental peers on the nature of instructional role enactment as cohorts. A more detailed discussion on distributed leadership will follow in the next section.

2.6 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Distributed leadership is an educational reform initiative of the 1980s that was propounded by instructional leadership scholars such as Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004), Hallinger and Heck (2010), Firestone and Martinez (2007) and others, to relieve principals from being the sole custodians of instructional leadership in schools. The reform was introduced in an effort to re-conceptualise leadership in schools by exploring how leadership is spread across a variety of roles and the process of leadership (Spillane *et al.*, 2004). Further elaboration by Smylie and Denny (1990), presents distributed leadership as a move from the individual and role-based conceptions of leadership to those that focus on the organisation and on leadership tasks. Observing what the distribution leadership scholars advocate would result in subject departments diversifying leadership where every teacher gets the opportunity of leading the group in his/her area of expertise. This practice relates to Alger's (2005) partial expansion of Spillane *et al.*'s (2004) notion of distributed leadership. Alger (2005) views distributed leadership as a democratic and collective form of leadership that proposes the decentralisation of the power and authority of the senior managers, such as principals and HODs. The argument being presented here is that instructional leadership practices should leverage on the collective energies of teachers (Hallinger, 2009). From such arguments, HODs need to recognise teachers as agents who can enact leadership in structures and systems of which they are a part. Given the fact that vocational education is attributed to dynamic content, methodological and technological skills, it is apparent that teachers and HODs would possess expert knowledge in some areas but be lacking in others.

Furthermore, Turner and Bolam (1998) posit that in the same department, teachers are usually at different levels of readiness to attempt challenges such as new teaching strategies in the classroom or teaching new topics. To complement one another's instructional weaknesses, situational leadership based on expertise should be employed. Distribution of instructional leadership would therefore be the ideal practice for empowering teachers if their overall teaching practices were to benefit learners. According to Hallinger and Heck (2010), it would be 'naïve' of HODs for

vocational subjects to assume the traditional, 'heroic' mode of leadership with a superior/subordinate kind of intellectual relationship, where the followers are reduced to being decision takers and never become decision makers. To keep pace with contemporary leadership practices, Senge (2006) advises top managers, for instance HODs, to shift their minds from seeing teachers as helpless reactors to seeing them as active participants in shaping their curriculum and from seeing them as reacting to the present instead of creating the future.

Despite the strength of the criteria that might have been used to appoint HODs, they should always keep in mind that they cannot be masters of all subjects, hence efforts should always be aimed towards engaging peer teachers in the leadership network in order to share ideas for the best student outcomes to be achieved. Decentralisation of leadership in subject departments promotes collective leadership, a factor, which influences student achievement compared to individual effort. Although teaching of vocational classes often takes place in isolation, the final student outcomes gives an overall impression of the whole subject department within the school. Collaborative leadership therefore is the bedrock for improving student achievement and school/district effectiveness (Firestone and Martinez, 2007). When leadership is distributed, teachers become committed to their work and develop a natural drive to learn and teach, acknowledging the positive effects of the distribution of leadership. Senge (2006) posits that teachers excel and learn not because they are told to but because they want to.

Distributed leadership builds collaboration and team spirit among departmental members (Timperley, 2006). It is therefore apparent that when vocational subject teachers are included in teacher leadership in the area of work, they may be able to realise their role in contributing towards the department and schools' learning outcomes. They will also be motivated to note that the results of their instructional efforts go beyond the classroom (Richardson, 2003). Furthermore, they are enriched with pedagogical ideas/skills and they are empowered to implement them for students' benefit. Through collaboration, teachers share valuable classroom experience and this interaction broadens their knowledge and skills base. Graczewski, Krindson and Horltzman (2009) credit distributed leadership with bettering teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge, a practice that is hailed as leading to improved instruction for high student achievement. Spillane *et al.* (2001) contend that leadership must be distributed because it is an organisational quality that reaches beyond the work of individual personal leaders. These views advise that HODs guard against

dominating departmental leadership authority resulting in good student achievement. Spillane *et al.* (2003) and colleagues reiterate that distributed leadership goes beyond the division of labour for leadership functions and transcends school leaders, material and symbolic artefacts (i.e. tools and situations). In actual practice, Spillane *et al.* (2001) and Sherer (2007) indicate that distributed leadership is spread among leaders, followers and situations. Muijis and Harris (2003) regard this notion of distributed leadership as helping to clarify the meaning of teacher leadership and its functions within schools. Hoyle *et al.,* (2005) regard followers as being important in the distribution of leadership through either accepting or rejecting leaders. In the process of teaching and learning, followers determine the power the leader may have in instructional situations. For those HODs who are novices in instructional leadership literature, it is sometimes necessary to take the followers' position during times when subject teachers take the lead in their content concepts or pedagogical strategies of expertise (Sherer, 2007). The behaviour the subject head portrays influences the leadership style of his/her practices. This holds in the light of the contingency view that no single type of leadership transcends all teaching and learning situations (Owen, 1981). The next section discusses the role expectations for HODs.

2.7 ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS OF HEADS OF DEPARTMENT

The ultimate goal of any form of leadership is to achieve the set organisational goals. Likewise, HODs are responsible for formulating and defining departmental aims, goals and policy (Jones, 2009) in addition to ensuring their achievement. The domain of the HOD goes beyond the classroom. It extends to administrative tasks. Scientific management theory can guide the roles and responsibilities of HODs in secondary schools in a similar vein to what occurs in industry (Gronn, 2000). Henri Fayol, the proponent of Scientific Management, outlines planning, organising, coordinating and controlling/supervising, as key tasks for leadership. Turner (2000) describes HODs as planners, supervisors of instruction, motivators and evaluators. Their other role is to draw up detailed school syllabuses and timetables indicating the work to be covered. To foster group subject teachers` cooperation, HODs need to issue each of the subject teachers with a copy of the syllabus. In collaboration with the other departmental teachers, they induct both new teachers and students in procedures and practices of the department. Subject heads, as engineers of change (Rukanda *et al.*, 1997), need to embrace instructional innovation. Vocational subjects

are poised to address diverse and ever changing social and economic problems, so it is pertinent that instructional strategies keep up with the changes (Barker, 2000).

In Weller (2001), it is stated that HODs work as managers and instructional leaders because they perform roles assigned to both categories. Furthermore, these leaders provide a vital link between teachers and administrator expectations and job satisfaction, by offering effective instruction in practical subjects, which assist learners in earning a living. The position of HOD is thus partly an administrative one which involves the responsibility of managing the teachers' teaching practices and the performance of learners in a given subject area (Turner, 2000). The HOD is influential in the achievement of outstanding educational outcomes by providing support for essential specialist subject knowledge. S/he also has the challenge of spearheading leadership centred on instructional matters (teaching and learning) for the curriculum subject. Given full support by all the stakeholders; that is, top management, teachers, learners and the community, HODs can uplift educational standards and bring about worthwhile improvement to their subject departments. Brown *et al.* (2010), claim that HODs are the driving force behind any school's achievement.

Where overall school performance is the focus, departmentalisation of the curriculum subjects has become a common feature as a way forward to improve performance (Brown *et al.,* 2010). The subject departments as sub-units of institutions require leaders, i.e. HODs or subject leaders, to whom successful departmental leadership is attributed.

Some scholars have studied the role of HODs as subject leaders. For instance, Turner and Bolam (2010) looked at theoretical frameworks that guided the practices of HODs of English departments in England and Wales but their study did not provide specifics regarding the mode of interaction that promotes effective instruction in vocational subjects. Brown *et al*. (2010), claim that HODs are the most appropriate and important units of change, compared to focusing on the entire school or individual classrooms. Turner (2003) also looked at the HODs for English, mathematics, science and technology in Wales. Her findings were that different subjects have different themes/content, which have different implications for subject HODs. Although important ideas were raised in such studies, it is not clear whether the findings of the studies that were conducted in developed countries have similar implications for developing countries such as Zimbabwe. Despite all these studies focusing on subject leadership in the school curriculum, none of them confronted the type of leadership that may enhance effective instruction and student performance for vocational and

technical subjects. There is a shortage of research on how subject leaders (HODs) manage the quality of instruction in vocational education.

Owing to the scarcity of literature on instructional leadership for vocational education, this study intends to benefit instructional practitioners, particularly HODs, for practical subjects at secondary school level by enlightening them about the nature of instructional leadership practices that may bring about significant improvement in the teaching and learning of practical subjects. This study highlights literature dealing with some of the specified roles and responsibilities, which HODs can engage in to foster instructional improvement in their departments. The role of setting goals is discussed in section 2.8 below.

2.8 SETTING GOALS

Goals are the road map towards achievement of both departmental and school endeavours. While the principals have the task of setting school goals, Sheppard (1996) reiterates that HODs have the responsibility of framing subject department goals. Ornstein and Hunkins (2013) and Graczewski *et al.* (2009) assert that goal setting should not be a one-person affair but should involve the subject group teachers and pupils and, if necessary, the community. Involving teachers from the outset (i.e. when planning the programme goals), would motivate them to associate themselves with the programme and strive to ensure its success. Conderman *et al.* (2009) state that when teachers work cooperatively they become joint owners of the planned activities thus, there will be a shared accountability of the outcomes. However, in order to achieve the set goals the teachers and leaders (HODs, for example are responsible for the departments) require a conducive environment to work in. The requirements for a conducive departmental work environment will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

2.9 CREATING A CONDUCIVE DEPARTMENTAL CULTURE

The HOD should create a work atmosphere conducive to effective instructional practices for its members. To ensure this, leaders need to move away from traditional styles of leadership, which keep them aloof and instead adopt a networking relationship among all the members of the department (Moore, 2000). A workplace characterised by cooperation, mutual respect, shared responsibility, humour and other social dimensions is more conducive to successful learning of leadership skills than one without these qualities. Staff collaboration fosters a departmental culture

that is supportive of effective teaching and learning (Conderman *et al.*, 2009). When collaboration occurs, there is power sharing or distributed leadership (Spillane *et al*., 2003). The ability to create a culture supportive of effective instruction is essential for efficient HODs because in a positive culture they will be able to meet the challenges surrounding improving instruction and achievement in their departments (Barnes *et al.*, 2010). Efforts to provide a stimulating teaching and learning culture have aroused interest in many scholars in improving teaching and learning by focusing on the distribution of leadership in both districts and schools (Timperley, 2006).

According to Firestone and Martinez (2007), the best way of creating a healthy working environment is through the distribution of leadership. The contemporary distributed leadership perspective held by Timperley (2006) and Turner (2000), involves moving away from ascribing 'heroic' status to leaders where a charismatic figure leads departments from the front while group members follow unquestioningly. This contemporary perspective is an example that is conducive to the development of a positive departmental culture. HODs should have the ability to create an atmosphere that allows teachers to be involved in developing both individual and group goals. Through the distribution of learning, teachers are also accorded some latitude and freedom of practice and expression (Marks and Printy, 2003) and are discouraged from dominating students' learning. The result will be a department free of 'hard and fast' rules about pedagogy for instruction. The leadership concept, if effectively practised, precipitates a pragmatic and user-friendly instructional environment embracing all stakeholders and promoting a spirit of oneness. Unity of purpose becomes a norm, where horizontal rather than vertical relations prevail. Distribution of leadership within the VTE department should be one which empowers teachers to attain actual realisation in teaching (Bernstein, 2011), with teachers interacting in different activities, bringing to one another different skills, ideas, knowledge and experiences (Conderman *et al*., 2009). They are also empowered therefore their teaching is enhanced. When a distributed leadership culture is developed, sharing of resources, for example, equipment, laboratories, books and expertise occurs and the spirit of oneness and common purpose is reinforced. In light of distributed leadership, heroic leadership gives in to collegial leadership for example the role of inducting or mentoring new teachers become a shared practice which may be subject to expertise. Induction and mentoring of new department members is discussed in section 2.13 below

2.10 INDUCTION AND MENTORING

To acclimatise to a new environment and a new job, novice teachers need to be inducted. Induction nurtures both the novice and the more experienced teachers. Cooper and Avarado (2006) describe induction as a process of training, retraining and supporting new teachers. In a department, this must not be a one-person exercise. Teamwork is essential if a meaningful programme is to be realised. Induction as retraining is necessary when a new skill, concept, or new technological system is introduced (Zvobgo, 1999). In Zimbabwe, a vocationally oriented programme, entitled Education with Production (EWP), failed in part because teachers, regardless of their teaching experience, lacked knowledge of the programme content and implementation because they were neither inducted nor given in-service training. Implementation was left to trial and error, hence schools failed to apply it properly and eventually it died a natural death (Zvobgo, 1999). To succeed in the educational reforms of the 1990s onwards, often talked about by scholars such as Spillane, *et al.* (2003), vocational education leaders need to induct teachers in all situations. The induction process should not be undermined or left to chance (Hobson and Sharp, 2005). Wang (2000) also emphasises that induction into the new teaching approach and its challenges is necessary to achieve the set goals.

At departmental level, the subject leader is responsible for planning and organising induction programmes. Working in an environment, which guides and assists teachers reduces stress and transitional problems. This result in increased self-confidence, self-esteem, reduced trial and error teaching and learning, job success and accelerated professional growth in specific subject areas. In addition to going through induction, new teachers need to be mentored. According to Garvely (2003), novice teachers have the challenge of learning the new curricula. To develop instructional expertise that is pitched at levels that enhance high educational achievements, new teachers need to be mentored for a specific amount of time. Induction and mentoring can help to create a conducive departmental instructional culture but of course with the enhancement of adequate teaching and learning resources. The procurement and management of resources is discussed in the next section.

2.11 RESOURCE PROCUREMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Writing about high performing principals, Sources within Quinn (2002), assert that HODs should act as resource providers. In the same vein, HODs should act as resource mobilisers. While

principals marshal personnel and resources within the school to achieve the school's vision and goals, the subject heads should acquire resources and allocate them equally to the subject teachers in a manner that fosters attainment of departmental and school goals. Hoarding resources is unethical and should be discouraged as it works against the goals of the department. A lack of resources for practical purposes frustrates and de-motivates teachers (Nziramasanga, 1999). According to Zvobgo (1999), no matter how loudly subject heads may shout about the need for teacher commitment and quality student performance in vocational subjects, if there are no resources, it all will be in vain. All forms of resources (artefacts such as equipment – big and small – consumable ingredients, fabrics, chemicals, seeds etc.) are pillars on which vocational education skills and teaching and learning practices rest. As a result, heads of practical subjects need to take the challenge of meeting the subject teachers' resource needs upon themselves as middle-persons between the principals, other stakeholders and teachers. Monitoring the procurement, distribution and usage of the resources is just as important. Monitoring will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

2.12 MONITORING

Monitoring is an important part of influencing teaching and learning (Firestone and Martinez, 2007). It occurs through direct supervision and indirectly using testing. HODs use supervision guides to ensure that teachers are following the curriculum and try to ensure its implementation. For technical subjects, instruction has to focus on the 'what', 'how' and 'why' of the learning process if students are to acquire worthwhile knowledge and skills (Ornstein and Levine, 2003). In the Zimbabwean education system, which is examination-oriented, testing is also vital to signify students' successful completion of an educational level. Supervision or monitoring of technical or vocational teaching and learning would require focusing on teaching methodologies employed by teachers and student response and involvement. When monitoring instructional activities in the department, the HOD has to work alongside the teacher leader for the topic being observed to ensure that students will be meaningfully engaged in the lesson (Firestone and Martinez, 2007), are using the available materials appropriately and ensure that teachers are planning sufficiently. For monitoring to be effective, the observed teacher(s) require immediate feedback in order for them to benefit from the exercise. Monitoring accelerates the quality of instructional activities for the teacher and student categories. The HODs also have to monitor the pace of the curriculum and

policy implementation. Monitoring will also allow the HOD to discover teachers' weaknesses or departmental weakness. This will further allow the HOD to discern which areas of the department or which teachers require professional development and what type of professional development is required. The following section (2.16) contains a detail discussing concerning professional development.

2.13 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Vocational education as a problem-solving focused area is responsible for addressing a wide range of changes in social and economic problems, so its content and instructional methodologies also need to be dynamic (Ornstein and Levine, 2003). For the HODs and other teachers to be able to manage the changes that are encountered in any curriculum, there is a need for professional development (Cannon et al., 2011). Floden et al. (1987) stress the need to develop teachers because they are the agents of change and for change to succeed, it must work through them. For example, the introduction of reforms such as the new vocationalism, require instructional personnel to be given in-service training in order to be updated with information on curriculum methodology and technology that they would need to bring about the intended student improvement. Cannon et al. (2011) contend that increased instructional competency is based on professional development activities, which meet the needs of teachers. What this implies therefore, is that the professional development of teachers should not be an arbitrary practice. It should rather be guided by a needs analysis. The research of Cannon et al (2011) also recommends that professional development must assist teachers in understanding subject matter, learners and learning and teaching methods. They further describe three effective components of professional development as (a) hands-on activities (b) teacher collaboration and (c) instructor credibility. Although Cannon et al. (2011) do not focus their study on instructional leadership per se the aspects that address professional development issues are typical of instructional leadership material. However, they do not reflect on how instructional leaders would influence the professional development of vocational teachers.

Simsek and Yildirim (2000) suggest that professional development is not only for empowering teachers who are already in the field. They presented the Turkish scenario where newly qualified teachers were cited by school principals as lacking practical knowledge and skills in addition to knowledge of industrial procedures. On a similar note, Moss and Liang (1995) advocates professional development for teacher empowerment to supplement the teaching knowledge

acquired from training colleges. His argument is that teachers' knowledge of state-of-the-art pedagogies and their application, as gained from teachers' training programmes, is insufficient for effective instruction in the changing curriculum. Vocational subjects require instructional practices that keep abreast of the changing social needs, technologies, content and pedagogical strategies if students are to benefit from their learning endeavours (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2013). Consequently, vocational subject teachers need to be professionally developed at regular intervals, depending on the identified discrepancies that may result from new knowledge and skill demands emerging from changing social or economic challenges. To offer effective instruction, these teachers need to be up skilled and empowered. Simsek and Yildrim (2000) also reinforce the opinion of Cannon *et al.* (2011) that professional development programmes must effectively respond to teachers' instructional and professional needs. They also point to the need to plan professional development according to time, place and content. Simsek and Yildirim (2000) expand on the view that the principals or provincial directors select the teachers who are given in-service training.

As the contingency theory rejects conservative ways of doing things, professional staff development can be enhanced through different strategies, that is, either through workshops, departmental meetings, demonstrations or in-service programmes offered as refresher courses (Firestone and Martinez, 2007). During the professional development programmes for vocational education, hands-on activities are pertinent and teachers sometimes have to perform activities that would be required of students. This helps to increase both their knowledge of content and teaching strategies to implement the programme. Professional development provides opportunities for intellectual growth. It also allows time for critical reflection and follow-up in order to enhance the learning process of the members (Neumerski, 2013). Professional development also includes providing the chance for teachers to serve as monitors of teaching practices with their colleagues, encouraging dialogue about effective teaching and students' work. Floden *et al.* (1987) state that denying teachers professional growth opportunities deprives them of professional autonomy and self-esteem as they may not have the liberty to experiment with teaching strategies and make their own decisions about the most effective pedagogies. The professional development programmes can also give teachers and leaders the opportunity to become acquainted with the tools and material artefacts that are essential for school leadership. A detailed discussion regarding these tools and artefacts will follow in the next section.

2.14 TOOLS AND MATERIAL ARTEFACTS

Artefacts and tools are essential to all forms of school leadership (Quinn, 2002). Like other curriculum subjects, vocational subjects also require the availability of tools and material artefacts to aid instructional leadership practices (Spillane, *et al.,* 2003). Spillane *et al.* (2004) lament the fact that few studies on school leadership have paid attention to the importance of tools and material artefacts. The tools that are used for instructional leadership include, for example, students' test scores, subject timetables, lesson observation protocols, curriculum framework (the syllabus) and textbooks, amongst others. For the purposes of this study, tools that facilitated instructional procedures for vocational subjects are explored. The investigation was aimed at establishing the nature and variety of tools and artefacts that are used in the departments. This is influenced by Spillane *et al.*'s (2003) view that tools characterise instructional leaders' actions. For example, the lesson observation protocol is one of the tools that gained more attention in order to establish its objectivity or subjectivity towards promoting effective student improvement in the VTE curriculum implementation. It is important to note that these tools and material artefacts are not accessories for use only by senior management in the execution of their administrative mandates. They are also core elements of teaching and learning whose purpose is to empower all instructional leaders and identify teachers' professional needs (Spillane *et al.,* 2004). Given the shortage of literature concerning instructional leadership tools, this study seeks to explore tools such as departmental agendas and minutes, teacher/lesson observation protocols and curriculum frameworks. The instructional tools and materials need to be guided by clearly defined policies to ensure their feasibility and effectiveness. The next section provides a guide on the kind of policies that promote teaching and learning in subjects with ever changing content and resource requirements. Suggested policies are discussed in the next section.

2.15 POLICIES FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Global technological advancement has become a topical issue. Sustainable technological development is enhanced by a dynamic vocational education curriculum. Policy makers have to ensure curriculum relevance at every point and time (Ornstein and Levine, 2003). Vocational education curricula should constantly address students' socio-economic needs (Aknipelu, 1981).

Therefore, it is apparent that the constantly occurring changes in knowledge and curricula necessitate a change in policy so that the goals are adjusted according to the changing needs.

The government is responsible for making the policies (Spillane *et al.,* 2003), thus policy changes are politically influenced. In Nigeria, for example, vocational education is expected to conform to general technical education in the country as indicated in the national policy of education (Idialu, 2007). In Zimbabwe, the Ministry of Education adopts its educational policies from the government policy, which are disseminated for use in schools. Stenhouse (1975) is against a predetermined curricula focus and proposes the process model for curriculum planning and implementation, where the process of performing tasks is more important than set targets. His intention is in harmony with the skills-oriented instruction that is required by the vocational and technical subjects hence it can serve as a good guide for both policy formulation and instructional stages. Stenhouse (1975) argues that effective teaching and learning is process- rather than product-focused. Relevant vocational education therefore, should be guided by views suggested by Swann and Pratt (1999) in that educational policy has to be concerned with addressing how best instructional practices contribute towards improved teaching and learning in the skills-oriented subjects. As a matter of policy, Idialu (2007) explains that vocational education is intended to prepare learners for the world of work or self-sustenance, therefore learners must be exposed to an experience-oriented environment to enable them to fit into the job market. Murphy (1997) argues for the need for policies, which clearly regulate operations and gives the example of the Illinois scenario where principals were required to spend more than 50 per cent of their time on their role as instructional leaders. Similar specifications are required for vocational subject HODs.

Policy does not exist in a vacuum if it did, it would be meaningless. For vocational education to be meaningfully implemented it may need to be philosophically guided. In this regard, it should take a pragmatic approach. This is an approach which focuses on the policy process in terms of the `what`, `how`, `when`, and `why` (Ornstein and Levine, 2003). Such policies would facilitate 'learning by doing' as proposed by the philosophies that guide goal setting, content selection and organisation for vocational education. For example, in policies for developing countries (e.g. Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular), the `what` would address issues of basic survival and the `how` would be determined by the available material resources and teaching personnel

(Zvobgo, 1997). On the other hand, in developed countries (e.g. Western Europe, the USA, Japan etc.), issues addressed relate to enhancing the rapid technological requirements of their advanced economies (Zvobgo, 1997). Developing countries like Zimbabwe would require a vocational policy designed based on their needs for example, the need to

- reduce the persistence of poverty amongst the peasantry,

- eliminate social and economic injustice inherited from colonialism

- promote rapid social and economic development through the acquisition of basic skills by youth, and

- develop the lower- and middle-level manpower required to spearhead rural development.

(Zvobgo, 1997)

Educational policies vary from country to country, depending on their individual needs. Policy formulation and interpretation therefore need to be contextualised accordingly. It is important for heads of vocational education to match their subject policy with the socio-economic, political, and cultural requirements of their states. Zvobgo (1997) argues that educational policies are non-transferable because the circumstances in which they are formulated are different. Policies designed pragmatically also take into consideration individual needs and the view that students master skills at different times for different purposes (Lahey, 2009). Again, they will have to acquire skills in different ways depending on their creativity because there is no 'best way' of working out practical problems. For example, in a subject such as textiles, clothing and design, there is no universal way of constructing garments (Aknipelu, 1981). Policies for vocational curricula therefore should not prescribe specific directions for instruction. For clearly defined policy, Ornstein and Levine (2003) encourage reality definers of the day (the government or politicians) so that their curriculum plans are based on some guiding theories. Hence academically oriented policies are influenced by the idealist perspective of 'universal or time honoured truth' (Aknipelu, 1981) while vocationally oriented policies are influenced by the pragmatist perspective which advocates a work-oriented (practical) curriculum that is dynamic and dependent on place, culture and time.

To provide effective instructional leadership practices (such as setting goals, mentoring, providing resource materials and many more), HODs need to have a clear insight into the philosophies guiding their area of specialisation and their pedagogical implications. To guide curricula in the same light, the prescribed policies need to be documented and available for continued referencing. Policy documents are tools that aid teacher leaders' instructional leadership practices therefore their guidance should be reflected in teaching and learning. The teamwork that takes place in buildings has to be influenced by policy (Floden *et al.,* 1987). The latter researchers also assert that policy is assessed through instructional leadership by examining achievement in schools. Vocational education requires that teachers be given space to make decisions in content selection and implementation. In support of this idea, Zvobgo (1997) contends that, at departmental level, the individual subject teachers concerned must reach a consensus. A policy that is imposed on teachers is bound to fail (Zvobgo, 1999) as is a policy, which is not clearly defined. In Zimbabwe, vocational education policy documents have lists of subjects for students to choose from but they have a lack of clear guidance on strategies that are necessary for imparting and acquiring quality skills. To improve policy presentation so that instructional leadership for vocational subjects is improved, Idialu's (2007) advice needs to be observed at the levels of policy formulation. This present study will further scrutinise the tools in light of instructional leadership perspectives, that is, how much light they shed on teacher interaction, teacher/student engagement and physical/human resource expectations, among other factors. The conceptual framework, which comprises the next section, will discuss these instructional leadership perspectives and the concept of instructional leadership in general, in detail.

2.16 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework, by definition, is a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of inquiry and are used to structure a subsequent presentation (Kombo and Tromp, 2009). A conceptual framework was essential in this study in that it assisted the researcher in understanding the instructional leadership concept and its organisation. It also provided reference points to discuss the literature and analysis of the research findings (Kombo and Tromp, 2009). The term instructional leadership means different things to different people because of the fact that several scholars have researched it in different contexts. Blasé and Blasé (2000) influence the idea of instructional leadership that the present study holds, where instructional leadership is defined as

the teacher leaders' ability to involve their colleagues collaboratively in mutual teaching and learning.

The researcher used instructional leadership and distributed leadership frameworks to guide this study, which focused on the instructional leadership practices of vocational and technical education HODs. The study adopts the instructional leadership framework to explore the various activities through which instructional leaders demonstrate knowledge and skills in their area of specialisation and how they interact with others (Quinn, 2002). In addition to the aforementioned framework, the distributed view of leadership, where leadership is influenced by knowledge and skills within contexts (Spillane *et al.,* 2003) was also adopted. Hallinger (2012a) proposes three dimensions for the instructional leadership role of principals, which also relate very well to HODs. These are defining departmental mission/goals, managing instructional programmes and promoting a positive school/department learning climate. Hallinger's (2012b) dimensions resonate with Jago's (1982) proposed definition of vocational education leadership where leadership is regarded as both a process and property (Moss and Liang, 1995). HODs as instructional leaders are mandated to manage and coordinate teaching and learning activities in specified set-ups, hence the need to examine their instructional interaction practices arises. The present study focuses on instructional leadership roles played by HODs for vocational subjects.

 The concept of distributed leadership complements instructional leadership. Neumerski (2013) regards traditional instructional leadership concerned with principals, teachers and districts leaders. She uses a distributed leadership approach to explore interactions of leaders in context. Hallinger and Heck (2010) also despise observation of heroic leadership and opt for shared instructional leadership. In contributing towards improving the overall school performance for which principals are responsible, the HODs' leadership practices need to be shifted from focusing on the school to the department. For example, they are mandated to define the department's mission and goals. In his study, Hallinger (2012a) broke down the principals' functions into ten. In the purview of Hallinger's (2012a) functions of principals, the HODs' functions in the current study were delineated to nine, as shown below.
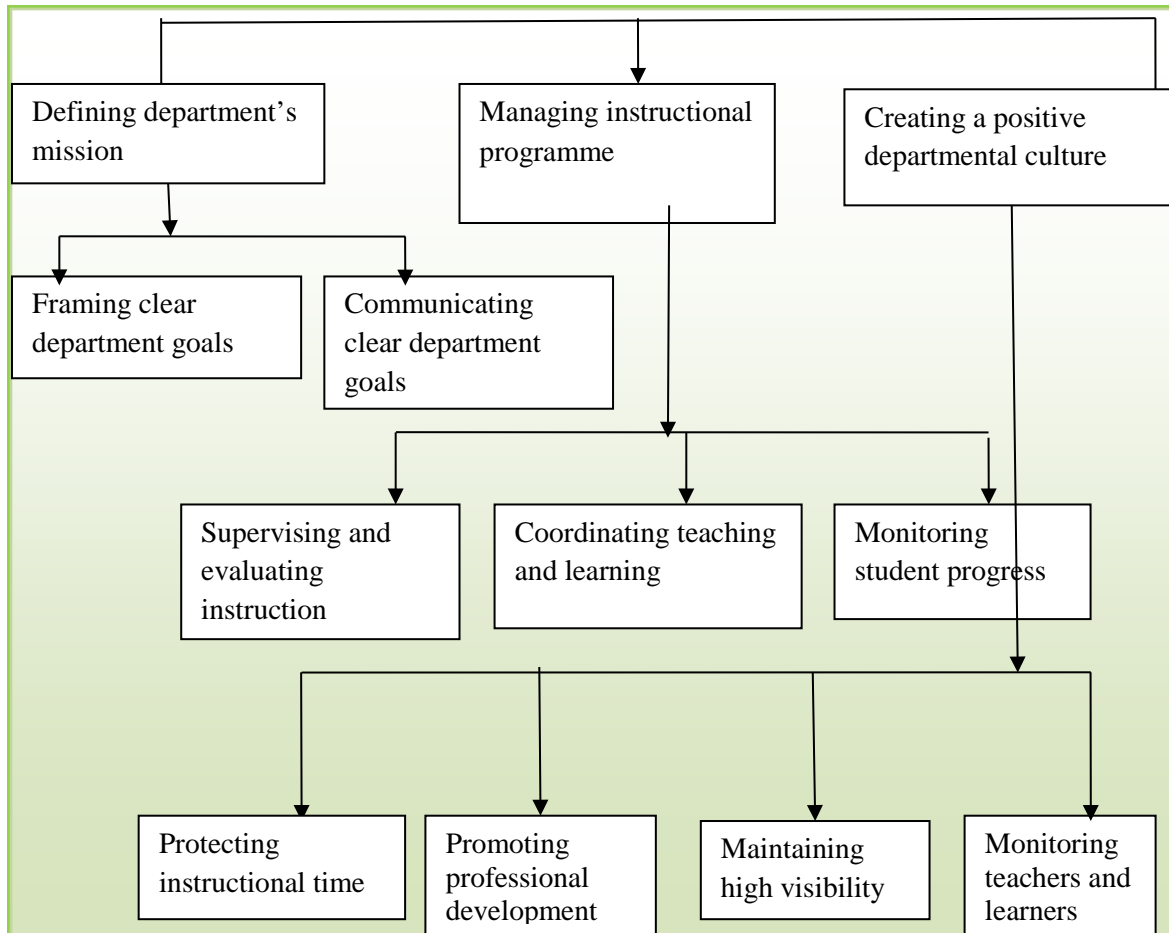
Fig 2.5: Functions of the head of department (Adapted from Hallinger 2012a)

From the concept that instructional leadership must leverage on the collective energies of teachers, the distributed leadership framework suggests the spread of leadership across a variety of roles. The diversity of roles necessitates the spread of leadership among multiple leaders (Harris and Spillane, 2008). Furthermore, according to Spillane *et al.* (2004), distributed leadership can be viewed normatively as being

1. quasi-democratic or an expansion of school administration; and

2. analytical, to understand how leadership work is spread among leaders, followers and situations.

Spillane *et al.* (2004) further contend that the analytical perspective seeks to explore leadership distribution and the illuminating effect of distributed leadership on teaching and learning. Based on the dynamic nature of the teaching and learning experience because of the ever-changing nature of problems that vocational education needs to solve, the subjects' leadership has to be analytical.

Thus, distributed leadership conceptualises leadership as an organisational property, which fosters departmental improvement. However, a few published studies have investigated the impact of distributed or shared leadership on vocational education improvement and its effects on student learning (Hallinger and Heck, 2010).

Traditional views of leadership tend to focus on the individual leader while distributed leadership theory extends beyond the characteristics of the leader to consider the activity of leadership (Spillane *et al.*, 2004). From this view, the scholars argue that instructional leadership practice is not influenced only by school leaders and teacher leaders but also by followers. When leadership is distributed as illustrated below, followers sometimes become leaders and vice versa. Sources within Spillane *et al.* (2003), confirm the change of power relationships when leadership is viewed in a distributed perspective. The figure also illustrates the cyclical nature of distributed leadership. Change of power in distributed leadership signifies reciprocation that is necessary for teacher and student enrichment (Hallinger and Heck, 1997).

Fig 2.6: Distributed leadership framework

(Adapted from Serrell-Cooke, 2011)

In this study, distributed leadership was used to study instructional leadership practices as practised by HODs and the group subject teachers. Interviews and observations were conducted to find out ways in which leadership was shared among the subject heads, teacher leaders and their followers.

In view of the notion that it is impossible for the HOD to meet all the vocational instructional needs (one person cannot be a master of all technical skills), the HODs are expected to distribute leadership to all the subject teachers. Based on teacher expertise, teachers need to be granted opportunities to lead in their areas or topics of expertise while the rest of the subject teachers (including the teacher leader) become followers (Sherer, 2007). Although one of the tasks for the teacher leaders is to monitor or supervise instructional activities when instructional leadership is shared (Hallinger and Heck, 2010), the role of the HOD becomes less of a teacher and student competence inspector and more of a facilitator of teacher instructional growth (Marks and Printy, 2003). Spillane (2005) and Sherer (2007) also confirm that distributed leadership recognises talents of all teachers in the department and they contend that it provides subject teachers with opportunities to assume instructional leadership responsibilities. However, Neumerski (2013) laments the fact that much of the available literature is focused on principal and teacher leader instruction and does not pay much attention to how the instructional leaders interact with one another, their followers and the context. Furthermore, the few studies that have been conducted seem to be silent regarding instructional leadership issues for vocational education.

To establish the manner in which leadership was distributed in various schools' vocational education departments, observation sessions were conducted in two phases, where a full week was spent at each school in the first five-week phase and another week was spent at each school in the second phase. This approach allowed the researcher to assess how shared leadership promoted teaching and learning improvement and the subsequent rate of growth in technical skills achievement. Followers' practices and engagement were subsumed in the study that sought to investigate the instructional leadership practices for heads of vocational subject departments.

Distributed leadership is characterised by team spirit, or collaborative leadership. Thus vocational subject teachers who have the requisite technical expertise or information collaboratively exercise leadership with the subject heads. The heads of subjects assign leadership roles to subject teachers, based on their expertise. As teachers work out problems together, they encourage one another to answers some instructional problems. Distributed leadership also promotes learner improvement in skills acquisition and mastery. Because the secondary education students usually receive instruction from multiple teachers, their learning depends, at least in part, on the quality of teaching across classrooms and on collaborative leadership. Collaborative leadership enables sequencing of

concepts or skills development through shared goal setting and instructional supervision. As guided by cognitive psychological theories, students' achievement is enhanced when concepts are presented concentrically, that is, starting from simple to complex (Mwamwenda, 2004). This could only be achieved through a collaborative breakdown of the national syllabi into sequenced school syllabi activities. Marks and Printy (2003) contend that shared leadership between leaders and followers leads to instructional and student improvement.

Guided by the distribution of leadership in other contexts, VTE practitioners can also follow a similar trend, as illustrated in figure 2.7 below.
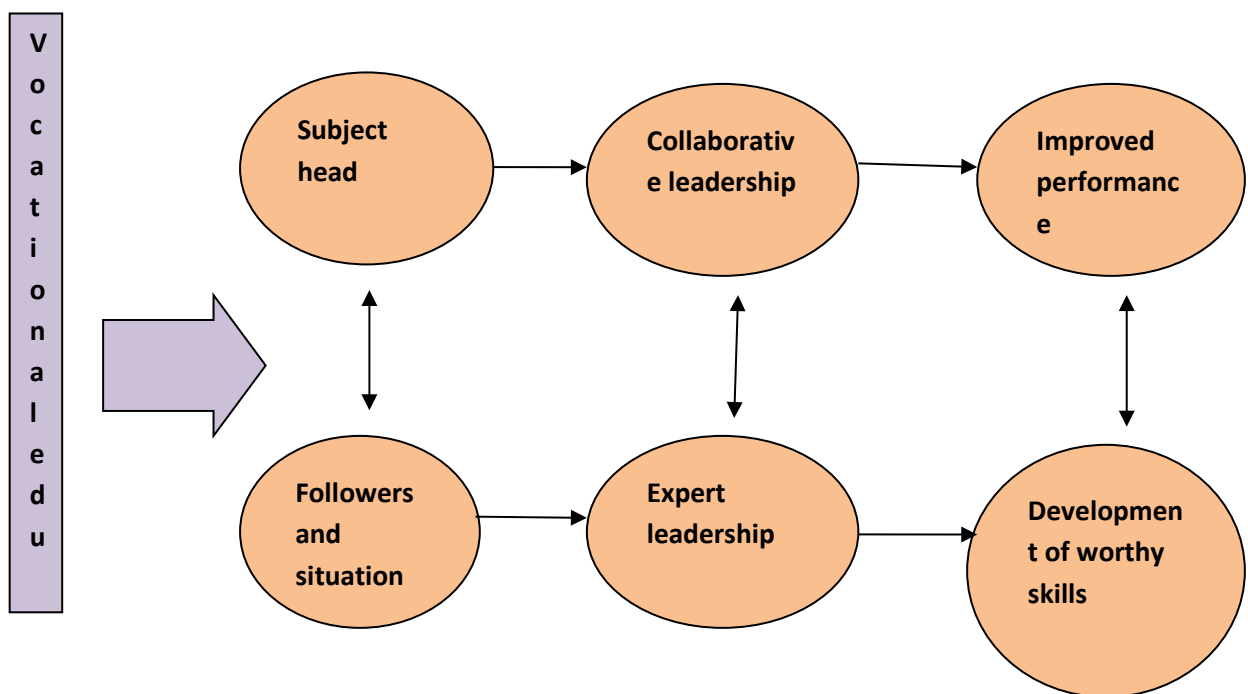
Fig 2.7: Structure and effect of collaboration in departments

(Adapted from Hallinger and Heck, 2010)

Fig. 2.7 presents a proposed model of how collaborative leadership in departmental contexts may be related to student learning. Observed comprehensively, sequenced content is the foundation of effective learning which is achieved from shared instructional leadership. Since the drive behind teaching and learning of vocational subjects is to yield suitably skilled citizens, it is pivotal that vocational education educators collaborate to achieve the intended goals together. Distributed leadership empowers teachers, gives them confidence and develops a sense of belonging within

them. In fact, it is a strong motivating factor which can increase teachers' commitment towards quality classroom instruction.

Instructional leadership for vocational education may need to be determined by the situation (Firestone and Martinez, 2007). Hence, team leadership needs to be observed. Sherer (2007) also asserts that leadership is the preserve of leaders, followers and situations. Thus, whether in specific or combined departments, the subject head should sometimes take the follower's position while a subject group teacher takes the lead in an area of expertise. For instance, a teacher who has expertise in conducting field trips as an instructional technique for practical subjects will be given the opportunity to lead all the other teachers in the department. The concept of distributed leadership draws strongly on the view of Lee *et al.* (2012), that viewing leadership as a monopoly is naïve. Distributed leadership values the rich contributions of colleagues for enhancing goal achievements and students' learning. The theoretical framework that guided this study is discussed in more detail in the next section, 2.20.

2.17 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework is a collection of interrelated ideas based on theories (Kombo and Tromp, 2009). Its purpose in the study is to explain phenomena, guide research work and help interpret the findings. The theoretical framework for this study is based on Fiedler's Contingency Theory (Owen, 1981). In support, Gronn (2000) also propounds that there is no best approach to leadership for all situations. Directly focusing on subject departments, Turner and Bolam (1998) assert that there is no best way to manage a department. This implies that when talking about any form of leadership or interaction, issues of relativity, dynamism or change and even leadership styles come into play. Contingency theory is rooted in a number of assumptions about organisations and individuals. In Turner and Bolam (1998), organisations are described as open systems that are influenced by their environments with overlapping goals. They also contend that organisations have problems that are universal and unique. This suggests that leadership has to adapt its practices to context-specific problems. What these scholars suggest is applicable to vocational subjects where instructional content is relative to place and time. This implies that HODs in different VTE departments are confronted by different instructional challenges and exposures. Given this position, Southworth (2010) rules out the need to search for an overarching leadership theory and

advocates adopting a more pluralistic approach when dealing with departments, which are characterised by a wide range of instructional leadership practices.

The contingency perspective of instructional leadership also embraces the differences that exist between departments teaching the same subject in different schools (e.g. staff establishments, specialist rooms, timetabling etc.) (Turner and Bolam, 1998). Concurring with the other scholars, Hallinger (2012b) asserts that effective departmental heads enact 'the same basic leadership practices' across school subject departments but in a manner that is responsive to their contexts. This view is critical to this research, which studied five different VTE departments not for comparative purposes but in order to explore the effectiveness of instructional leadership practices in each of the sample schools. The relative nature of vocational education corresponds well with the contingency theoretical framework of leadership. The prominent features of vocational education are change of content to suit time and place in a relative way, learner-centeredness, value-based worthiness and a need to share ideas and resources. There is no homogeneity of practices although national goals may be the same. Ideally, vocational education departments are too complex for effective leadership to be attributed to a single leader (Sergiovanni, 1996). Owing to these contingency-based views, it was hoped that qualitatively studying the practices of HODs in their actual school departments would unearth different instructional practices experienced in vocational educational areas for different secondary schools in the Gutu district. The drive was to examine what practices operated and how they contributed towards improving students' instructional experiences at every point. Contingency theory, according to Owen (1981), states that it is important to know the time when specific leadership dimensions are applicable to instructional situations. Observations and interviews enabled the establishment of conditions that influenced different leadership practices in order to find out how, how often, when and why certain leadership practices were practised in the departments.

From the understanding that there is no best way to exercise leadership, Turner and Bolam (1998) argue that no HOD knows everything concerning his/her subject area. The perspective underpinning this framework is thus that instructional leadership should be distributed or shared among all departmental members. Confirming the coverage of distributed leadership under the contingency theoretical framework, Jones (2009) propounds that there are five models. The first two, instructional leadership and distributed leadership, were of particular interest to this study.

From the contingency theoretical perspective, distributed leadership embodies the idea of team leadership where departmental members participate in leadership activities. Proponents of distributed leadership suggest that this perspective is essential in subject departments because they are so complex and the tasks are so broad that many individuals must participate in accomplishing tasks (Hoy and Miskel, 2008). During interaction, the HOD takes the centre stage as the department organiser and coordinator. Their leadership role however does not make them heroes. There is a need for interaction with all other departmental members for the common good. Gronn (2000) says that a department should comprise aggregations of numerous leader-follower dyads and the interaction among the team players should unite. Thus, the strength of the individual members of the group becomes the combined strength for professional growth and learning.

The theory assumes that there is no one universal best way to exercise leadership under all conditions. The framework also points out that effective organisations or departments are characterised by having participative team leadership. It also suggests that

- moving a department to a state of outstanding performance requires a task-oriented leader who can develop active engagement of the other subject area members in departmental activities;
- leaders (in this case, vocational subject heads) need to create participative leadership conditions and engage with the readiness and ability of members to function well.

Guided by the contingency theory, the study explores how leadership is spread across the members of the vocational education departments. Because the instructional situations or problems cannot be predetermined, the study seeks to examine how the situations determined the sharing of leadership in the department. The type of leadership tools at the disposal of the departmental leaders and their influence on teacher and learner performance are also studied from the perspective that various tools work towards improving instruction and increasing learner performance.

2.18 SUMMARY

This chapter has reviewed literature related to instructional leadership for VTE focusing closely on how HODs take leadership and follower roles to improve instruction in practical subjects. The reviewed literature on the history of vocational education reflects a bleak beginning where the

subjects were placed at the margins of curriculum implementation. This background is most likely the basis of the instructional neglect surrounding the VTE system. The literature demonstrates that despite the large amounts of literature on instructional leadership in schools, there is a shortage of studies on leadership practices that are focused on improving the teaching and learning of VTE. The literature also demonstrates that the large amounts of literature that are available focus more on the history and rationale of the education system. On the other hand, there is a great deal of literature on instructional leadership for academic education and this literature will inform the study as far as possible. The literature on distributed leadership reflects the importance of the concept in dealing with instructional leadership issues. The literature on contingency theory highlights the diversity of leadership and agrees with Spillane *et al.* (2003) that leadership should be based on single leaders but spread over a number of people within an organisation. The current study seeks specifically to examine the influence of HODs for VTE to teachers and situations in an effort to improve student achievement of vocational skills. The next chapter addresses the methodologies used to conduct the study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research approach and design that were used to study the role and influence of vocational education heads of department in the teaching and learning of practical

subjects. It also highlights the research instruments, sampling procedures and data gathering techniques that were found most suitable for this study, the intention of which is to examine the instructional leadership practices of heads of department of vocational subjects in the teaching and learning of practical subjects. Although the study is focused on the instructional leadership practices of HODs, the role of the principal, education officials and the subject teacher is also critically considered, because HODs do not operate in isolation.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The current research study seeks to explore the instructional leadership of HODs for VTE in the Gutu district's secondary schools. To understand how the HODs enacted their instructional leadership mandate, a qualitative approach was adopted because it facilitated exploration of participants' experiences, attitudes, views, opinions, beliefs and values (Cohen *et al,*. 2011). According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), exploring and understanding human behaviours such as influential personalities and role execution requires the researcher to be on the ground where things are happening. In support, Cohen *et al.* (2011) hold that qualitative research facilitates understanding of complex phenomena such as human behaviour and experiences. In the same vein, McMillan and Schumacher (2010) assert that studies that require an understanding of human behaviour in certain circumstances are successfully carried out through direct interaction with the research participants. Hence the qualitative research design afforded the researcher an opportunity to have direct interaction with all the research participants involved in this study. In the process, I gained a deep understanding of the HODs' instructional practices and interaction with teachers and pupils. This makes the qualitative research approach well suited to the present study which sought to explore how the HODs were appointed, their role enactment, distribution of leadership in the departments and the effects of knowledge and skills- based leadership. Using the qualitative approach enabled the researcher to go into the schools to obtain a clear understanding of the instructional leadership roles played specifically by HODs for vocational subjects in the secondary schools, and the nature of interactions aimed at the effective teaching and learning of practical subjects.

Adoption of the qualitative approach was also motivated by McMillan and Schumacher's (2010) argument that it allows the researcher to explore the phenomenon in its natural setting. In support, Patton (2001) defines qualitative research as the kind of research study that produces findings from

real world settings where the phenomenon of interest unfolds naturally. In the current study the setting was the secondary schools' vocational and technical education departments. The natural setting perspective enabled the researcher to study the heads of department while conducting their instructional duties that is, in context (Spillane, *et al.,* 2004). The rationale behind data collection in natural settings is that human actions are believed to be strongly influenced by the setting in which they occur (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). For this reason, Silverman (2009) argues that using the quantitative approach to investigate human practices would distance the researcher from the phenomenon under the spotlight. Studying the leadership practices of the heads of department in their natural setting also accommodated what Bogdan and Biklen (2007) refer to as the researcher being a direct, key data collection instrument. By being present in the schools' vocational education departments during data collection, the researcher was able to obtain first-hand information and an in-depth understanding of heads of departments' practices, as well as related events surrounding the teaching and learning of practical subjects. Being on the ground enabled the researcher to see things happening, hear participants' oral expressions as well as note their body language (gestures, facial expressions etc.). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) recommend qualitative research in part because it allows participants to be understood from their own points of view and voices. This then enables the researcher to draw informed conclusions from the research findings. McMillan and Schumacher (ibid) argue that an explanation of human behaviour which does not take into account the context is incomplete. Some researchers also stress that authentic and accurate data are obtained directly from primary sources (Silverman, 2009).

I also took my cue from Marshall and Rossman (2006) who validate the relevance of the qualitative approach for the present research study by contending that such approaches are more suited when little is known about the phenomenon. At the time of this study, very little has been written about heads of departments' leadership practices in vocational and technical education, as has already been alluded to (Hallinger and Heck, 2010). Hence there was a need to get participants' views on the supervision and support that is given for the teaching and learning of vocational subjects to improve student achievement.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design, according to Nachmias and Nachmias in Yin (2003:21) is a plan that "guides the investigation in the process of collecting, and interpreting observations". The major purpose

of the research design is to ensure agreement between the research questions and the findings. To conduct a study about the instructional leadership practices of HODs for VTE, the case study design was used and the multiple case studies method adopted (Gray, 2009).

According to Maree (2008), there are several definitions of a case study. Yin (2003:13) defines a case study as "an empirical study that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". In an attempt to elaborate on Yin's perspective, Gray (2009) explains a case study as an exploration of subjects or issues where relationships may be ambiguous and uncertain. Cohen *et al.* (2011) on the other hand define a case study as "a specific instance in action", while McMillan and Schumacher (2010) refer to it as an in-depth analysis of a single unit which could be a single person, a school, a class, an event or an organisation. The present study was also informed by Creswell's (2008) definition of a case study as an in-depth study of a bounded system based on extensive data collection. By "bounded system" Creswell (2008) refers to something specific or unique according to place, time and participant characteristics. In this study, five secondary schools' VTE departments were therefore studied as separately bound cases. The case study design was used because it enabled an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Maree, 2008). From an array of subject leadership in the secondary schools, the leadership for vocational education specifically was the phenomenon focused upon. The qualitative case studies approach permitted me to study the HODs for vocational subjects in their school departmental settings.

Investigating the HODs' leadership practices in a natural setting brought about deeper insights and a better understanding of the HODs' actual instructional leadership practices and the problems they face as leaders and teachers of practical subjects (Kombo and Tromp, 2009). Studying a case may also enable the unveiling of some other factors that have a bearing on teaching and learning in vocational subject areas (Ary *et al.,* 1996). The case study method is synonymously called the "naturalistic", "inner-perspective" or "grounded" theory because the researcher has direct contact with the people and the situation under study (Nyawaranda, 2007). For the purpose of this study, the focus was only on what the heads of departments did to influence effective implementation of vocational subjects, and multiple case studies were thus conducted. The study involved five secondary schools in one province and one district, in accordance with Creswell's (2008)

definition. Each secondary school constituted a case on its own. It was hoped that studying individual schools as cases would reveal divergent factors that may have a bearing on the teaching and learning of practical subjects under different settings.

Data were extensively gathered using the qualitative data collection tools outlined in Fig. 3.1 below. Acknowledging the use of a variety of data collection strategies, Yin (2003:97) expresses the belief that:

> A major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence. Furthermore, the need to use multiple sources of evidence far exceeds that in other research strategies such as experiments, surveys, … Experiments for instance, are largely limited to the measurement and recording of actual behavior in the laboratory and generally do not include the systematic use of survey or verbal information.

Through the use of interviews, observations, focus group discussions and document analysis in this qualitative case study, the researcher was able to study a wider range of instructional leadership activities enacted by the HODs and other stakeholders. Data were gathered in two phases in which the researcher spent one week at each school during each phase. The case study approach was also used because it allowed the researcher to focus on individuals or groups of actors in an effort to understand their perceptions of events and/or practices in order to get rich and detailed descriptions of events or findings relevant to the case (Gray, 2009).

Considering that there is not much research literature about instructional leadership for vocational and technical education, it is hoped that the detailed narrative explanatory report of the research findings will benefit the intended beneficiaries (HODs and teachers for the practical subjects).

3.4 RESEARCH SITE

The study was carried out in the Gutu district, within the Masvingo Province of Zimbabwe. Only five secondary schools which offered a minimum of two practical subjects and above were included in the study. The schools were selected on the basis of convenience (Best and Kahn, 2003) and only those schools that were easily and safely accessible were chosen (Kombo and Tromp, 2009).

3.5 POPULATION

A population is a group of individuals, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement (Kombo and Tromp, 2009:76). Borg, Gall and Gall (1996) define population as the entire group of persons or objects with similar characteristics that are of interest to the researcher. The population for this study comprised ten provincial and five district officials, seventy principals (school heads), eighty-five heads of department and three hundred teachers in the seventy secondary schools that were studied. The major participants for the study were the HODs. This was because they played significant roles as both instructors and administrators (Hallinger and Heck, 2012). Educational reforms of the 21st century are strongly opposed to leadership that is divorced from classroom practice. This study endeavoured to explore the effectiveness of HODs in influencing student achievement in VTE. Although HODs were the major informants for the study, Yin (2003) advises researchers against becoming overly dependent on a key informant, to avoid biased responses. Advocating the use of varied data sources to ensure credibility, Yin (2003:92) presents the view that: "A reasonable way of dealing with pitfalls … is to rely on other sources of evidence to corroborate any insights by such informants and to search for contrary evidence as carefully as possible".

The latter point inspired the inclusion of a number of stakeholders in the study. The principals, subject teachers and education officials were included as stakeholders that work with the HODs. The findings from these participants helped to enhance the credibility and authenticity of the research findings (Gray, 2009).

3.6 SAMPLE

Studying the whole target population was not possible and could not enable a sufficiently deep understanding of the problem at hand (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2003). The sample for the study therefore comprised two provincial officials, two district officials, five principals and five heads of department (two of whom were heading specific subjects and three heading combined subjects). It also included twenty-three practical subject teachers.

3.7 SAMPLING PROCEDURES

A good research study is dependent on a good sample which accurately reflects the population from which it is drawn (Charles, 1988). The view fits well with qualitative research demands where

the research study sample should be representative of the targeted population (Best and Kahn, 2003). As defined by Maree (2008), sampling is the process of selecting a portion of the population for the study. While scholars like Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) recommend ten per cent (10%) of the research population for a study sample, Cohen *et al.* (2011) argue that there does not have to be a specific size of the sample for qualitative research. They argue that the size can range from one (1) to many research participants. Nyawaranda (2007) also affirms that in qualitative research, the sample size should be large enough to generate thick descriptions and rich data. Rich data is obtainable from participants who are knowledgeable and informed about the phenomenon and this could mean a small number of participants, as the researcher deems fit. The researcher decided to gather data for this study from five HODs for vocational technical subjects, five principals, twenty-three practical subject teachers, two DEOs and two PEOs.

To obtain the research sample, a variety of sampling procedures was employed. Purposive sampling is one of the sampling strategies that were used to select the research participants. Cohen *et al. (*2011) assert that purposive sampling is a key sampling strategy of qualitative research. Participants were purposively sampled to come up with responses most likely to yield the required data about the evolving research questions (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). In the same vein, Gray (2009) asserts that researchers should search for information-rich places and events from which to select sub-units to facilitate in-depth study. These perspectives influenced the researcher to include participants who were involved in the teaching and learning of vocational subjects because they had the knowledge of pedagogy and the human and material resources required to enhance student achievement.

The selection of research sites was based on convenience and theoretical sampling. According to Creswell (2012), theoretical sampling is a purposeful sampling procedure where an individual or a site is sampled because it has the potential to generate a theory. Purposive sampling of the schools was essential to ensure inclusion of those schools which offered the required number of vocational and technical subjects. Despite their convenient access, some schools could not be considered for sampling because they offered only one practical subject or none. Schools falling into this category were those that exist in former white farming areas where people were resettled. Williman (2011) holds that a theoretical sample is a method of gathering research data from participants whom the researcher thinks know most about a subject. For this study which focused on instructional

practices of vocational education leaders, five secondary schools which offered two or more vocational and technical subjects were sampled in the hope that the researcher would gain in-depth insights on the nature of instructional interactions between the HODs and the stakeholders which effectively improved teaching and learning in the VTE departments. The issue of convenience was considered because the study was not funded and it was necessary to use easily accessible schools in terms of geographical proximity to the town of Masvingo which is the researcher's place of residence. This was done to cut down on travel and subsistence costs.

According to Bogdan and Biklen's (2007) perspective, purposive sampling is the selection of information- rich cases to enable an in-depth study. In support of the suitability of the strategy in qualitative research, Maree (2008) echoes that it is necessary for identifying and studying the richest possible sources of information to answer the research questions. Purposive and convenience sampling was used to select the secondary schools to be studied. Using the same sampling strategy for both the participants and the setting (secondary schools) is encouraged by Maree (2008) who posits that purposive sampling is not only restricted to selection of participants but also has to involve the settings or events. Convenience and cost-effectiveness are also important factors to take into account when choosing research sites (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2003). Borg *et al*. (1996) also reiterate that when the population is spread over a large geographical region, a randomly selected sample may not be possible as the project costs may become unsustainable. Gutu district is a large area with secondary schools located at distances ranging from as near as forty kilometers to as far as two hundred kilometers from the city of Masvingo (my residence and workplace). Therefore the schools which offered two or more practical subjects and were within easy reach were selected because they had the advantage of lower transport costs.

Studying all the secondary schools in Gutu district within the timeframe of the study was not feasible because as mentioned above it is a very large district and resources were scarce. As a result, only the secondary schools which are located close to highways within the range of one hundred to one hundred and thirty kilometers from the city of Masvingo were included in the study. Five heads of vocational education departments (one HOD for specific practical subjects and four HODs for combined practical subjects) were sampled for the study. I also used my personal judgment to decide on which participants to use and included them in the study as I saw fit. In defence of this, Bogdan and Biklen (2007) declare that purposive sampling rests upon the

researcher's discretion. Teachers who participated in the study were those that taught practical subjects and they too were purposively sampled. The guiding criteria were: the subject leader's period of experience in the position (those chosen had spent five years and above); reputable performance for 'O' Level classes; and the accessibility of the school. An achievement of 'O' Level ZIMSEC results ranging from 50 per cent and above for three consecutive years was considered reputable.

The simple random selection was used to select district education officials (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). This was done to afford all the officials equal opportunities of being included in the study. In Zimbabwe the district education officials perform management roles in the running of both primary and secondary schools regardless of their specialist subject areas. Provincial education officials were purposively selected (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). This strategy was used so that the Education Officer for Technical Education (EO/Tech. Ed.) would be included in the study. This enabled the involvement of the Deputy Provincial Education Director (D/PED) (Secondary). There are three D/PEDs who are responsible for running the affairs of different education sectors, namely: D/PED (Primary), junior education, D/PED (Primary) Early Child Development (ECD) and D/PED (Secondary) education. The D/PED (Primary) ECD and D/PED (Primary) junior education are responsible for managing primary education while the D/PED Secondary is responsible for managing secondary education which involves the VTE departments, the subject of this study. The D/PED (Secondary) was a rich source of data because the officer was directly involved in the management of secondary school education. The EO/Tech Ed was also included because he/she was responsible for supervising the instructional practices which went on in the vocational and technical education departments in the schools in all the districts of Masvingo Province.

The school principals were automatically included by virtue of their influential position in monitoring curriculum implementation across the schools' subject departments.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Data collection instruments are essential for aiding the acquisition of research data. Qualitative research uses different data collection tools to achieve trustworthiness (Maree, 2008; McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) advice that when used in a study, all

instruments should be equally important, and no tool should be regarded as superior to another. This study used the interview, observation, document analysis and focus group interview. In addition, the researcher also acted as a key data collection tool (Yin, 2003). The researcher relied on her teaching experience, background and common sense to make judgments about what to look for and select as valid data concerning instructional practices (e.g. teacher assessment and resource mobilisation) in vocational education teaching and learning (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007; Nyawaranda, 2007). Thus, from my own experience in teaching a practical subject (Home Economics) where I have held positions as head of department (in schools), head of section (at a Teachers' college) and subject coordinator (at University level), I could comfortably select important ideas (data aspects) noted during fieldwork and draw some conclusions from these. Details of the other data collection instruments are discussed below. The figure below summarises the qualitative data collection tools employed by the current study, prior to their detailed discussion.

1

In-depth Interviews

2   **3**   **4**

1	2	3	4
• **Field observations** • **Prolonged observations** • **Silent observations**	• **Select type of interview** • **Determine types of questions** • **Interview records transcripts and elaborations**	• **Select type of questions** • **Field notes transcripts and elaborations**	• **Types of documents ; departmental minutes, lesson observation protocols**

Fig. 3.1: Qualitative data collection tools (Adapted from McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 342)

3.9.1 THE INTERVIEW

Some of the literature reveals that interviews are at the heart of many scholars' research as a major data collection tool for qualitative research. Marshall and Rossman (2006) support this view by arguing that a situation is better known after an interview. This view inspired the use of the interviews for data collection in the study where little was known about instructional leadership practices in the vocational subject areas. Interviews in this naturalistic study facilitated conversations between the research participants and the researcher. An interview is defined by Maree (2008) as a two-way conversation where the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data and to learn about their ideas, beliefs and behaviours. The nature of the conversations that took place in the current study was that of "give and take", where the interviewees were encouraged to ask the researcher questions, especially when they were not clear about some point or word. The "give and take" atmosphere between the interviewer and the interviewee is essential for bringing them both to the same operational level. The two-way communication promotes interviewees' willingness to participate and also builds trust and rapport between the two parties involved in the conversation (Cohen *et al.,* 2011). This creates a purposeful, fruitful conversation

(Cannell, in Marshall and Rossman, 2006). In my opinion, an interview is a situation in which I seek to elicit answers to the outlined research questions between the interviewer and the interviewee in a relaxed atmosphere (Nyawaranda, 2007).To elicit detailed data collection which enabled an in-depth study of the phenomena, open-ended questions were used (O'Leary, 2010).

The interviews were used to gather data from all the heads of department, practical subject teachers and the other stakeholders. The HODs and principals at each school as well as the DEOs and PEOs were individually interviewed, while the subject teachers at each secondary school were engaged in focus group discussions. These enabled exploration of the heads of departments' and the stakeholders' ideas, views and opinions about their work environment or departmental culture, the collaborative experiences they encountered and the challenges that militate against teaching and learning in the relevant areas. A clear understanding of how the heads of department provided guidance and support, and the effect of their influence on teaching and learning was best facilitated by direct or face-to-face talk with the relevant participants (Ary *et al.,* 1996). Semi-structured interviews were used with all the participants. Interview schedules were used so that participants would answer the same questions (Gray, 2009; Maree, 2008). Before data collection interview guides were constructed for each group of participants and for each interview session. The HODs were the major participants of the study because their data was very critical for the success of the study (Yin, 2003). Six interview guides were prepared for their response. The research data was collected in two phases where five weeks were scheduled for each phase during which the researcher spent a week in each school. The HODs attended three interview sessions per week and they were scheduled according to participant convenience. With so many interviews to be carried out, use of interview guides was critical for making data collection systematic with each interviewee (Cohen *et al.,* 2011). Interview guides also enabled consistency in defining the line of inquiry and keeping data collections focused. Furthermore, the interviewees responded to the same questions, which made data analysis easy because responses could be easily compared (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). The data for each interview question were recorded in the form of field notes backed up by audio taping. The data was transcribed verbatim.

The interview was also chosen for use because of its several strengths. Its naturalistic nature enabled gathering volumes of data which facilitated rich and detailed descriptive characteristics of qualitative research (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). On a similar note, interviews could be

combined with observation and this broadened understanding of participants' routines or behaviours as they executed their duties. There was an opportunity for the researcher to gather data from non-verbal and verbal behaviours. The researcher obtained vast amounts of data especially when the subject teachers expressed their opinions about the HODs' practices. Notations from participants' comments, voice tone and visual signs such as nods, smiles, facial expressions, gestures and at times even silence, provided data that could not be obtained through the use of the other instruments. In addition, the non-verbal form of communication aided completion of answers (Williman, 2011).

The interview was also used because of its flexibility, which permitted reframing of questions that may sound difficult or ambiguous to participants (Maree, 2008; Borg et al., 1996). Despite having pilot-tested the research instruments, it was noted during interviews that a number of participants were not familiar with terms such as "instructional leadership", "distributed leadership", "instructional practices", and "principal". In Zimbabwe, the common term used to explain instructional practices is "teaching and learning". The term "principal" has a negative political connotation from the colonial legacy where white secondary school heads were addressed as "principals". When the secondary schools were led by the natives, the title "principal" was replaced by "headmaster" or "headmistress". In other cases, participants did not understand some questions and the researcher simplified the questions. However, in every case where a question had to be reconfigured, care was taken not to alter the question's demands. Ability to probe also made the instrument relevant and appropriate to the study. Probing was done as outlined by Maree (2008). The detail-oriented strategy was used to understand the "how" and "what" of the answers given by the participants (ibid). Where insufficient responses were given about how the HODs interacted with both their colleagues and situations, I probed for elaborations and also for clarification of responses to check the accuracy of my understanding of what was said by the participants. Clarifying questions and probing for further explanations according to Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), yields high responses from participants. In all the probing, however, care was taken not to force participants to answer questions with which they were not comfortable.

The tool's ability to garner a higher response rate than any other source of evidence was its other notable strength. Many research participants prefer talking to writing (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). This was suitable for HODs and subject teachers who were required to provide data in more

than one session. The principals and education officials were also interviewed on the assumption that they would be more comfortable providing data about their subordinates verbally. Interviews would also give them room to provide detailed explanations about the criteria they used to appoint HODs, their expectations and how they interacted with them, the instructional support they rendered and so on. Interviews are good at affording the researcher the chance to motivate the interviewees (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Owing to prolonged data gathering from the HODs, some participants complained about the exercise being strenuous. As a sign of discontent, one of the HODs made the following remark; "A! Nhasizve here?" meaning; "A! Today again?" In response to such expressions, I maintained a friendly and non- threatening manner to encourage voluntary participation. I avoided coercion in their participation in the interview sessions. Before getting down to business I would carefully begin by engaging in casual talk to rejuvenate the researcher-participant rapport.

One of the weaknesses of the interview is its lack of anonymity (Creswell, 2012). I mitigated this weakness by assuring the interviewees of the confidentiality of their responses. The data were coded and pseudonyms were used according to ethical considerations (Maree, 2008). The other weakness of the interview is that accuracy of information depends largely on the interviewees, because they can deliberately give misleading information (Ary *et al.,* 1996). To curb such a problem, rapport with the participants was established before data collection in order to build trust between the researcher and the research participant. Use of data from other instruments was also important to ensure the trustworthiness of data.

3.9. 2 THE OBSERVATION STRATEGY

Observations are part and parcel of our normal behaviour or daily life activities. As a data gathering device, they make an important contribution to studies of a descriptive nature like qualitative research (Best and Kahn, 2003). The strategy enabled looking at the manner in which instructional leadership practices by HODs influenced teaching and learning in VTE departments, for example: the interactions between HODs and school principals, the nature of HOD-teacher talk, the quality of HOD-teacher talk, the nature of informal conversations as well as the nature of group cooperative work (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Furthermore, in any situation, if the quality of an activity and its effects are of interest to the researcher, it is difficult to develop an adequate

understanding of that activity without observing it directly, to understand the situation as it unfolds from the perspectives of the guiding theories as well as the member players (Cohen *et al.,* 2011). Hence observations were deemed very suitable to this study which sought to examine instructional leadership practices of HODs for vocational education in secondary schools.

Marshall and Rossman (2006) perceive observation as a foundational tool for all qualitative inquiry which is systematic in noting and recording behaviour and artifacts in a social setting chosen for study. Further illuminating the nature of the tool, Maree (2008:84) defines observation as "the systematic process of recording the behavioral patterns of participants, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them." This was critical to this current study where the researcher noted and recorded those aspects of the HODs' and subject teachers' behaviours and attitudes that were of interest to the study, as they occurred. Some of the observed aspects were the manner in which instructional leadership practices were distributed among subject heads, subject teachers and situations (Spillane, 2005).

Observations were also made to examine how subject heads mentored and supervised other teachers, as well as facilitated professional growth. Although data about the instructional interactions between HODs and teachers were collected through using other research tools, observation was also critical in that it provided some reality checks because sometimes what people do may differ from what they say they do (Robson in Cohen *et al.,* 2011). Observational data are essential when studying complex human behaviours especially as demanded by the current study because they are sensitive to contexts and they provide strong ecological validity (Moyles in Cohen *et al.*, 2011). This enabled the researcher to gather sensitive data especially in cases where participants had to talk about other people, for example, where HODs were required to give accounts of whether the principals were supportive or not to the teaching and learning of vocational subjects. The same also applied to situations where subject teachers were required to report on the effectiveness of their HODs in both teaching and influencing teaching and learning experiences in their departments. Guided by the perspective of Robson (in Cohen *et al.,* 2011), it can be affirmed that observations facilitate trustworthiness of the research findings.

Observation guides outlining behavioural aspects to be observed were used. The tool provided space to describe the behaviours as soon as they were noted. This helped to keep data records to avoid confusion or misinterpretations of data which may have been caused by a time gap between

data collection and data presentation activities. Observations were carried out during departmental meetings and teaching and learning sessions as HODs assessed teaching and learning situations. The focus of the observations was on heads of departments' non-verbal behavioural practices as well as those of teachers and learners. The data obtained aided document analysis. Observations were also used to note the conduciveness of the teaching and learning environment to departmental culture. Supporting the co-observation notion, Timperley (2006) asserts that "vision-in action" is far more powerful than any written statements. This view led to the decision to use observation to augment document analysis. The tool was sometimes used together with the interview to elicit non-verbal data portrayed through body language (Best and Kahn, 2003).

Observing the behaviours of heads of department in teaching and learning contexts is very important. The significance of their practices cannot be appreciated in isolation; hence the effect of their interaction for instructional purposes can best be noted through observation of their interaction with the teachers and learners. Justifying the relevance of this tool, Silverman (2009) states that observation assumes that behaviour is purposeful and expressive of deeper values and beliefs. Extracting data about behaviours and attitudes cannot be meaningful only through the use of either questionnaire or other data collection methods because complex interactions are involved (Maree, 2008). Effective use of the observation tool requires the researcher to be in the natural setting and this ensures its qualitative nature. Observing the participants in context enabled this researcher to get a clear insight and better understanding of what they did to ensure improved teaching and learning. Lesson observations also made it possible to catch a glimpse of students' work, their attitudes towards their work and the quality of the artifacts they produced.

The advantage of being physically present on the research site is the ability to get first-hand information (Cohen *et al.,* 2011). In addition, authentic and accurate data were obtained when extracted from primary sources (Silverman, 2009). First-hand information was pivotal to facilitating accurate findings about the collaboration between the heads of department and the teachers. The researcher adopted a non-participant observation strategy (Best and Kahn, 2003; Maree, 2008), because participant observation was not feasible. As a university lecturer, I could not take up a head of department post in the secondary school in order to study the phenomenon from within, because schools and universities observed different operational calendars.

3.9.3 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

A focus group is defined as a method of data collection which involves interviewing participants in a group (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Cohen *et al*., (2011) define a focus group as a form of group interview where group members interact in a group discussion on a topic given by the researcher in order to yield collective rather than individual views. In the current study the instrument was used to explore the VTE teachers' opinions and expectations about the instructional leadership practices of their HODs. Focus group discussions were held in two sessions with the group of practical subject teachers at each of the five schools. The study was carried out in two phases with the researcher spending a week in each school, in each phase. The teachers were group interviewed once a week; however, data continued to be gathered from them through either formal or informal observations at other times.

A focus group discussion schedule was used with each group at each secondary school. This was done to ensure that all the groups were asked the same questions in the same order (Creswell, 2012). Sequencing of the group discussion questions also facilitated easy organisation and analysis of data. It was also easy to identify the similarities and differences in the instructional leadership experiences that were lived by teachers in different VTE departments (Maree, 2008), and recurring themes could easily be noted. The focus group discussion schedule used open-ended questions to allow gathering of qualitative data. The nature of the questions enabled respondents to express their views and opinions freely as well as promoting the active, interactive sharing of ideas (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010).

The size of focus groups should not be very large. Marshall and Rossman (2006) hold that its composition should range from as small as four to as large as twelve participants The tool was used with teachers from departments where subjects were either combined and led by one head of department or were treated as independent practical subjects and led by a specialist head of department. The recommended numbers were in accordance with the numbers of vocational subject teachers who usually form the minority of the staff establishments in schools. In four of the studied secondary schools, the VTE departments were merged into one department. Five teachers were group interviewed. In the other school the department was subject- based and three teachers were group interviewed.

During focus group discussions the task of the researcher was to ask questions to enable continuity of the discussions. She also moderated participant interactions in order to maintain an atmosphere conducive to healthy interaction (Gray, 2009). An introductory note to discussion sessions clarified that participants were not allowed to challenge or condemn other participants' responses (Williman, 2011). Most questions in the first discussion phase sought to establish the participants' opinions concerning the manner in which their HODs carried out their instructional leadership mandates. In their responses they were also expected to comment on the ability of the HODs to influence effective teaching and learning of practical subjects. The questions appeared sensitive and a number of participants displayed reservations when responding. The researcher encouraged participants to air their views, but avoided coercing them (Cohen *et al.,* 2011).

A focus group schedule was designed to keep the interview discussions focused. Silverman (2009) propounds that if focus group activities are not well planned, time may be lost discussing irrelevant issues. The focus group was used because it was economical in terms of time, and by allowing many participants to provide research data in a short time, it was cost effective (Silverman, 2009). In addition, its relevance was invigorated by its ability to permit the studying of participants in a more natural and relaxed atmosphere (Maree, 2008). For instance, the discussions in this study were held either in subject specialist-rooms, subject teachers' offices or any other places chosen by the participants. Relaxation is essential in that it encourages participants to express their views in their own words and without fear. Hence, the focus-group tool gathered first- hand, qualitative data. The other strengths attributed to this tool, according to Cohen *et al.,* (2011), are that it:

- inspires participants to build on one another's ideas, hence widens the range of their responses;
- provides insights and in-depth views that might not have been available in a one-on-one interview;
- can add value to the study by enabling easy explanation of new ideas and unexpected responses;
- is good for gathering data on attitudes, values and opinions.

The above strengths enabled obtaining rich data from collaborative participation. It was hoped that using focus group interviews would encourage teachers who may not have the courage to speak their minds about what they experienced in their departments, to do so. It was also hoped

that they would be able to disclose the manner in which leadership tasks were shared and distributed in their departments.

According to Silverman (2009) and Maree (2007), focus groups comprise participants who are not known to each other. I had no objection to the idea but in this study the view could not work because it was difficult to bring teachers from different schools to the same place and at the same time because the secondary schools were geographically distant from one another (Charles, 1988). The focus group discussions were thus conducted at individual schools.

The weaknesses of this tool according to Silverman (2009) are that:

- during discussions, the outspoken participants may "steal the show" and influence the contributions, making data collected biased. To counteract this problem, I moderated the discussion so that participation was balanced and evenly distributed.
- the data may be difficult to analyse because of a high diversity of ideas and opinions. Coding of data to see the emerging theories or themes helped to facilitate the organisation and presentation of data.

3.9.4 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

According to Gray (2009:428) "documents are some of the most frequently used unobtrusive measures and include a wide variety of organizational and institutional documents". They are important sources of data in many areas of qualitative investigations. Documents as data sources may include published documents (books, newspapers) and unpublished ones (memos, faxes etc.) (Borg *et al.,* 1996). In this study, documents were analysed to enhance trustworthiness of information obtained through other instruments (interviews, observations and focus groups). Documents were sources that would shed light on instructional leadership practices of vocational education heads of department, such as minutes of departmental meetings, term or annual reports by heads of department, lesson observation protocols, memoranda, meeting agendas, policy documents and departmental files. These documents were important in that they constitute primary data sources which provide authentic and accurate data (Silverman, 2009). Documents, according to Marshall and Rossman (2006), are an unobtrusive method of gathering rich data while portraying a setting. Such data augmented data collected through interviews, focus groups and observations. Focus was also placed on the teachers' records with reference to aspects such as

suitability of objectives (i.e. did they address all the domains of learning?), appropriateness and adequacy of media, appropriateness of the teaching methods in relation to the topics, and so on. It was hoped that data from these documents would provide evidence of teamwork or the lack of it in planning and teaching, as well as the support teachers received in terms of resources for effective "hands-on" teaching and learning. Minutes of departmental meetings and the quality of the agendas were analysed to establish their usefulness in promoting instruction, and to reflect on members' contributions etc. Teachers' lesson evaluations were also analysed to ascertain their effectiveness in teaching and learning.

3.10 CREDIBILITY

Validity and reliability of research tools relate to quantitative research, while credibility and trustworthiness relate to qualitative research (Maree, 2008). There are several strategies which researchers can adopt to ensure credibility of their studies. This study used prolonged engagement, crystalisation, broad representation, member checking and triangulation or trustworthiness. To ensure that each research instrument collected as much data as possible, prolonged and persistent fieldwork was done to provide opportunities for interim data analysis and corroboration to refine ideas (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Instead of a once-off data collection session at each school, the researcher spent a period of two weeks at each school to ensure an in-depth study of the developments in the various VTE departments. Much of the time was spent with the HODs who were engaged in three interview sessions from three different interview guides. A rich and diverse understanding of what the HODs did to influence improved teaching of practical subjects was obtained (O'Leary, 2010) hence the strategy of "crystalisation".

During fieldwork, "grey" areas of the tools were given appropriate attention to enhance clarity and ensure the capacity of each tool to collect the intended data. Member-checking was done as a strategy of getting the respondents to review transcripts of their interviews in order to confirm accuracy of the field notes and to see if there were any additional comments they would like to add (Cohen *et al.,* 2011). Participant reviews were also done to review transcripts or syntheses of the data that had been obtained from them (Maree, 2008). During the reviews, participants were asked to modify any interview information that may be inaccurate (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). To facilitate participant reviews, verbatim accounts were presented in simple language that could easily be understood by participants (Sidhu, 2005).

3.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS

In qualitative research, the notion of trustworthiness replaces the conventional view of reliability (Lincoln and Guba in de Vos *et al.,* 2011). Reliability is the degree to which procedures give results of the same kind under constant conditions on all occasions (Macmillan and Schumacher, 2010). In a qualitative study which sought to establish the instructional practices undertaken by the practical subject heads, replication was not necessary because human behaviour is not universal but dynamic. Hence instructional practices are determined by the particular situations or tasks to be carried out. For instance, in the teaching and learning of vocational subjects, instructional practices by both HODs and the subject teachers differed according to their lived teaching experiences (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). Pragmatically it is also argued that instruction should always be dynamically construed to keep pace with the dynamic social and economic needs of individuals and communities (Dewey, 1984). Concurring with the pragmatic notion of not getting the same results, Nyawaranda (2007) states that. One cannot cross the same river twice. By this he means that even if the same instructional practices were repeated, the effect would not be exactly the same because the variables determining the instructional situations are not static. This view reinforces the vision of LeCompte and Preissle (in Cohen *et al.,* 2011) that the canons of reliability for quantitative research may be unworkable for qualitative research. Hence in this study, reliability was construed as trustworthiness (Cohen *et al.,* 2011).

To ensure trustworthiness of the study findings about the distribution of leadership and teamwork in the VTE departments, stability or consistency of observations was enabled through the use of an observation schedule. The observation protocol was adopted in order to guide the observation focus in different buildings' vocational education departments. Being a qualitative study, gathering data from the studied cases in a once-off visit would not yield authentic and credible data. It was also felt that a single visit to each school would not provide adequate representation of what was happening in the departments most of the time (Gray, 2009). As a result, fieldwork was prolonged. Data collection was scheduled to last ten weeks. The study time was categorised in two phases of five weeks each. In each phase the researcher spent a full week at each school studying the instructional practices of the HODs through interviews and observations. Both formal and informal observations were undertaken with data being captured on observation protocols as soon as it occurred.

Trustworthiness of interview data was ensured through the use of an interview protocol which contained the same format and sequence of words and questions for each respondent (Cohen *et al.,* 2011). This was important for exposing each interviewee to the same questions. The interview guides, however, had open-ended questions to accord respondents opportunities to demonstrate their individual perceptions of the instructional leadership practices they were experiencing in their vocational education departments. Furthermore, during both individual interviews and focus group interviews, field notes were backed up by audio-tape recordings. This was in keeping with Gray's (2009) recommendation that taped conversations present more reliable evidence than hastily written, filed notes.

Member-checking of the interview data was also done to ensure trustworthiness (Maree, 2008). The researcher went back to the study setting during the writing of the research report to check on ambiguities and gaps, to clarify some data and to make further observations that enriched the descriptions. The member-checking process involved both the researcher and the participants, hence a good collegial relationship between the two parties was maintained (Ganga, 2013). Trustworthiness was also guided by attempts to answer questions such as: "Would another researcher working in the same theoretical framework have made the same observations and interpretations?"

Although in qualitative research researchers contend that the researcher is the key data- gathering instrument (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007), to prevent data from being biased, researchers are warned against depending too heavily on a single source of data (Yin, 2003). It is hoped that the use of a multi-method approach including interviews, observations, focus group discussions, artifacts and document analysis would yield trustworthiness or triangulation of the research findings (Maree, 2008). To ensure consistency of the findings of this study, the researcher took the precaution of using four of the listed strategies, as indicated in Fig.3.1

3.12 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Before embarking on data gathering, I had to seek ethical clearance from the University of the Free State (UFS). Because qualitative research is obtrusive in nature, I had to adopt an ethical protocol to seek permission from the local education authorities (LEA); that is, both the Provincial and District authorities, to enter their schools. Maree (2008) advises seeking participants' informed

consent first before engaging them in a study. Before observations and interviews, participants were asked to read and sign consent forms to show their willingness to participate. Two weeks were spent in each school, observing and interviewing each of the five HODs. The study was split into two phases: during phase one (1), one week was spent studying the instructional interactions between HOD and teachers of the schools under the spotlight; while phase two (2), five weeks later, entailed repeating the activity. In each phase, HODs responded to three interview protocols while subject teachers attended one focus group session. Throughout the two phases, principals, district and provincial officials responded to only one interview protocol.

Interviews were by appointment so that participants would be readily available, and also to avoid inconveniencing the participants (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Interviewees' consent about the interview venues were sought (Borg *et al.,* 1996) so that they would participate freely and comfortably. A supportive environment was created by simplifying questions to promote free participation and easy self-expression by respondents (Maree, 2008). Interviews were scheduled to take thirty (30) to forty (40) minutes to avoid fatigue, and time was strictly observed to avoid deception (Cohen *et al.,* 2011). In the same vein, it was feared that a delay in informing participants could eventually result in their refusing to answer some questions so that they could pursue their business. To record data, a tape recorder and a notebook were used. Some responses were recorded in the spaces provided on the interview schedules (Sidhu, 2005). To validate the findings and to ensure detailed and complete information, each HOD was interviewed three times a week.

Informed consent was sought for observations and participants were informed of their purpose. Maree (2008) and Silverman (2009), condemn covert observation as a violation of human rights. Thus, research participants had the right to information so they were not taken unawares (Shastri andKoehler, 2008). Permission to take notes was also sought so that behaviours or events were noted as they occurred. Note-taking was guided by Marshall and Rossman's (2006) idea of the observation protocol which entails writing description notes in a column on the left hand side and comments on the right.

Documents were analysed in relation to the outlined characteristics or practices. An observation guide with columns specifying aspects for observation was used.

3. 13 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Data analysis involves breaking data into bits and then "beating" the bits together as would be done when making an omelette, an assimilation activity where breaking and beating of eggs is the major process (Dey, 2004).

The contingency theoretical framework influenced this study in several ways. Apart from suggesting differences in leadership, Denzin and Lincoln (in de Vos *et al.,* 2011) also posit that there is no single way to conduct an interpretive enquiry. Thus, more than one strategy of data analysis was used as was deemed fit. One of the data analysis strategies used in this study was Tesch's open coding method of data analysis (de Vos *et al.,* 2011). Data collection here was simultaneous with data analysis. Data coding, according to David and Sutton (2004), is a process of applying codes to chunks of texts so that those chunks can be interlinked to highlight similarities between texts.
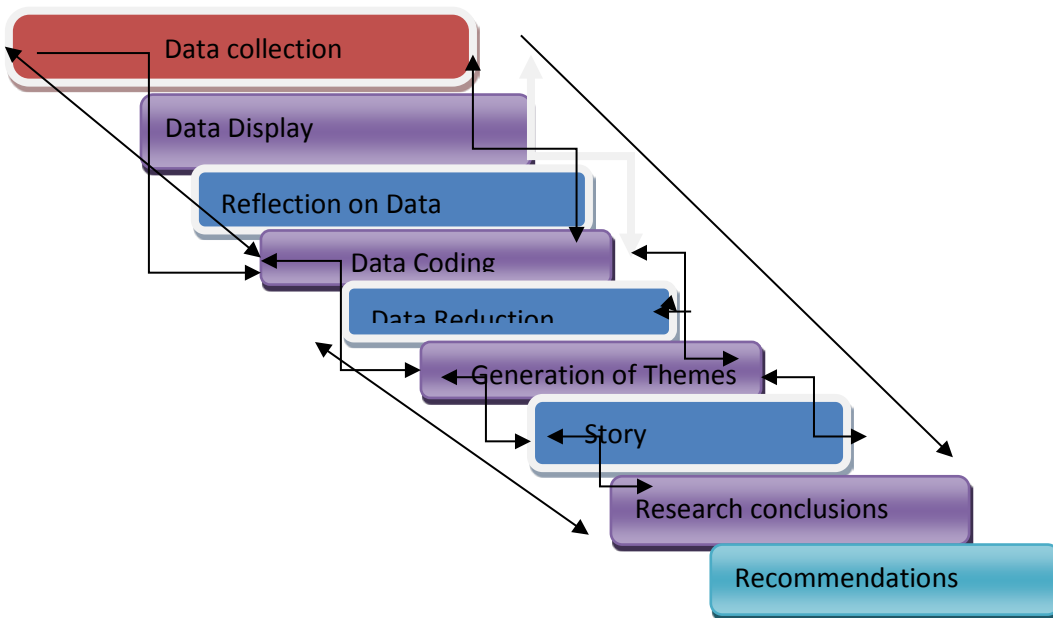
Fig : 3.2 Iterative Simultaneous Process

 (Adapted from Ganga 2013:114)

In this study which sought to investigate the instructional leadership practices for vocational education, heads of departments' codes could be, for example, distributed leadership, resource availability, resource distribution, collaboration, and many more. Data coding was important for helping the researcher to make informed data interpretation to formulate codes or themes. The researcher became involved in several repeated and simultaneous activities during qualitative data analysis. Supporting this practice, David and Sutton (2004) contend that qualitative data analysis is essentially an iterative process which involves repeated returns to earlier phases of the analysis. By so doing, they posit that data evidence becomes more organised and ideas are clarified. To ensure corroborated evidence in the study, data analysis in the study did not assume a linear configuration, but was cyclically done, without however distorting the position that   HODs and their subject teachers reflected as instructional practitioners in their departments.
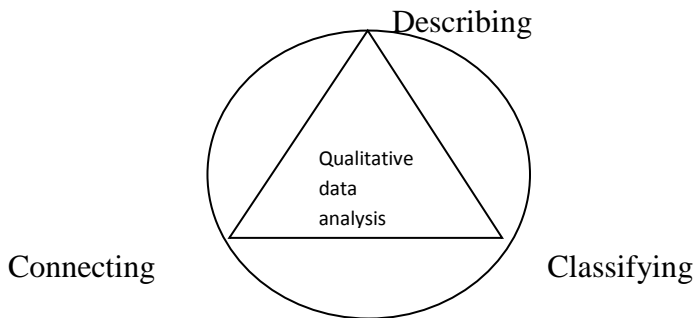
Fig.3.3 Data analysis as a cyclical process: (Adapted from Dey, 2004)

Fig. 3.3 above is a circular representation of qualitative data analysis and is symbolic of revolving data analysis activities. For example, data description may not be "one short affair" in which one may expect to "hit the bull's eye" on first attempt (Dey, 2004). In the cyclical process, description of data lays the basis for analysis and further description. Description also provides the basis for interpretation and explanation of data, to help classification of data into categories or themes, which is important for making meaning of the different bits of data (Dey, 2004). In this study, the descriptions and classifications were not ends in themselves but served to provide a basis for an account of data analysis. The themes that were drawn from data classification were connected to build a comprehensive research story or report based on "what" and "how" vocational subject heads contributed to the improvement of teaching and learning in their subject departments. At every stage, there was co-ordination of activities; for example, the association between different

variables was examined to see if their connection to instructional leadership practices yielded quality learner experiences in vocational subjects.

Content analysis was also used to identify the emerging themes and patterns of the behavioural practices of the heads of vocational education departments which influence instruction (Kombo and Tromp, 2009). To understand the heads of departments' perceptions and beliefs of their instructional behaviours and the possible value of instructional tools, I used pragmatic content analysis. This was facilitated by making inductive conclusions or inferences from observations made during fieldwork (Dey, 2004). Thematic analysis was also used to analyse data according to emerging themes (Maree, 2008). The term "thematic" derives from "theme" and in research "themes" refer to topics or major subjects that come up in discussions (ibid). Thus, data from the interviews were analysed to identify recurring topics or ideas and these were coded under the major themes for presentation. Since subject heads have several responsibilities, it is usually impossible for all subject heads to engage in the same instructional activities. Therefore some kind of pattern of practice emerged when the data were analysed. Patterns also emerged from focus group data. Data from interviews and focus groups were transcribed verbatim and presented in a rich, detailed, descriptive narrative manner. Vignettes were also used to bring the voices of participants aboard (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007).

3.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Qualitative research is more intrusive than quantitative research because of its naturalistic nature. Before getting into the field to collect data, some ethical principles or issues need to be observed. Research ethics refer to the moral principles guiding research (Gray, 2009:69). In order to gain access to data from a setting, Cohen *et al.* (2011) indicate the need to gain official permission to undertake the study in the particular targeted community. To study the heads of vocational education departments' practices, a clearance letter was sought from the Free State University Research Board. The letter was used to seek permission from the local education authorities to collect data from the schools. Permission was sought from Masvingo Provincial Education Director (PED) first, then the Gutu District Education Officer, and finally from the heads of schools (principals). Human beings involved in research need to be respected, hence they should not be dragged into providing the needed research data (Maree, 2008). For this reason, it was necessary to seek participants' voluntary consent to participate, so this was done before data

collection (Maree, ibid). Participants were also informed that they had the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time. As they participated they had the right not to answer questions if they felt disinclined to do so (Gray, 2009). For participants to make informed decisions on whether to participate or not, I informed each one of them fully about the focus of my study, its aims, the time required for data collection and the purpose of the data Grow *et al.* (in Gray, 2011). When informed consent was obtained, it was hoped that the heads of department and vocational subject teachers would have confidence in the researcher and become more open with their responses (McMillan and Schumacher, 2011). These scholars further posit that instructional review boards (IRBs) require a protocol for informed consent to be signed by each participant. This was very important in this study where data about participants' behavioural practices were sought. In each case participants (HODs or teachers) were required to report on one another's practices. These were sensitive data which could lead to some unforeseen problems such as tensions, conflicts, or resentments. For these reasons, each participant was asked to read and sign the voluntary consent form after the clarification dialogue (see Appendix 1).

Being honest is essential for credibility in all research endeavours, Deceiving participants is unethical and inhuman. Gray (2009) is against researchers' infringing on human rights by misrepresenting their research in order to gain participants' cooperation. Though it is condemned, deception has been found to be rampant in research. Research findings by Cohen *et al.* (2011) found that in 88 per cent of studies from a sample of 47 studies, some researchers used deception as a strategy. It is always good to treat participants respectfully. In the dialogue with participants, I avoided this unethical practice by negotiating with the participants in a sincere way.

Maree (2008) warns against causing physical or mental harm to human participants. In the hierarchy of human needs, Maslow outlines the need for safety as a prior need before actualisation (Bernstein, 2011). To guard against causing mental harm such as stress or anxiety, pilot interviews were conducted with heads of department and subject group teachers from schools that were mot sampled, with the intention of weeding out sensitive issues as well as clarifying ambiguous questions (Best and Kahn, 2003). This helped to prevent embarrassment and emotional injury to participants. Participants' security was also safeguarded by ensuring and preserving confidentiality of individuals (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). To ensure this, participants' names were not written down

anywhere and their data were coded for inventory purposes. Individual data were also not disclosed to anybody.

3.15 SUMMARY

The researcher used the qualitative research paradigm which permitted a grounded approach to the study which sought to explore instructional leadership practices for HODs for vocational education. The approach enabled an in-depth understanding of the nature of interactions for instruction between the HODs and vocational subject teachers. The study was carried out in five secondary schools which offered two practical subjects or more. Participants were purposively sampled and schools with vocational education departments were both purposively and conveniently sampled. The interviews, observation, focus groups and document analyses were all used to gather detailed data to enable a detailed account of the research findings. The research participants engaged in voluntary participation by signing consent forms. Use of multiple data collection tools enabled the trustworthiness of the research findings. Apart from influencing leadership, the contingency theory also influenced the use of different data analysis methods. Hence the present study uses Tesch's data coding model, thematic analysis and content analysis. The next chapter presents the analyses and discusses the research findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three presented the research methodology that was used to conduct the current study. The qualitative research approach was used in the form of multiple case studies to enable studying the HODs' instructional leadership practices in a natural setting (Maree, 2008). The use of data collection instruments such as the interview, focus group discussion, observation and document analysis facilitated collection of large volumes of data which enabled compilation of a detailed research report. This chapter presents analyses and discusses the data and findings of the study which sought to investigate instructional leadership practices of HODs for vocational and technical education in secondary schools. The study is guided by questions which seek to explore the expected roles for HODs for VTE; the policies or regulations which guide their instructional leadership practices; how they carry out their leadership mandate within the schools, as well as how their work can be described.

The qualitative data to answer my research questions were sourced from five vocational and technical education (VTE), heads of departments (HODs), often referred to as (VTE- HODs), five secondary school principals, twenty-three vocational subject teachers, two district education officials (DEOs) and two provincial education officials (PEOs). The interviews with HODs were conducted in two phases wherein three interview sessions were conducted in each. Hence a total of thirty interview sessions were conducted with the HODs. With two focus group discussion (FGD) sessions at each school, a total of ten FGDs were conducted with the subject teachers. I also had five interview sessions with the school heads. The DEOs and PEOs were engaged in a single interview, hence a total of four interviews were held with this group of participants. Interview

guides with open-ended questions were used in all the interview sessions and FGDs in order to solicit qualitative data from the participants. I did this to enable a 'thick' description of the research findings about circumstances surrounding what the HODs for VTE did to promote a high standard of teaching and learning within their subject departments. The study focused on school-based instructional leaders, but principals, DEOs and PEOs were included as stakeholders who have an input in the appointment of HODs. Subject teachers were included as instructional leadership partners to HODs.

A few reminders concerning the data and its collection are important to revisit before I engage in the discussion of the data. First, it is important to reiterate that the data presented in this chapter were collected from five secondary schools in the Gutu district of Zimbabwe and were not necessarily representative of the national picture. The purpose of the study was, however, not to generalise its findings but rather to understand in greater depth the instructional leadership practices of HODs for the vocational and technical subjects. Furthermore, it is important to point out that in Zimbabwean secondary education systems, vocational and technical subjects include subjects such as: agriculture, woodwork or wood technology, home economics, technical graphics, building studies, music education, art and design, physical education, and information and communication technology. Schools select the vocational and technical subjects they wish to offer on the basis of their capacity. In the present study, only the schools that offered two or more vocational and technical subjects were included. To get a comprehensive and diverse picture of the leadership of VTE, I selected those departments where the VTE subjects were merged under one leader and those whose leadership was distributed across leaders, based on subject specialisation. The organisation of the findings is based on emerging themes, sub-themes, categories and in some cases, sub-categories.

Participant observations were carried out during departmental meetings with the researcher contributing to some discussions through dialogue or by asking questions based on some agenda items. Data from the interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed verbatim using field notes and audio recordings. The themes were further divided into sub-themes and categories. The following themes emerged: 1) selection criteria for VTE subject heads; 2) stakeholders' expectations of VTE instructional leaders' roles; and 3) the HODs' enacted instructional leadership practices.

4.2 DATA PRESENTATION AND ETHICAL ISSUES

Data from the cases are presented thematically. Data were collected from the five different cases as reflected in the study title. For easy management of data, the schools and the participants were code-named. Coding was also done to conceal the identity of participants, as was indicated under ethical considerations. The five secondary schools were coded **A, B, C, D** and **E.** Coding was sequenced according to the order of initial visits to the schools. In addition to the alphabetical codes, codes indicating the responsible authorities for the schools were also included. Responsible authorities that ran the schools became relevant to the study after it was found that authorities such as church organisations have a significant influence over the appointments of HODs and the provision of learning resources for VTE. Thus the schools are further identified by the addition of the acronyms **RCS** for "Rural Council School" and **CRS** or "Church Run School". Despite the inclusion of responsible authority codes, anonymity of data is maintained as no one (not even the participants) can identify a school by its code because the order in which the schools were visited is not known.

These codes are used in presenting the findings to indicate the contexts from which the data were collected. The tables below present the code names for the schools I visited.

Table 4.1: School codes and their meaning

School Codes	Meanings
ARCS	Code A-is case study school 1 and is run by the Rural Council
BCRS	Code B-is case study school 2 and is run by the church
CRCS	Code C- is case study school 3 and is run by the Rural Council
DRCS	Code D-is case study school 4 and is run by the Rural Council
ECRS	Code E-is case study school 5 and is run by the church

The VTE instructional leaders in the five secondary schools are also identified by pseudonyms, which begin with the first letter of the alphabet labelling their respective schools. This helps to avoid confusing data since the study worked with large volumes of data from the HODs. Data obtained from the six HOD interviews required careful handling to ensure authenticity of the study's findings. Table 4.2 reflects the pseudonyms of the HODs.

Table 4.2: School codes and HOD pseudonyms

School Code	HODs' Pseudonyms
ARCS	Amina
BCRS	Believe
CRCS	Cayla
DRDS	Dee
ECRS	Earning

To further protect both the researcher and the identity of the participants, HODs are not addressed by titles that would reveal their gender (Mr. / Mrs. or Ms). Instead, the job title prefix is used. For example, "HOD Amina" or simply by addressing the HOD directly by name, ("Amina"), so that data may not be matched with any participant. Before the participants sign the consent forms, confidentiality of data is one of the promises the researcher must make (Cohen et al., 2011). Efforts were made to keep this promise as far as possible.

Pseudonyms were also used for the five principals, to make the data anonymous. The names of the districts for Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe were randomly used as pseudonyms for the principals, as shown in the table below:

Table 4.3: School codes and principals' pseudonyms

School Code	Principal's Name
ARCS	Mr. Gutu
BCRS	Mr. Zaka
CRCS	Mr. Chiredzi
DRCS	Mr. Masvingo
ECRS	Mr. Mwenezi

Table 4.4 above shows that three of the school principals head council-run schools (RCS) while two head church-run schools (CRS). The difference in responsible authorities (church or council) could be a signal for the difference in support given to VTE departments.

Focus group discussions at four of the schools comprised five subject teachers each, while there was one school with only three subject teachers. The school with fewer teachers was the one where the HOD headed only one subject. In order to cater for specific individual responses, teacher participant codes and pseudonyms were used to preserve anonymity, as discussed in the section on Ethics in Chapter three. Participants comprised both male and female VTE teachers. To avoid confusing data from the largest group of research participants, they were named according to strata, with some being identified by English or ChiShona unisex names, and others being given names of mountains, rivers, trees or food items.

Table 4.4: School codes, numbers and pseudonyms for individual teachers in focus group discussions

School Codes	Focus Group Teacher No.		Pseudonym	
ARCS	1 3 5	2 4	Percy Tinashe Prayer Comfort	Shingi
BCRS	1 3 5	2 4	Limpopo Mississippi Zambezi Mutirikwi	Save

CRCS	1 3 5	2 4	Kilimanjaro Drakensburg Vumba Inyangani Gombe
DRCS	1 3	2	Acacia Baobab Mukwa
ECRS	1 3 5	2 4	Nyama Hove Nyimo Nhanga Nhopi

4.3 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE HODS

The table below provides details of the HODs. Data relate to their professional qualifications, areas of specialisation, the subject areas they supervise and the number of teachers they lead. Reference will be made to this table when presenting data on the criteria used for the appointment of HODs. Table 4.6 below presents the demographic data of VTE- HODs.

Table 4.5: Demographic details of VTE-HODs

HOD Name	Sex	Professional Qualifications	Experience	Nature of appointment	Subject specialisation	Subject areas Lead	Number of teachers in department
Amina	F	Dip Ed and B.Ed. (Human Nutrition)	15yrs	Seniority	Human Nutrition	F/F, T.G, B/S, Agric, ICT.	7
Believe	F	Dip in Ed and B.Ed. Agric	9	By qualification	Agriculture	F.F, Agric, ICT	5
Cayla	F	Dip in Ed.	8	Appointed by principal	Textiles and Clothing	Agric, F.F, Wood Tech.	5
Dee	M	Dip in Ed.	14	Appointed by principal	H.E	F.F, F.N,	3

Earning	M	Dip in Ed.	10	By qualification	B/S	B/S, Agric, F.F, F,N	7

4.4 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

4.4.1 GENDER OF THE HODS

One of the issues the researcher was interested in was gender representation in the VTE departments. This is important because VTE departments comprise both male and female teachers hence I am interested in finding out the leadership composition in the departments. In recognition of gender balance, Barsh at el. (2008) proclaims that all men and women with the desire to lead should be encouraged to fulfill their potential. Findings from the five VTE departments show that three of the HODs were female while the other two were male. Gender distribution was balanced. The need for the appointment of men and women subject leaders concurs with Barsh's (ibid) perspective that women being employed in schools have the same intelligence, education and commitment as men. The HOD establishment in the schools visited challenges the argument by Kent, Blair, Rudd and Schuele (2010) that although women have made great strides achieving positional success within organisations, they are still under-represented at higher levels of organisations. Although biographical data was not included to answer any research question, the data were critical to the current study because it enabled the current study to demonstrate gender-balance in instructional leadership.

4.5 OVERVIEW OF THE EMERGING THEMES

Before engaging in a discussion of the emerging themes and the critical findings, I provide a summary of the emerging themes, organised and presented in a diagram to facilitate understanding. The layout also guides my subsequent data presentation. The sub-themes and categories that were generated during the process of data analysis are also included for ease of reference during the discussion of the data.

Stakeholder expectations of Instructional Leadership Roles for:

1.**Stakeholders' expectations of HODs' Functions:**

1.1 VTE teachers' expectations
1.2 Principals' expectations
1.3 DEO and PE-O expectations
1.4 Teachers' perceptions of HODs
1.5 Teachers' reflections as HODs

Selection Criteria for:

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS FOR VTE-HODs

Enacted Instructional Leadership by:

1**. Policies guiding recruitmen**t
1.1 HODs' perceptions
1.2 Policies and regulations
1.3 Principals' selection criteria

2. **HOD recruitment as perceived by Stakeholders**
2.1 D.E.Os' perceptions
2.2 P.E.Os' perceptions

3.1 Specific HOD Instructional Leadership practices.
3.1.1 HOD instructional practices and behaviours
3.1.2 Nature of instructional leadership practices
3.1.3 Duration of enactment
3.1.4 Administrative duty enactment
3.1.5 Challenges faced

3.2 **Indicators guiding HOD practices**.
3.2.1 Policies and regulations

Fig 4.1: Emerging themes, sub-themes and categories

4.6 THEME 1: SELECTION CRITERIA FOR HOD APPOINTMENTS

Evidence abounds that HODs are key players in the running of successful departments and schools (Turner, 2003). Given the pivotal role they play, their appointment should be carefully planned with a view to recruiting the most suitable persons for the role. It was against this backdrop that I felt it was critical to understand the selection and appointment of HODs in this study even before beginning my exploration of their instructional leadership practices. Consequently I sought out the views and perspectives of all relevant stakeholders involved in the recruitment processes, viz. the DEO, the PEO, school heads and the HODs themselves. To deepen my understanding further, I consulted various documents that guide the recruitment processes.

4.6.1 VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION HODS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR APPOINTMENTS

I began my conversations with the HODs by exploring their capacity and qualifications for the position in order to find out what qualifies them for their instructional leadership roles. The issue of capacity, experience and qualifications is discussed extensively in the literature as cited in Chapter two.

Observations made by Rorrer et al. (2008), show that the instructional leaders' (HODs') capacity to lead should be dependent on their managerial competence, while Kotur and Anbazhagan (2014) point out the importance of qualifications and experience in school-based leadership. Capacity, however, is not always equal to qualifications, although higher qualifications are always a recommendation. The data in this study seem to suggest that factors other than qualifications were often considered in appointing HODs for the vocational and technical subjects in this district. In School A for example, HOD Amina's appointment by the principal seems to have been based on seniority. This is evidenced by her responses when asked about how she was appointed. She said:

> *I was just called to the principal's office one afternoon and when I got there, the principal told me that he had appointed me to head the Practical Subjects Department in place of the former HOD who had transferred.*

From the above quote, the appointment of Amina who had no previous management track record seemed to be based either on seniority or on a good track record in her instructional performance. The manner of appointment is indicative of an arbitrary process which did not take into consideration the appointed teacher's capacity or will to lead (Southworth,2010) When probed further about what she thought informed her own appointment her response was:

> *I really have no idea. I was just as surprised as other teachers about the appointment I just have the feeling that I was appointed because I had been the longest serving member in the department.*

This reflected Amina's belief that length of service is a criterion for HOD appointment. *Continuing* the discussion about her knowledge of the appointment policies, Amina showed her lack of knowledge by saying: "*I am not aware of the existence of any policy which guides the appointment of HODs.*"

The responses by Amina illustrate a selection process where the principal is the sole authority in the appointment of HODs (Kotur and Anbazhagan, 2014). Moreover, the whole selection process, as reflected by the HODs, does not appear to be transparent but shrouded in secrecy. For instance, it leaves the HOD, herself ignorant of the strengths on which her leadership is premised and this is likely to impact negatively on her self-esteem and confidence to do the job. Furthermore, this may be a kind of imposed leadership that has the potential of creating rifts and tensions in the

department which is not helpful for a role that requires followership. There is some evidence of the negative effects of such an appointment procedure, seen in Amina's own perceptions of self-efficacy:

> *I only accepted the appointment because I was afraid of being regarded as insubordinate. If I was given the opportunity to choose, I would have not accepted. My refusal to lead should not be mistaken for fear but it's just that I do not want to be involved in extra work. Imi hamuzivi kuti vanhukadzi hatidi kungobatikana batikana nezvinhu zvose zvose. (Don't you know that we women do not want to engage ourselves in everything). Right now I feel that the one- and- a- half year period I have served is enough and I am thinking of an excuse that can liberate me from the unnecessary role.*

It is clear that the manner, in which HODs were appointed, according to this account, did not give the targeted teachers the opportunity to express their willingness to turn down or accept the leadership offer. This runs contrary to the distributed leadership perspective where teachers are expected to lead in areas that match their strengths and are aligned with the school vision (Anderson, 2012). By basing instructional leaders' appointments on their own arbitrary judgment and decisions, the principals may not be aware of the interaction rift they might be creating among the department's members. What is not clear is what considerations the principals took account of and how they rationalised the implications of their appointment procedures on teaching, learning and instructional leadership within those departments.

On the other hand, in Schools B and E, the study discovered how the process of appointment of HODs was grounded in professional qualifications and religious affiliation. Both Schools B and E are church-run even though they belong to different religious denominations. In School B, the HOD, Believe, reported being appointed by the principal based on academic qualifications and religious affiliation. The HOD holds a degree in agriculture, and she started off as an HOD for Agriculture but was later assigned to lead all the practical subjects. She was of the view that her further appointment as HODs for the VTE was based on her experience:

> *When the VTE subjects were merged, there were degreed teachers in the other subject areas. The school head told me that I was appointed to lead all the practical subject areas because of being a senior church member just like other HODs in other subject areas.*

As with the previous HOD we looked at, Believe also seemed unaware of the policies governing the appointment of HODs: *"I have no idea because I have never heard or seen one (the policy)"*.

Whilst qualifications seemed important in Believe's appointment as HOD, it was also clear that church affiliation played a key role in the appointment process. This suggests that for church-run schools, religious affiliation was also a key consideration.

In School E, the HOD, Earning, claimed that he was duly appointed based on both qualifications and church affiliation. Explaining his selection from the group, he said:

> *When l joined this school all teachers in the VTE department were untrained. I was appointed to the post because l was the only one with a Diploma in Education. However, the other contributory factor to my appointment is that I am an active church member. At times in these church-run schools having the relevant qualifications may not be an obvious determinant for consideration.*

From the quotations above, it is clear that the common criteria for appointing leaders in church-run schools are teacher qualifications and church affiliation. This was also confirmed by DEO 2 who posited that:

> *When making leadership appointments in church or private schools there is need to ensure the consent or recommendations of the responsible authorities first. In the case of nationally advertised posts the applicant has to attach a recommendation letter from the responsible authority to his or her application. In the case of localised or school based posts, the principal works in liaison with the local church leaders' recommendations. However the practice sometimes results in lower performers getting places above the higher performers who may not be recommended. For example, a candidate with 71% can be appointed over one with an 89% quality assurance assessment.*

Appointment of the HOD in church-run schools is thus influenced strongly by the responsible authority.

When asked about the importance of church affiliation, each one of the two HODs responded: *"They want people who would uplift their doctrines without bringing in their own."*

It is interesting to note how sharply such selection criteria contrast with the recommendations of Rorrer et al. (2008) and Kotur **and** Anbazhagan, (2014) who advocate for capacity and managerial competency as standard criteria when selecting HODs. Furthermore, there is no policy in the Zimbabwean education system that supports consideration of church affiliation when appointing instructional leaders. Instructional leadership scholars also place emphasis on the appointees' competences in organisation and management of the subject matter (Quinn, 2002) yet in the above cases this was never factored in. Idialu (2007) asserts that when appointing instructional leaders, only those teachers who have demonstrated outstanding performance not only at examinations but have also shown leadership competences should be accorded the opportunities to lead in the skills-oriented departments. Although from the equal rights perspective churches have the right to define the nature of leadership they want in their schools, it is important that they should do so in the interests of promoting improvement in teaching and learning of VTE subjects, and not value religious affiliation over competence. As they exercise their rights, the responsible authorities may need to observe that HODs are critical instructional leaders who profoundly influence development and maintenance of effective departments. Thus, there is a danger of church-run schools promoting spirituality while relegating the core business of the school's existence, viz. improved teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2012; Quinn, 2002) to a less important position.

In Schools C and D, the HODs' appointments were based on the principals' discretion. In School C, HOD Cayla captured this view as follows:

> *I was appointed by the principal. There were senior members and also some members with higher qualifications, l mean degree holders, but the principal just picked me. If the principal considered one's period of service in the school, maybe I would say he chose me on that reason because I started teaching in this school since 1996 when I was a temporary teacher and I again joined the school after teachers' training.*

In School C, Cayla who holds a Diploma in Education seems to have been appointed for her seniority ahead of a colleague holding a B. Ed. It would appear that principals tend to value experience more than qualifications when they use their discretion to make appointments. This is again illustrated by another HOD, Dee, who summarised his appointment as follows:

l was appointed by the school head a year after joining the school. The appointment came when the then HOD was elevated to senior woman post. I think the principal noted somewhat outstanding work experience as well as in my performance because l was from a school where l had served for seven years in the post of HOD in a Vocational Education department.

The responses above suggest the importance of the teachers' work experience and qualifications in their appointment as HODs. There seems to be some consistency in consideration of experience by principals. Although the issue of qualifications was also considered, it was noted that the qualifications varied from school to school. To confirm this, I also probed the matter with the principals as discussed in the section below.

4.6.2 PRINCIPALS' CRITERIA FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF HODS

I interviewed five school heads, two DEOs and two PEOs to triangulate the data from the HODs. The data from the principals did indeed concur with the sentiments from the HODs that teacher qualifications and experience were the major considerations. The other factors considered by the principals included: teacher competence, demonstration of good leadership qualities, ability to work well with others and maturity. The issues of good leadership qualities, teacher competence and collaborative leadership are discussed extensively in the literature as cited in Chapter two. Rukanda *et al.* (1997), for example, argue that teachers need to demonstrate good instructional leadership behaviours, such as the ability to address technical, professional and interpersonal issues that relate to the teaching and learning processes and instructional development. On the other hand, Spillane *et al.* (2003), prioritise collaborative leadership while TTA (1998) points to the importance of teacher competence for eligibility to lead a subject department.

Mr. Gutu, one of the principals, revealed that he based his appointments on seniority:

I consider the teacher's working period in this school. When I appointed the VTE-HOD, I used the first-come-first-to-be-appointed criteria. Since the HOD is required to lead others in the light of the school policy, I believe that the longer one has served the school, the better positioned he/she will be to understand the instructional standards required by the school. In the event of two teachers equally satisfying the criteria I will be using, I then go further to consider teacher competence, based on performance in examinations.

The findings show that seniority is determined by the length of time a teacher has served a school and not professional qualifications. Factors such as teacher competence, ability to lead others and maturity are also considered when there is need to differentiate between eligible teachers with equal qualifications. There are different perspectives in the literature on the importance of experience in leadership behaviour. Gronn (2000) asserts that leadership is rooted in conditions of the workplace and is less dependent upon whole-of-life learning or on experience. On the other hand, Van Vugt, in Kotur and Anbazhaga (2014), posits that increased experience in the workplace does tend to influence the leadership practices of leaders. However Kotur and Anbazhaga (2014) also refer to the effects of experience as being 'mythical' and they treat it as a cultural belief which assumes that people get wiser as they get older, as well as having more exposure and experience. Participants like Kilimanjaro pointed to similar 'mythical' beliefs, for example when he pointed that "Wisdom goes by age" in his argument against the appointment of junior department members to the HOD post. Whilst there is some substance in the importance of experience, basing appointment of instructional leaders purely on experience may compromise the gains of distributed leadership which emphasises basing leadership on expertise in order to effectively benefit the learner.

A slight variation in these appointment criteria was picked up in School B where the principal, Mr. Zaka, argued as follows:

> *I consider the teacher's subject specialisation in order to have a suitable HOD in place. I appointed one who trained to teach Agriculture because she possesses relevant subject knowledge and skills. This teacher trained to teach a practical subject and she also holds a relevant Technical Education Degree. Coincidentally, the teacher has also served the department longer than the other members.*

Mr. Zaka went on to say:

> *Apart from the considerations I make as a school head, this being a church-run school, my selection has to take consideration of the responsible authority's requirements. The church prescribes that posts of responsibility in their schools need to be assigned to teachers who are bona fide church members; hence in a church school like this one the teacher's church affiliation is also critical. Thus, I also had to consider the teacher's*

religious status. I had no problems in appointing the HOD because she was an active member of the church.

Two additional considerations, viz. subject specialisation and church affiliation were introduced in this discussion. The teacher appointed to the HOD post had two outstanding characteristics: first, the teacher held the highest qualification in her teaching area; secondly, she was an active church member. The principal was happy to have a HOD who was degreed while at the same time being an active, bona fide church member. Nusbuga in Kotur and Anbazhagan (2014) agrees that leaders with some specialised knowledge and skills in a subject area can perform better in leadership. Furthermore, Danielson (2006) argues that teacher leaders should be trained to teach specified subject(s) in the secondary school curriculum. I was curious to see how the criteria of qualifications and subject expertise was used for what Turner (2003:43) terms a 'confederate' department. Examples in Table 4.6 show that the HOD for School B leads a department with merged practical subjects.

Mr. Zaka illustrated this position for me when he argued that:

I chose the HOD from any practical subject area because I strongly believe that all practical subject areas require similar instructional pedagogy. The content is different yes, but strategies of delivering it to learners are similar. Furthermore, they all require learning materials and resources as their backbone for effective teaching and learning.

Mr. Zaka's view contends that practical subjects are more similar than dissimilar. This claim that there is some similarity between the practical subjects is supported by John (2011) who asserts that VTE is characterised by uniform activities which demand the 'hands-on' approach for effective teaching and learning of these skills-oriented subjects. Contrasting views, are however, raised by other scholars such as Turner (2003), who describes confederate departments as having a weak centre. Tyagi (2010) adds his voice to this observation when he states that instructional supervision by the HOD from a different subject area is a time-wasting and meaningless exercise. Despite these divergent views, what is interesting is that Zimbabwe has continued to be guided by a 1979 pre-independence circular (Ministry of Education and Culture, Zimbabwe, 1993), more than 35 years after attaining independence. Important questions that can be asked include whether this circular still finds relevance in a post-colonial education dispensation. It is also clear that the

reason for merging was for remuneration purposes, yet HODs are not paid for their extra work at present. The practice of not remunerating teachers in posts of responsibility runs contrary to Quinn's (2002) encouragement of incentivising teachers so that they keep their focus on students. Quinn's proposal was once effected in Zimbabwe during a period of severe economic hardship (2008 to 2012) and the practice significantly improved the teachers' morale and attitude towards their work.

In School C, Mr. Chiredzi took seriously the relevance of the HODs' qualifications when he outlined several factors that guided his appointment of the HODs:

> *First and foremost, I consider the relevance of the teacher qualifications and experience. I appoint teachers who are trained to teach practical subjects. I then consider other factors such as the good leadership qualities displayed by the teacher, teacher's subject knowledge in terms of content and teaching and learning resources and the attitude demonstrated by the teacher regarding the other practical subjects offered by the school.*

Mr. Chiredzi went on to say:

> *In addition, I appoint a teacher from the subject area with the largest number of students. The other critical issue I consider is the effectiveness of the teacher in taking instruction. The thing is, apart from leading in departmental activities, the HOD has to conduct some assigned administrative charges.*

The issues of relevant teacher qualification and experience kept coming up in almost all the discussions with the school heads. The issue of pedagogical content knowledge, pedagogy knowledge and interest also came out from the above excerpts. The issue of interest was never alluded to by the previous participants (Heads). This is quite interesting and prompts the question; can interest manifest into effectiveness? This could be the subject of another study.

It is also important to note that Mr. Chiredzi raised other interesting issues which cannot be ignored. Apart from the HODs' qualifications and experience, the principal recognises that there could be some distinction between his qualification and subject knowledge. The aspect of leadership quality was not analysed though it is critical. The post of HOD calls for someone who

can coordinate, organise, plan, direct, supervise, etc. This consideration is very critical and is in keeping with the major tenets of distributed leadership. In School D, Mr. Masvingo stated:

> *I appointed the HOD based on the relevance of his qualification. Whenever I appoint HODs I give first preference to teachers holding a relevant degree before considering teachers with Diplomas in Education. When there is no degree holder, I then consider Diploma in Education (Dip Ed.). The other factor is I also consider the individual's period of service in the Ministry of Education in Zimbabwe.*

When I asked him if there was a policy guiding selection of HODs, he responded as follows:

> *There is no policy as such but we are borrowing the idea of prioritising degree holders as is currently articulated by the Vacant Post Announcements or circulars for school heads or deputy heads. In fact this has become the norm.*

What this suggests is an absence of a clearly defined policy pronouncement informing HOD appointment. Principals use their own discretion according to how they valued various factors as determinants for promotion to HOD positions. The issues of teacher qualifications and experience pointed out by Mr. Chiredzi were also replicated by Mr. Masvingo. A different variable that Mr. Mwenezi of School E raised was the aspect of teacher maturity:

> *I find teacher qualifications and experience critical for qualifying a teacher to lead a subject department. The issue of maturity as I see it is also very important in guiding the leader's personal contact among teachers and students in the department. However, this being a church-run school, I am obliged to make my selection within the responsible authority's requirements. The church prefers to have teachers belonging to their denomination in leadership posts.*

The above findings reflect a mixed bag of criteria where most principals considered church affiliation, teacher competence, leadership qualities and maturity amongst others. Interestingly, none of the five principals mentioned using a policy or regulations as a guide to their decision-making on appointments. Only one principal, Mr. Masvingo, referred to borrowing from the selection criteria on school heads or their deputies, where a teaching degree was a prerequisite.

This view was, however, not common among the principals. HOD Cayla was appointed to lead degreed subject teachers while only holding a diploma.

To have effective subject heads in place, there is a need to have policies or regulations that clearly articulate the selection procedure for HODs. The findings indicate varying degrees of arbitrariness in the appointment of HODs for VTE, mostly based on the principal's discretion. To satisfy the criteria laid out by Turner (2003) and Brown *et al.* (2010), among others, a systematic selection and appointment procedure should be adopted to ensure that only competent and capable members are appointed to lead instruction especially in these skills- oriented departments where technical expertise is required. This study has discovered that there is currently no formal documentation of any of the practices employed in the appointment of VTE-HODs in the Zimbabwean context, a situation that is far from the ideal.

There was evidence from the DEOs that their offices had no control over schools' HODs' appointments. In their response to the question on how the district education officials influenced the recruitment of subject leaders, the two DEOs confirmed that they do not have any influence at all. For example, DEO 1 explained that:

> *We do not have much influence on the appointment of HODs. It's really the prerogative of the headmaster (principal) of the school, but we sometimes check on the suitability of those who would have been chosen. Head of department is a school staffing issue so it's really in the hands of the headmaster.*

When pushed further about how they verified the suitability of the appointed teachers, his response was that: *"We check that through the school head's end of term or annual reports."*

DEO 2 also echoed similar sentiments when he commented that:

> *The district has no influence on the appointment of HODs for secondary school subject departments. Most DEOs are primary trained and our major task is to supervise implementation of the primary education curricula. Our involvement with secondary schools is mainly administrative and in relation to the HOD issues it is only when we process their responsibility allowances. The details concerning their instructional*

leadership practices are handled by provincial office education officials because that is where subject specialist officers are found.

The findings show an interesting bifurcation in the responsibilities of the district office with respect to the support and monitoring of instructional leadership in schools, viz. that district education officials' mandate is to ensure the smooth running of schools while matters dealing with teaching and learning are the concern of the provincial officials. This may be an interesting case of distributed leadership and collective leadership between the DEOs and PEOs or it may just be a case of poor, or lack of, coordination between the various arms of school leadership (districts and provinces). Further research on this matter is needed to clarify the interactions between districts and provinces with respect to instructional leadership in secondary schools especially.

The present study did, however, pursue the issue of appointments of HODs with the provincial officer responsible for VTE. In her response to the question about how the provincial education officers influenced appointment of subject heads, PEO 1 presented the following view:

I expect to see competent teachers in the positions of HODs. I also expect to see appointments which are based on subject specialisation. In my own view the practice of appointing an overall HOD (for all subjects) does not mean anything. How can one lead instruction in an area he/she has no knowledge of?

The response by the PEO shows the desire to have instructional leaders who have the capacity to effectively influence teaching, learning and student performance in the schools even though her influence on such appointments remains limited, if it exists at all. However the PEO's statement did not reflect the reality on the ground. This gap between expectation and reality communicates a loose monitoring and supervision framework for standard procedures at provincial level.

4.6.3 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS DATA ON SELECTION CRITERIA

From the analysis of document, it was found that in (Ministry of Education and Culture, Zimbabwe, 1979:3) there is a clause which reads as follows: "Vacant and upgraded posts will be considered nationally and applications will be considered by the Ministry's Promotions Committee." This statement refers to all posts of "special responsibility in the secondary schools". Clearly, HOD positions can be characterised as falling within the ambit of "special responsibility".

Following the prescriptions of this circular would thus help to provide guidance on the appointment of competent instructional leaders in various capacities. Currently, the evidence presented suggests that there were no circulars or policies that were used to guide or justify the appointment of officers to carry out the pivotal functions of improving instructional practices in the VTE departments. DEO 2 confirmed the non-functionality of the circular when he said:

> *The circular guiding selection of HOD was compatible before independence when secondary schools were very few. Furthermore school-based leadership posts remain localise as they cannot be advertised because of the recommended school staff establishment. The posts have to be localised so that over-staffing problems will not be created. In Mathematics and Science, the circular continues to guides the grading of HODs in order to determine their workload and responsibility allowances.*

This circular is thus not entirely dormant, but is rather used selectively as in the case of combining the practical subjects into one department (see Table 4.6). The case of HODs seems peculiar because there are Vacancy Announcement Circulars for other posts in the Ministry of Education; for example, Vacancy Announcement No. 10 of 2010, Vacancy Announcement No.3 of 2011 and Vacancy Announcement No 5 of 2013 for the posts of school head, DEOs and Deputy Education Directors respectively. In each circular the major duties and responsibilities are outlined. In addition, the expected competences and skills are listed. Advertising posts gives people room to show their interest by applying. Again, the outlined duties and expected competences and skills enable teachers to assess their capacity to lead. The manner in which leadership is recruited in some of these areas (such as school heads, DEOs, etc.) could also be what would be most suitable in the skills-oriented domain of VTE (Kotur and Anbagazhan, 2014). An important observation made in this study is whether schools would improve their chances of getting more effective HODs if they were allowed to design their own instruments for the selection of HODs and advertise these internally. Further research may be necessary to explore this question.

4.6.4 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS ON THEME ONE

The findings reveal that the common practice in the appointment of HODs by the principals was that this was done without any consultation. The school heads alone sanctioned the appointments in council-run schools, whereas in schools under church patronage the appointment criteria took

into consideration the responsible authority's recommendations. It also appeared that in some schools the school heads considered the length of period a candidate would have served in the Ministry, and their qualifications. In church-run schools, whether one was an affiliated church member was also a critical marker of one's suitability for the post of HOD. Despite the differences in the variables considered, the Dip. Ed. qualification seemed to be basic and a common criterion in HOD appointments. For example, each of the five HODs had a Dip. Ed. as a minimum qualification. It was rather strange to note that in all cases the HODs were not aware of the criteria that were used to appoint them into their positions. This method of appointing school-based leaders is, according to Blasé and Blasé (2000)'s formulation, bureaucratic and characteristic of top-down practices where those who are led are powerless and have no control over decisions that prescribe their fate. The HODs are likely to be disempowered by not having any explanation of what guided their selection as instructional leaders. The importance of school-based leadership is not well served by simply having leaders in the departments but it is more important to have leaders who can effectively promote transformational instructional leadership in the schools (Timperley, 2006). Under the present conditions of appointment, it is possible for an incompetent teacher to be appointed on the church's recommendation at the expense of better qualified and more capable teachers. Such findings confirm the suspicion by Moss and Liang (1995) that VTE's existence is somehow threatened by the continuous call for higher standards of performance in subjects such as mathematics and science. This shifts focus away from VTE and may result in the absence of instructional leaders who can competently safeguard the VTE system of education. It is quite conceivable that some HODs who get into their posts through church recommendations may find themselves promoting church values, not vocational education.

Teacher qualifications and ability to lead are critical factors to ensure the appointment of instructional leaders who are capable of providing both effective administrative and social relations functions in a manner that improves teachers' instructional practices as well as student performance (Turner, 2003). Despite the different approaches used in different schools, all the HODs expressed ignorance of any formal procedures used during their appointments. This shrouds the general approach used to appoint the subject leaders in secrecy and indicates a lack of guiding policy for such appointments. The availability of a guiding tool providing a framework for HOD appointment practices would go a long way towards strengthening the appointment of these school-based subject leaders. The use of such formal or systematic procedures and artefacts or

tools like memos or appointment letters requiring the incumbent to acknowledge acceptance of responsibility by signing, should be considered in order to give more meaning to the practice of school-based subject leadership (Spillane *et al.,* 2003).

4.7 THEME TWO: EXPECTED ROLES FOR INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS AS EXPRESSED BY THE VTE SUBJECT TEACHERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

VTE subject teachers were included in this study as partners to the HODs on instructional leadership. Twenty-three subject teachers (five teachers from each of the Schools A, B, C, and E and three teachers from school D), were engaged in two FGD phases. Each cohort was interviewed at its work-station and was engaged once in each phase, making a total of ten FGDs sessions. Theme two emerged from an analysis of the findings of the ten FDG sessions.

The sub-theme is organised into three categories, namely: the VTE teachers' expectations; the principals' expectations; and the education officials' expectations of the HODs' instructional leadership roles. The VTE teachers' expectations comprise much of the data for this theme. The categories seek to explore the opinions and expectations of VTE teachers regarding the instructional leadership by the HODs. I wanted to find out the VTE teachers' opinions about HODs' visibility, the regularity of lesson observations, demonstration lessons, and departmental meetings, as well as their opinions concerning their involvement in instructional leadership encounters. For ethical reasons, I used pseudonyms for teachers as indicated in Chapter three (see Table 4.4). *FGD Phase 1: Qs 1 items a-g* sought to explore teachers' opinions and expectations on a variety of HODs' instructional leadership functions, and the findings are presented below.

4.7.1 HODs' VIEWS ON THE CLARITY OF THE STANDARDS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

One of the issues I was interested in was the vocational subject teachers' opinions about the clarity of the standards of instructional practices as set out by the HODs, if at all. In School A, only two teachers expressed an opinion on this matter. Percy, for example said:

I expect the HOD to explicitly explain what the teachers should do in their work. Again the HOD should have adequate knowledge to address related queries by teachers, pupils or the principal.

The opinion of the respondent suggests that the HOD should spell out the details of the instructional performance he/she expects of the peer teachers. The response also creates an expectation for the HOD to be able to answer subject-related questions in the school. The excerpt could also imply that teachers expect HODs to have the pedagogy, technical and content knowledge of vocational and technical subjects. They would provide more expert advice to teachers than someone who is a novice in the subject. In agreement with this set of expectations, Quinn (2002) spells out the need for leaders who have appropriate subject knowledge and skills. I find the idea of having technically skilled teachers leading instruction in VTE departments critical and interesting. The assumption is that possession of appropriate vocational and technical knowledge and skills would enable the leaders to provide clear guidance to teachers on what they are expected to do to improve their performance as well as handle some challenges that may be likely to impinge on effective teaching and learning. It is interesting to note that this can never be realised where different subjects are merged under one HOD who may lack competence in all the subjects s/he leads.

Tinashe, on the other hand, stated his expectations as follows:

The HOD should have an itinerary for checking with departmental activities from time to time. Furthermore the HOD should have courage to correct colleagues when they appear to misunderstand the department's instructional focus.

The opinion here is that instructional standards are better communicated when they are presented to teachers in written form and that for effective department coordination, the HOD needs to be able to point out areas of weakness on instructional issues. The importance of instructional tools and/or artefacts such as departmental policies or memos for leadership (Spillane *et. al.,* 2003) is underestimated. The entire study findings depicted only one HOD (Believe) satisfying the need to use artefacts that guided or organised instructional supervision activities such as lesson observation and book inspections. Apart from checking for schedules to guide instructional supervision, I was

motivated to look for more documents that clarified how teachers should enact their instructional duties.

The above issue of the HODs' clarity on standards of instruction for VTE was also pursued in a different setting, at School B. One of the participants, Limpopo, acknowledged the HOD's competence by noting that: *"I find the HOD very clear on how teachers should manage classes for effective teaching and learning to take place."*

Mississippi also echoed this opinion when she asserted that:

> *She (the HOD) is very clear about the quality of work the department should produce. On average, I can say, the HOD explains clearly the instructional standards she expects of both teachers and learners. I am also glad to say that when we are not clear on anything, she is welcoming to any questions seeking clarity.*

Although the responses to the question were obtained from only two teachers, the sentiments were confirmed by the HOD for School B who explained in no uncertain terms what the instructional behaviours expected of teachers in the VTE department were.

In School C, Gombe expressed the expectations as follows:

> *For teachers to understand what is expected of them, the HOD should set departmental instructional standards with them. We also expect to get ministerial set standards; for example, the number of written exercises and tests to be issued to every teacher as written memos. She should also encourage teachers to keep focused on the departmental set goals.*

The finding provides the view that teachers wish to be included in the planning of the department's instructional activities. This expectation is confirmed by most instructional leadership scholars, for example, Hallinger (2012a) who suggests instructional leadership practices that involve super-ordinates and subordinates collectively and collaboratively. Such an inclusive approach is a potent tool promoting ownership which can lead to faithful implementation of the curriculum. Further analysis of Gombe's response indicates that the department has some set goals which the HOD should encourage teachers to adhere to. The issue of encouraging teachers to keep focused suggests that the HODs need to monitor teaching and learning processes to ensure that teachers comply with the set plans. There seem to be contradictory views coming from the same participant,

however. Gombe talks about teachers' wish to be included in the setting of departmental standards as well as the need for teachers being encouraged to keep focused on set goals. It is not clear who set the goals being referred to.

It also emerged that teachers require HODs to give them copies of the memos on some of the instructional requirements that the department receives from the Ministry. This brings to the fore the importance of instructional leadership tools and artefacts to guide and support teaching and learning.

 While Gombe expected the HOD to give teachers memos as a means of reference, Vumba, another teacher, was satisfied with receiving verbal explanations from the HOD:

> *I feel the HOD is clear about a number of things. She explains that she expects us to take our classes according to the timetable. In meetings, she reminds us about the quality of work expected, the quantity of written exercises, as well as practical and theory tests.*

As regards the VTE teachers' expectations of HODs providing clarity on instruction, the findings reflect divergent views among members of the same cohort. For example, there are contrasting opinions between participants Gombe and Vumba on how HODs should make their expectations clear. This sounds very practical in a department where freedom of expression and interaction is encouraged for improving instruction. These responses may reflect the need for leadership to adopt different strategies and use different tools and platforms to communicate their vision and expectations towards achieving common goals. On the other hand Vumba's expectations resonate with the old adage: 'Children learn what they live.' This is demonstrated by the congruence between the observations of the departmental meeting proceedings and her (Vumba's) expectations. Her expectations were expressed in a manner that diminishes teachers to mere recipients of information. In a departmental meeting held at School C on the 21st May 2015, the deliberations of the meeting began with a word of prayer, and then the HOD talked about punctuality. She emphasised that the principal was complaining about lateness by some teachers. Teachers were not given the opportunity to say anything and they remained passive recipients of top-down instructional leadership practices. This contradicts the HODs' role as a conduit and mouthpiece for the head of the school. The HOD proceeded to talk about the previous year's results where she commended the Fashion and Fabrics area for improved results. She indicated that there

was a student who had passed with an 'A' grade (equivalent to a distinction). In appreciation of the improved performance she said: *"I am happy that there was a remarkable improvement in one of our areas. An A was registered in F/F as compared to the Bs and Cs of the past."* The HOD's voice dominated the deliberations. This study endorses a strong shift from traditional recognition of authority by leaders to adoption of collaborative leadership which allows active participation and recognition of the contributions from all the department members. The teachers' expectations of how the HODs should enact their instructional leadership roles as well as the interactions in departmental meeting protocols are contrary to Lee *et al.* (2012) who recommend interaction for instruction that promotes effective sharing of quality pedagogic strategy to improve student learning.

From a different perspective, Kilimanjaro was unhappy about teachers having to take the blame when the expectations of teachers' instructional practices are not communicated clearly by the leadership:

> *As subordinates, we expect departmental issues to be well communicated to the members. We don't like a situation where the teachers are accused of doing things wrong when tasks have not been clearly spelt out. I also feel that the HOD must set measurable and achievable goals.*

Kilimanjaro wanted instructional issues to be clearly communicated. The comment about teachers being accused of making errors on issues not well spelt out to them could be evidence of inadequate communication between the instructional leaders and their colleagues. Much of the literature on instructional leadership emphasises the need for collaborative leadership, collective learning or team teaching for effective teaching and learning to take place (Harris and Spillane, 2008; Marks and Printy, 2003). Kilimanjaro's opinion that the HOD should set measurable and achievable objectives may be one more suggestion of the need for inclusion and consultation in the planning of departmental instructional activities. The responses could be an indication that the teachers felt undervalued and/or excluded from the decision-making processes (Mohammad and Salahuddin, 2011).

The point was further emphasised in School D by Acacia who remarked that:

On paper the instructional standards seem to be clear but in practice some of the standards cannot be met due to certain logistical problems; for example, some co-curricular activity programmes especially during the second term, often disrupt teaching and learning.

An interesting issue of HODs as protectors of instructional time is being raised here. Whilst scholars such as Hallinger (2009) contend that HODs should protect instructional time, the expectations put forth by many participants were beyond the VTE-HODs' control because the VTE teachers expected the HODs to handle a challenge which affected all subject areas. During data collection the researcher also experienced the problem when she visited two schools and failed to make appointments when she found teachers away or departing for Sports. As has been indicated earlier, schools in Masvingo Province observed a centralised Sporting Calendar where schools would break academic sessions for Sports competitions every Friday. I was surprised to find individual VTE teachers experiencing and expressing a general problem. My observations suggested a common weakness of VTE teachers who seem to have developed a tendency to complain. The situation revealed by the excerpt calls for consideration to conduct make-up lessons to cover up for the lost time, which would be largely dependent on the will and capacity of the department's members. The complaining behaviour may possibly be attributed to the effects of stigmatisation as reflected in the history of VTE outlined in Chapter two Moss and Liang (1995) urge teachers to develop positive attitudes towards the developments that take place in their subjects. There is need for VTE teachers to move from the past and collaborate with the HODs in pursuit of the 21st century educational reforms.

4.7.2 HOD VISIBILITY

The second issue under Theme Two (expectations on the instructional leadership activities of HODs) relate to the teachers' opinions about the visibility of the HODs. Most participants had strong views about the need for HODs to be more visible and/or accessible for example, Shingi expressed that: "*I am of the thinking that the HOD should be visible both inside and outside the classroom in case of subject-based problems arising.*"

In support of this view, Prayer affirmed: "*I feel the HOD needs to be strategically positioned for ease of access by colleagues in the department when they have work- related problems*"

The responses suggest the need for HOD to be more visible. These findings resonate with Hallinger's (2012b) view that high visibility is one of the four main characteristics of an effective instructional leader.

Speaking about visibility in a different way, Comfort argued as follows:

> *My opinion is the HOD should be all over the school premises. Through management by "wandering" the HOD may be able to identify some problems which some subject teacher(s) may not be aware of.*

An interesting idea of 'management by wandering' is raised, which is similar to the 'walk-through' practices suggested by Blasé and Blasé (2000). The excerpt suggests visibility through which the HOD may work in terms of identifying deficiencies in teaching and learning resources or teachers' and students' instructional challenges. The nature of visibility is one that would be to the advantage of effective instructional leadership.

The issue of HOD visibility was also raised in School B although it was put differently. For instance, Mississippi said:

> *Since teachers are required to be present during school time, my opinion is that the HOD should also always be present during school time. We are both workers and hence if we (teachers) are to be at the station we (teachers and HODs) should all be at the station.*

As much as the teacher wanted the HOD to be visible it was not entirely in good faith. The opinion was expressed in a manner that reveals some ill feelings about the HOD. This raises some issues about teamwork in the VTE department at School B. There is some literature that touches on the issue of teamwork between instructional leaders and followers, but there is nothing on the effects of HOD visibility on student learning (Spillane *et al.,* 2003).

Save also posited that:

> *In the past, I used to have opinions as has been expressed by my friend Mississippi. This time I am happy to say my expectations have been satisfied because the HOD in the post maintains high visibility. If she is not outside the classroom, then she is in the department*

office at the Agriculture Unit. She also dutifully avails herself even after hours whenever need be.

These findings point to the fact that different HODs may enact their roles differently. For these teachers, the current HOD has performed to their expectations of good instructional leadership. When teachers are happy, they are more likely to do their best in their work and this could result in good student achievement. Literature reviewed in Chapter two names visibility as one of the four variables marking high performance of instructional leaders (Quinn, 2002).

Expressing his view, Zambezi also commented that:

I share the same views with Save. Maybe I should further say that each time I have required the HODs' instructional assistance, I got it because she is always present and easily accessible.

Further confirmation of the HOD's visibility in School B was made by Mutilikwi and Limpopo as they acknowledged Save and Zambezi's opinions. The agreement among the teachers could be an indication that the HOD's visibility is important as a factor in effective leadership because four of the five teachers in the department concurred on the value of the HOD's visibility.

The same sentiment was expressed by teachers in School C. For example, Vumba agreed on the visibility of the HOD, commenting that: *"She is always present during work hours. She is duty conscious."*

In the same vein Drakensburg noted:*"Each time I expect to get help from the HOD, I successfully get it because she is always around school."*

In support, Inyangani indicated that: *"I have the opinion that the HOD should always be present and she does exactly that."*

The respondents agreed that the HOD demonstrated a high visible presence and this behaviour is one of the attributes of effective instructional leaders (Andrews and Soda in Quinn, 2002).

Putting across a different opinion on the issue of the HOD's visibility, Kilimanjaro argued that:

I see no good or bad in the presence or absence of the HOD in this department. In fact she is always present but I see no intrinsic value in that.

In this case, the response shows that the respondent does not value or recognise the HOD. The respondent suggests that the HOD has no influence at all on the teaching that takes place in the department. The view differs from Turner's (2003) perception that HODs are key players in the running of successful departments and schools. Examining the evidence from this school further, I suspect that the negative feelings the respondent was expressing about the HOD could emanate from the manner in which the HOD was appointed. Anderson (2012) propounds that people need to see a handful of attributes in a leader before accepting that person as a leader. Looking back on the findings on the appointment criteria used to appoint the HOD in School C. it is noteworthy that the HOD was appointed to lead very senior as well as degreed members, using criteria that were not explained to the teachers. This brings us back to the need to improve the selection and appointment processes used to fill vacant HOD posts.

Baobab lamented the fact that: *"The HOD is always visible but lack of learning materials impact negatively on their effectiveness."*

This is an interesting twist that VTE teachers have taken on HOD visibility. Indeed the HOD's presence in or outside the building may be insignificant in the absence of appropriate and insufficient teaching and learning facilities. Confirming this view Idialu (2007) points out that shortage of equipment and facilities seriously affect the quality of teaching and learning in vocational and technical subjects.

In the same vein Mukwa noted that:

Although the HOD is highly visible, I find her to be of little use, in the absence of learning materials. The HOD may come to supervise teaching and learning but lack of materials can impact negatively on skills to be taught.

Acacia also observed that:

The HOD is always visible but I think his visibility is defeated by the fact that he does not have much influence on resource procurement. Instead of pursuing administrators on the provision of resources, he expects us to make do with whatever is available,

The three respondents from School D seem to have made the same observation about the status of resource provision in their subject areas. The suggestion to rely on whatever is available as reflected by Acacia may not effectively facilitate achievement of quality vocational and technical skills which are acceptable on the global job market. Furthermore the observations made by Acacia, a teacher from School D presented resource scarcity as a common problem in council-run schools. The poor state of affairs was also described by each respondent, yet resources are considered as the pillars on which VTE teaching and learning lean (Zvobgo, 1999). This was evidenced when HOD Amina of School A stated that:

> *Procurement of teaching materials is challenging. We make our requisitions to administration but more often than not, fail to get the materials due to lack of funds Sometimes we get the supplies very late. Electricity is a challenge.*

When asked further if students were not levied on practical subjects and the response was, *"They are levied but because most of them are dependents of subsistence farmers, who have problems getting the money."*

Responding to *(Phase 1: 3: Q 3)* which sought to establish the HODs' feelings about the state of equipment in the school, Amina related that:

> *I am not happy with the state of affairs. We have scanty and out-dated resources in all sections of the department. With the advent of the new technology, we need machinery and equipment which is compatible with the new inventions. I also suggest that when machinery is out of order, skilled technicians should be hired for repairs.*

Although there is nothing new about these findings, this study finds this data very critical in that the resource challenges experienced in the teaching and learning by the curriculum implementers (HODs and teachers) are brought to the attention of the school principals and the other LEAs and this may help to stimulate their instructional support in terms of resource provision. It is crucial to point out that the high visibility demonstrated by HODs counts for nothing in the absence of the appropriate teaching and learning materials that facilitate acquisition of quality skills by the learners. Idialu (2007) affirms that shortage or lack of equipment and facilities defeats the effectiveness of teaching and learning of the skills-oriented subjects. Surprisingly, despite the lack

of appropriate teaching and learning materials, one HOD revealed that the VTE (F/F) department was the best performer in 'O' Level, ZIMSEC examinations at the school.

In church-run schools the resource situation was rather different. Expressing his pleasure about procurement of resources in School E, Earning said:

> *As long as we make our orders in advance , we experience no problem. We submit our orders to the deputy principal for onward submission to the principal. Purchasing of machinery, equipments and consumables is done by subject specialists while small or general issues like stationery are purchased by the deputy principal. There is adequate infrastructure for specialist rooms as well as adequate space for Building Studies practices.*

4.7.3 VTE TEACHERS' OPINIONS ABOUT LESSON OBSERVATIONS

The third issue on the major theme of expectations was the opinion of the subject teachers on how often lesson observations should be carried out with teachers. From School A, Shingi expressed the view that: *"The number of lesson observations per term should depend on the expertise and experience of teachers. If teachers are experienced they should not be followed religiously."*

When I asked about the measurement of experience and expertise, and if there was a policy that guided the decisions, the response was that:

> *I consider teachers who have a post- qualification teaching period of ten years and above as experienced teachers. Expertise is measured by external examinations performance of the classes taught by the teacher. For one to be considered an expert, the results should always range from seventy five per cent (75%) and above. This is just my opinion. There is no policy about this.*

From the above quotation, the respondent is almost suggesting that lesson observation as instructional leadership practice should be reserved for novice and less competent teachers. It is important to note that the respondent's opinions were not necessarily guided by any policy, and could also indicate some ignorance of what instructional leadership entails. Shingi's view is supported by Idialu (2007) who acknowledges that lesson observations provide quality induction experiences for beginning teachers. The latter view contradicts that of Firestone and Martinez

(2007), who posit that lesson observation is a critical aspect of instructional supervision which is crucial for influencing teaching and learning. These scholars also hold that supervision of teachers accelerates quality of instructional activities for teachers and students as well as ensuring policy implementation. Such a tool can thus be useful for every teacher depending on what improvements are targeted to promote high quality teaching and learning.

On a slightly different note, Comfort was of the view that: *"At least two lesson observation per teacher in a term is enough."* When I probed her views regarding feedback, she stated that:

> *Oh yes, we expect it so that we can become aware of our strengths and weaknesses and would know what to work on to improve our teaching. The HOD sometimes discusses with the observed teacher and at times only the lesson crit is issued.*

The latter respondent expected no more than two lesson observations per term. Feedback on the teachers' instructional performance seems to be given either through post-observation discussion with the teacher, or through the lesson observation 'crit' report. It would appear that perhaps HODs sometimes postpone post-observation discussions with teachers when they are short of time. The idea of giving feedback on lesson observation is encouraged by scholars of instructional leadership. For example, Leithwood's (1994) view of instructional leadership as a series of behaviours designed to affect classroom instruction is based on the idea of giving teachers the feedback that is necessary to affect their subsequent behaviour. The effectiveness of giving the feedback through reading 'crit' reports may, however, be limited as no clarification can be sought or provided in that context (TTA, 1998).

Responses in School B followed a similar pattern of recommending one or two observations per term. Mississippi for example recommended that: *"the HOD should make at least two class visits per term and in our department, our HOD did just that."* Limpopo on the other hand argued that: *"because the HOD is also a class teacher, she should conduct lesson observations at least once in a term with every teacher."*

Similarly, Mutirikwi noted that:

> *The HOD sees each one of us at least once in a term. However, I suggest if she could make more visits whenever time allows. A good point to note is that during post- observation*

discussions, the HOD brings to the teacher's attention, the importance of using locally available media to facilitate skills acquisition as well as knowledge retention in the teaching and learning of VTE.

Whilst the common view is that HODs should observe teachers in order to provide feedback and support, there was no clear consensus on the number of observations to be made. In the absence of clear policy guidelines on this issue, it would appear that the teachers would be happy as long as the observations remain useful for their own improvement.

The value of the lesson observations can sometimes be complicated for the VTE teachers who work in merged departments with more than one subject areas. Inyangani cautioned about this situation in his response:

Lesson observations are complicated to conduct in a department where there are no common topics for the different subjects. The HOD may have a bias towards his/her own subject area.

For this teacher, the issue of subject expertise and specialisation is critical for the observations to be meaningful and/or useful. The literature reviewed in Chapter two describes the subject departments which handle merged subjects as 'confederate' departments (Turner, 2003). The challenge of the confederate departments is also discussed by Tyagi (2010) who points out that supervising teachers from a different area of specialisation with the HOD may be a meaningless exercise with very little value. In agreement, Turner (ibid) also points to the difficulty of embracing shared values within such department's staff. The issue of HOD bias towards his/her subject was observed during departmental meeting observation when HOD Cayla showered praises on the achievement of an 'A' in F/F, her area of specialisation. Instead of looking further into the performance in other VTE areas, the meeting deliberations changed and skewed towards the airing of complaints. Kilimanjaro deliberately changed the meeting focus by expressing disappointment at the lack of recognition of performance by the school administration. He argued that the school's administration did not recognise good performance: *"The school administration promised to incentivise good performance but we seem to live unfulfilled promises."* Vumba on the other hand complained about a too high teacher-to-student ratio and insufficient time for practical subjects' teaching and learning. The findings of this study demonstrate clearly the difficulty of shared values

in subjects having different content as suggested by Turner (2003). The lack of collaboration displayed by the department members negated the importance of collective leadership as well as teamwork. These findings should provoke the principals not to take VTE instructional leadership for granted but to make a critical analysis of the worthiness of bringing practical subjects together under one department. These concerns may be what PEO 1 had in mind when she argued against the practice of HODs leading merged departments.

While discussing the issue of lesson observations, I also asked the teachers to indicate how often they observed the HODs teach and how this might have benefited them. The non-verbal responses of either giggling or looking down were noted and only three participants in different schools responded in soft voices saying: "We never observe HODs because they are our superiors". This response highlights the hierarchies involved in schools, which may at times undermine the value of collegiality and the spirit of sharing involved in lesson observations. The purpose of the lesson observations cannot just be to monitor and quality assure but should include other aspects of instructional leadership such as promoting sharing and innovation on teaching and learning. The role conflict between quality assurance and the threat to collegiality was clearly illuminated by Percy when she indicated that "Lesson observation is for HODs. How can a junior member supervise his or her leader?" Clearly there is some way to go before HODs can operate in networks of shared and complementary expertise rather than in hierarchies or in isolation (Phillips, 2009; Rorrer *et al,* 2008; and Spillane, *et al.,* 2006).

Blasé and Blasé (2000), advocate for collegiality in instructional planning so that the lessons taught become a collaborative venture. The level of expertise demonstrated by the HOD is also subject to follower-leader recognition. Turner and Bolam (1998) aver that when the HOD is an expert practitioner he/she is well respected by departmental colleagues. If this is not the case, then attempts made to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the department are likely to be seriously undermined.

4.7.4 DEMONSTRATION LESSONS FOR VTE INSTRUCTIONAL EMPOWERMENT

Pursuing the sub-theme of lesson observation, I also explored the practice of using demonstration lessons for instructional leadership in the VTE departments. Such demonstrations seem to be uncommon within the VTE departments and the teachers were not sure of their value.

Percy held the view that: *"Demonstrations are sometimes not necessary. I find engaging veteran teachers in demonstration lessons a waste of time. To me it is like demonstrating to a child how to eat sadza (porridge)."*

Expressing a similar view Comfort argued that: *"Demonstration lessons are very good if there is something new to be learnt."*

Zambezi agreed that: *"Although we never conduct any demonstration lessons as a department, I feel we should only have such an encounter at least once a term."*

Mississippi echoed the same view that*:*

> *Demonstrations are only necessary when there is need, for example when a new skill or concept has been introduced in the syllabus and many teachers have problems with its implementation. However since I joined this school three years ago, we have never had demonstration lessons staged at departmental level.*

It was surprising to find that VTE teachers were ignorant of the importance of demonstrations. It is pivotal for VTE implementers always to bear in mind that the skills and content for vocational subjects are not static but are constantly changing to keep pace with the changing social and economic needs of societies. The VTE teachers are therefore alerted to the fact that the instructional capacities of teachers also need to be updated or elevated.

One of the challenges to having demonstration lessons seems to be scheduling: Vumba for example observed that:

> *The teaching timetable for practical subjects is concurrent. If teachers attend demonstration lessons, it means they would have to leave their classes unattended. Yes, some common aspects for example some teaching methods such as demonstration, field trips etc. may apply equally to all practical subjects such that teachers from different subject specialisations will benefit, but we should not forget that students come to school to make good use of their learning time. Departmental demonstration lessons benefit the recipient classes at the expense of others.*

Gombe added that: *"We have never had any demonstration lesson. Personally I am not worried because I have not seen their relevance and they are time consuming."*

In general, the findings suggest that there are no demonstration lessons to speak of in most schools. Only School B had some, but these demonstrations were usually focused on coaching students for examinations. An opportunity to use demonstration lessons for incorporating the multiple-leadership approaches to VTE through distributed leadership from the teachers was missed (Harris and Spillane, 2008). It is critical to note that through interaction, pedagogical strategies are collaboratively shaped and creativity is improved among teachers as they learn from each other's expertise.

Effective teaching and learning are highly premised on effectiveness of pedagogical practices. Owing to this, there is no doubt that all curriculum implementers in a subject unit need to collaborate on the best teaching strategies to engage. The findings demonstrated an absence of interactions about how to deliver vocational concepts and skills to learners. Teachers are however reminded that no matter how long they have taught the subject, effective teaching of some topics or skills requires use of demonstrations strategies. From the study, two different perspectives about demonstrations were observed, viz. 1) acknowledgement of the importance of the method and promising to use the strategy in future was viewed as an indication that some HODs were unaware of the usefulness of the demonstration strategy which they only realised after it was highlighted. This echoes the English saying that 'practice makes perfect.' If the VTE teachers keep practising the instructional approaches they learned during teacher training programmes and those that they are consistently confronted by through interactions for learning, they would become expert instructional leaders. 2) teachers were overwhelmed by workloads hence they became obsessed with meeting targets such as managing their weekly teaching load, and giving and marking the prescribed number of written exercises and tests, among other tasks. This tended to disrupt interactions and promote isolated teaching practices.

Such instructional practices run contrary to the thrust of teaching vocational subjects as identified by Lauglo (2010), because much attention will be given to preparation of examinations at the expense of preparation of skilled manpower. Effective interactions about instruction in the teaching of vocational subjects should be proactive (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2013). Hence there is no way VTE instructors can go wrong if they engage in demonstrations. The teachers can use the

demonstration strategy either as a process of showing how a specific skill is carried out or to teach the results of certain practical processes (Gwarinda, 2001). It is essential to note that concentrating on written activities and examination tends to trivialise effective acquisition of vocational skills. Zimbabwe, like other countries of the Global village, should aim to equip its learners with vocational skills which will make them competitive on the global economic stage. The demonstration method can be one of the best strategies through which instructional leaders for VTE pool their expertise to achieve the intended educational goals.

4.8 THEME THREE: THE ENACTED PRACTICES OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP BY THE HODS

The third major theme sought to explore the instructional leadership roles enacted by the HODs. This was critical to this study because I wanted to establish those instructional practices of the HODs that have a possible impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning of vocational and technical subjects. Based on the analysis of data, the theme was divided into sub–themes: instructional leaders' enacted practices; supervision of instruction; lesson observation; resource procurement and management; and the professional development of teachers.

4.8.1 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS' (HODS) ENACTED PRACTICES

I began my conversation with the HODs by asking a question that sought to solicit responses about the instructional supervision activities they enacted in their role performance (*Phase 1: 1: Q5*). The responses of the five HODs are summarised in Table 4:7 below. The table also helps to avoid repetition of what the HODs do.

Table 4.6: HODs' enacted practices of instructional leadership

Industrial leadership practices	Perspective of HODs				
	Amina	Believe	Cayla	Dee	Earning
Allocating teaching loads	✓	-	-	-	-
Inspecting teacher records	✓	-	✓	-	✓
Lesson observation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chairing departmental meetings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Inventory management	-	✓	-	-	✓
Encouraging team teaching	-	✓	-	-	-
Encouraging use of media in teaching	-	✓	-	-	-
Exercise book inspection	-	-	✓	-	✓
Monitoring teachers on duty	-	✓		✓	-
Asset management	-	-	✓	✓	✓
Liaison person between administrators and teachers	-	-	✓	-	-
Keeping inventory for teachers' assets and books	-	✓	✓	-	-
Supervising student work	-	-	-	-	✓
Resource procurement	✓	-	-	✓	✓
Routine checks on equipment given to teachers	-	-	-	-	✓

Table 4.7: above shows a variety of activities enacted by the HODs in their roles as instructional leaders. These roles are divided into three categories, viz 1) instructional supervision roles which include lesson observation, exercise book and teachers' records inspection; 2) resource procurement and management roles; and 3) administrative roles which include allocating teaching loads, serving as liaison persons between the principal and department members and monitoring teachers on duty. As illustrated in the table above, not all roles apply to all the HODs.

4.8.2 Lesson observations

All five HODs were unanimous in their identification of lesson observations as a key practice of instructional leadership for them. As I probed further about the lesson observations, it emerged that almost all the HODs conducted observations "at least twice a term for each teacher." The similarity of the response to this question made me curious to know whether there was a policy or circular that guided the lesson observation practices. Indeed, there is a circular(s) or policy, even though only the HOD for School had a copy of the circular at hand (see Appendix J)

Apart from being guided on written work by a circular, there are also lesson observation protocols that are used to guide lesson observation practices. From the findings that all HODs inspected students' exercise books and teachers' records, I became eager to understand the nature of tools they used to validate the quality of work. I analysed lesson observation protocols to complement data from the HODs' descriptions of the tools they used to supervise lesson delivery. I also analysed policy documents and circulars guiding instructional leadership practices in the departments. I found that two different structures of lesson observation protocols were being used in the VTE departments. A feature common to both is the details of biographical data. This is essential for identifying the observation with the respective teacher. It also reflects the period of observation, topic and class taught. The two observation protocols are presented in this study as Appendices J and K (see Appendicles)

4.8.2.1 Lesson Observation Protocol A

Lesson observation protocol A (see Appendix J) is the artefact that was used in schools B and E. This is a school- designed tool. The sub-headings are indicative of a tool that is focused more on teaching and learning. It seeks in the first place to check the preparedness of the teacher or

instructional colleagues for the lesson. It also seeks to explore how the lesson progresses. This is the time when important instructional variables such as teaching methods and teacher-pupil interactions are viewed. With the array of teaching strategies at the disposal of the teachers, VTE education would not find randomly-selected pedagogical strategies effective. The details such as; pupil involvement, methods and media are suggestive of the 'hands-on' and work-oriented methodologies. The protocol also promotes students' active involvement in their learning. Pupil involvement is key to effective teaching and learning of practical subjects. By seeking to establish student involvement, the protocol provides instructional guidance on the nature of learning experiences that contribute towards the effective teaching and learning of practical subjects.

The lesson observation protocol also has an area for media preparation and use. This is very relevant for VTE teaching and learning because effective teaching and learning of these skills-oriented subjects is largely premised on availability of adequate and appropriate resources (Zvobgo, 1999).

Classroom management is also essential for effective teaching and learning. Suggestions and recommendations are necessary. It is essential that the instructional leaders identify teachers' instructional weaknesses and then suggest ways of improving them. The documented information on teachers' strengths and weaknesses helps to guide planning of professional requirements. An analysis of the sub-headings guiding lesson observation reveals an instrument that has been tailored to suit the instructional requirements for VTE subjects. Although there is no actual specification of what to look for, the tool is suitable because it enables focusing on practical involvement by both the teacher and the learner. The space provided can accommodate meaningful observation details which provide feedback to the observed teacher.

4.8.2.2 LESSON OBSERVATION PROTOCOL B

Lesson observation protocol B (see Appendix X) shows the structure of the other observation tool that was used by the sample schools. The tool was designed by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, Zimbabwe (1993). The structure of the instrument reflects one which was designed and disseminated to the Head Office, Provincial Offices, school heads and teachers. Although the tool does not have either a policy or circular number it can be strongly argued that it (the observation protocol) was not disseminated as a ready to use assessment instrument but rather as a guide to construction of a number of instruction supervision tools. The tool is presented in

sections with Sections A and B relating to details that are linked more to administrative than instructional purposes. For example, information such as: type of appointment; date service was joined; name of school; registration number; and department/station number, seem not to foster effective teaching in any way.

Section B deals with teaching assignment and responsibilities, but also tends to focus on aspects that may have no significant influence on teaching and learning. Section C seeks to explore professional qualities and competence of the instructional leaders (HODs and teachers). This is the area which deals with actual teaching and learning. The aspects outlined for observation are: Introduction, Development and Conclusion. A critical aspect, 'Use of Media,' is presented after the Conclusion. Space for overall comment is also provided but it is rather limited. The problem was also cited by HOD Earning, who noted the limited evaluation spaces provided on the protocol document. Provision of more space would enable adequate coverage of observations that may give helpful feedback to the supervisee (Firestone and Martinez, 2007). Scrutiny of the teacher's records also comes under Section C. Inspection of students' written exercises forms a component of this section as well.

Section D looks at issues to do with professional growth. Here the supervisor is expected to comment on the teacher's involvement in some specified instructional activities.

On the issue of book inspection, again all HODs revealed that they inspected both   teachers' records and students' exercise books. Amina had this to say:

> *I inspect schemes of work and students' exercise books four times per term. I do this to ascertain that the teachers' records are up to date. I also check the match between the schemes and the work assigned for students.*

When I probed why she inspected the teachers' records and exercise books so many times, she answered: *"Teachers benefit from constant supervision and they need to be kept on their toes."*

This quote suggests power-based leadership where only the HOD leads all the instructional activities by the teachers. Hallinger and Heck (2010) consider the idea of having a single leader for all educational activities as naïve and they propose shared leadership. The same view is shared by many instructional leadership scholars who condemn the belief of one administrator serving as

a lone leader for the entire department without the active participation of other department members (Spillane *et al.,* 2001; Elmore, 2000). According to the literature reviewed in Chapter one, on the development of the HOD concept in three phases, the school leaders in the sample schools may still be operating in Phase One which is characterised by the super-ordinate leading unquestioning subordinates (York-Barr and Duke, 2004).

Believe on the other hand, took a slightly different approach to the instructional guidance tasks:

> *I carry out book inspections separately from lesson observations. My supervisory activities are normally guided by a self-designed supervision itinerary. I do this to ensure that I give my colleagues' work ample supervision that may enable identification of their strengths and weaknesses. I also want to make my supervision meaningful.*

A sample of Believe's supervision schedule is reproduced in Table 4.7 below:

Table 4.7: Believe's supervision itinerary

Week ending	Type of Supervision	Teachers	Date	Time
23/01/15	Schemes of work	All teachers	19/01/15	08.00hrs
13/02/15	Lesson observations	Limpopo	10/02/15	09.15hrs
		Mississippi	10 02/15	12.05hrs
		Mutilikwi	12/02/15	09.15hrs
		Save	03/03/15	08.05hrs
		Zambezi	17/03/15	08.05hrs
20/03/15	Exercise book inspection	All teachers	19/03/15	08.00hrs
27/03/15	Schemes of work	All teachers	23/03/15	08.00hrs

Table 4.7 shows the dates and times for lesson observation and book inspections for each teacher in the department. Pseudonyms assigned to teachers during FGD sessions are used to replace the teachers' real names for the ethical reasons explained earlier on. The manner in which the respondent organises her instructional activities is indicative of a leader who is aware of her instructional leadership roles. Being a degree holder, her leadership quality correlates with Kotur and Anbazhagan's (2014) belief that highly qualified people can make good leaders.

Cayla, on the other hand, said: *"After lesson supervision, I ask the teacher to submit his / her records and the students' exercise books for inspection"*.

Cayla chose to do lesson supervisions and book inspections separately. This could suggest that the HOD wanted to have more time to address the instructional issues that have to do with teachers' performance in lesson delivery as well as the quality of teachers' records and students' written performance.

Whilst still on the issue of time spent on book inspection, Dee explained that:

> *I see the students' exercise books as many times as I like because the books are always at my easy reach. In fact we share the same office with the other teachers so I can get the books any time I feel like. As for teachers' records, I ask for them twice per term.*

The kind of supervision given to exercise books seemed to portray a laissez–faire style of supervision (Anderson, 2013). By assessing the exercise books as and when he felt like it, there was a possibility of his not seeing the books at all. Anderson *(ibid)* emphasises that instructional leaders checking student's progress and hence supervision of students work is critical.

Earning also said:

> *I inspect exercise books and teachers' records subsequent to lesson observation. I separate the two activities because I want to get an insight of the quality of both the teachers and students' work.. I regard lesson observation as one of the events which provides a better understanding of the actual performance prevailing in classrooms.*

The respondent in this case argued that book inspection provides more information about the quality of work for teachers and pupils. Except for Amina who did lesson observation concurrently with book inspection, the other four HODs separated the two supervision activities. This separation gave supervision the importance it deserves (Kennedy, 2012).

When I asked about the supervision roles the HODs played *(Phase 1:2: Q, 5),* Amina pointed out the following: "*I sometimes allocate teaching loads to subject teachers. I also chair departmental meetings*".

From the above quotation the respondent revealed that she allocated teaching loads to peer teachers. She also acknowledged chairing departmental meetings. When I asked about how the

HOD and teachers interacted during work-load allocation and departmental meetings *(Phase 1: 2: Q,4)*, *Amina's* response was:

> *For teaching load allocation, I ask teachers to deliberate on the issue in their subject areas. My task is to preside over the subject allocation sessions which are led by subject specialist teachers and my task is just to endorse the agreed loads. During department meetings, if for example we are discussing the issue of syllabus interpretation, I give the chairing opportunity to the teachers whose area is being discussed because they know their area better. I always try to ensure freedom of interaction and expression.*

The responses reflect that the HOD endorsed the work-load allocation done in respective subject areas. She also indicated that departmental meetings were an interactive platform for department members. The inclusion of all members in departmental instructional activities indicated a democratic spirit in the departments. This is in agreement with the view of Floden *et al.* (1987), that teachers are the central agents of change who should be directly involved with teaching and learning. Amina revealed quite interesting issues. Firstly, on the kind of topics they deliberated in their meetings and how they went about the meetings. Syllabus interpretation is one of the critical competencies an effective teacher should possess. Failure to interpret the syllabus could lead to teaching students the wrong concepts. This supports the view that most curricula fail in the hands of teachers who are on the chalk face (Makaye, 2014). Secondly, HOD Amina of School A brought in the view that leadership does not reside in one person. In most cases specialist teachers whose area will be discussed during meetings are given the opportunity to lead others. This view attests to the distributed leadership principle by Spillane *et al.,* (2006) that the leader's position is determined by the task and/or situation at hand. The distributed leadership perspective can be exploited effectively by leaders who may not necessarily be experts to their followers or department.

In the context of contemporary educational improvements, lesson observation becomes an important strategy in improving teachers' performance as well as student performance (Brown *et al.,* 2010). According to Ghavifekr and Ibrahim (2014), instructional leaders have to spend more time in the observation process in order to help teachers improve their performance. Yet contrary to these scholarly views, VTE teachers were not keen to be seen teaching. The teachers' behaviour can be linked to McGregor's Theory X which points out that workers have an inherent dislike of

work such that if they are given the opportunity, they would try to avoid it (Stoner 2003) The observation of literature that encourages enactment of instructional supervision may send a positive message to VTE teachers and HODs that the outcomes of frequent supervision can be seen in the performance of teachers and students alike. With the inspiration from TTA (1998) I am interested in seeing VTE-HODs effectively use the lesson supervision strategy not as an end in itself but as a means to fulfilling their primary purpose of achieving high quality teaching and learning of VTE knowledge and skills.

4.8.3 RESOURCE PROCUREMENT AND MANAGEMENT

(Phase 1: 2: Q 2) sought to find out how easy it was to get the materials needed for teaching and learning VTE. Amina reiterated that:

> *Procurement of teaching materials is challenging. We make our requisitions to administration but more often than not, fail to get the materials due to lack of funds. Sometimes we get the supplies very late. Electricity is a challenge. I asked if students were not levied on practical subjects and the response was, "They are levied but because most of them are dependents of subsistence farmers, they have problems getting the money."*

Responding to *(Phase 1: 3: Q 3)* which sought to establish the HODs' feelings about the state of equipment in the school, Amina related that:

> *I am not happy with the state of affairs. We have scanty and out-dated resources in all sections of the department. With the advent of the new technology, we need machinery and equipment which is compatible with the new inventions. I also suggest that when machinery is out of order, skilled technicians should be hired for repairs.*

(Phase 1:3: Q5) asked about the availability of books and Amina's response was "*Yes; but they are very few*". Expressing his pleasure about procurement of resources in school E, Earning said:

> *As long as we make our orders in advance, we see no problem. We submit our orders to the deputy principal for onward submission to the principal. Purchasing of machinery, equipments and consumables is done by subject specialists while small or general issues like stationery are purchased by the deputy principal. There is adequate infrastructure for specialist rooms as well as adequate space for Building Studies practical lessons.*

In School B, Believe responded happily, with a smile. She said:

> *It is easy to get the resources we require for effective teaching of practical subjects. In fact it is just a matter of submitting our requisitions to the headmaster and everything will be in order When we need stationery items such as manila, mighty markers etc., we simply go to the receptionist where the stocks are kept. We also have specialist rooms, however, more needs to be done in this area.*

Responding to *(Phase 1: 3: Q 3)*, Believe smiled and then said:

> *I am quite happy because the state of resources is quite satisfactory. We feel we are well supported by the school administration. Right now we are looking forward to receive computers in our subject units for data storage as well as research purposes. However, I think there is need to purchase more textbooks for student use.*

Cayla of School C noted that:

> *We have adequate laboratories but we have challenges with procurement of consumables. We go to the deputy headmaster for supplies and she helps us where she can afford it. We are often worried about the delays in supply of material that we need for course work processing. One of our biggest challenges is that purchasing of our teaching materials is done by either the secretary or deputy head both of whom have very little knowledge of the requirements. Furthermore we are denied custody of learning resources that may be in stock The principal wants them to be kept by the secretary and the HOD will sign for them and then distribute to the subject section. We do not know why our department is treated so unfairly.*

On the issue of the state of equipment in the department, Cayla indicated:

> *I am not happy because the equipment we have is insufficient and outdated. We tirelessly make requisitions but nothing is done. At times we are told that our department is too expensive. The other disturbing issue is that all other subjects received United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) textbook donations but practical subjects were not given. We do not know whether this was by default or by design. The*

other worrying issue is that equipment for Agriculture e.g. hoes and rakes are borrowed for use on school grounds or teachers' houses and some of it is never returned.

As regards textbooks, Cayla said:

In Fashion and Fabrics we have relevant books whose selection is guided by examination demands, however there are very few. The state of books in other practical subjects units is known by the respective subject teachers.

On the other hand Dee expressed that:

We have specialist rooms yes, but their standard needs to be improved. I mean, the rooms are too small for the class sizes. Again, in a school that is electrified, the rooms are not electrified. We have always presented our electricity bids but no response has been made yet. The accrual of consumables I can say is fair.

Expressing his feelings about the state of resources in the department, Dee showed unhappiness saying:

I am not happy because the equipment we have is insufficient and out dated. Imagine, we still use "Dover – hood and coal stoves." The only impressing thing is that we have more than enough textbooks in the department. In fact, we are enjoying a student- textbook ratio of 1:1.

Answering a question on how the HOD felt about the state of resources in the department *(Phase 1:3: Q 3),* Earning registered some displeasure as he reported:

There is need for resource improvement. For example we note with concern that all the other subjects received textbooks from the UNICEF project but practical subjects were completely left out. As a result we are the only department with a high student-text book ratio.

Responding to (*Phase: 1:3 Q 5)* which asked about quality of textbooks in the department, responses were consistent with the one above. *"We have relevant textbooks but students use them from the library because they are not enough to be used by large classes"*.

The findings revealed in the above excerpts are that, in all RCS, resource procurement was a challenge and the resource position was poor. From the above responses, it appeared that CRS are in a better state than RCS with regard to resources. This would be because the schools were established long ago and they started offering VTE subjects when the economy was relatively strong hence they were able to furnish VTE Departments effectively.

Provision of resources is one of the key strategies which instructional leaders can use to change the teachers' instructional practices (Lauglo, 2010). The above quotes also indicate that schools endeavour to procure the necessary resources for teaching and learning of the practical subjects in their departments. However in School C, HOD Cayla expressed her displeasure at the procurement process. She felt that the process should be done by subject specialists, not by the secretary or deputy head. Whether the secretary or deputy head would procure the wrong or right resources could not be established. This casts a shadow of suspicion on the part of the teachers as to the motives behind the procurement of resources. In other schools, School B, for example, resource procurement process was not a problem.

According to Timperley (2006), one of the HOD's tasks is procuring and distributing resources. Some of the critical resources for VTE are specialist facilities, for example, specialists' rooms or machinery. Lack of work space, for example, can put pressure on teachers when they fail to provide students with adequate working space (Turner, 2003). This concurs with findings from FGDs in School D where participants indicated that lack of appropriate and /or adequate teaching and learning resources sometimes rendered lesson observations valueless. Zvobgo (1999) also attests that a lack of resources for practical lessons affects teachers' commitment badly and is likely to affect student performance negatively as well.

In view of the global technical and economic developments, Kennedy (2012) encourages the VTE departments in developing countries (Zimbabwean included) to keep pace with modern and emerging technological advancements. It is important for VTE-HODs to understand that instructional experiences offered in adequately- equipped VTE learning environments would

enable individual learners to: 1) acquire relevant vocational and technical skills; b) expose learners to career awareness by informing them of potential options in the world of work; c) enable learners to acquire a clear understanding of the increasing complexity of technology; and d) stimulate creativity (Phillips, 2009).

4.9 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings revealed minimal interactions and those that did take place were devoid of active participation by all teaching staff in the departments. Apart from the lessons observed by the HODs, there was a total absence of teacher-HOD lesson observation. Furthermore, there was no teacher-teacher lesson observation. While Spillane (2005) opts for fluid distribution of instructional leadership for the improvement of teaching and learning practices, I got the impression of the passive nature of interactions, which does not augur well for the nature of the subjects (vocational/practical). Although some level of interaction was evident through lesson observation and book inspection, it was not of the degree that was likely to bring serious instructional experiences and improvement in the vocational subjects. Furthermore the interactions were structurally linear: either the HODs supervised the teachers teaching or they inspected instructional records (schemes of work, individual record books, projects, test records, etc.) While the nature of interactions tends to be consistent in the different schools studied they are contrary to effective instructional leadership practices which emphasise networked relationships among the instructional leaders for improved student achievement (Meador, 2014). This study thus points to the fact that successful teaching and learning of VTE subjects is not premised on the teachers' intellectual abilities, but on the teachers' ability to share ideas in a reciprocal manner (Scribner et al., 2007).

The findings also revealed that teachers viewed HODs as authority figureheads whose purpose is to find fault with teachers. This is the result of a linear pattern of HOD supervising teachers, not vice-versa. Mupinga *et al.* (2005) and Williams (2011) argue that such practices typify the colonial regime period whereby instructional practices such as lesson observations or book inspections fell under authority hierarchies. Such practices breed fear, mistrust and a sense of teacher victimisation among others. These practices have negative effects on teaching and learning. This study is interested in highlighting VTE teaching staff (HODs and teachers) on the significance of distributed leadership perspectives of upholding that effective instructional leadership practices

are anchored in fluid leadership based on respect, knowledge or expertise, rather than authority (Harris and Spillane, 2008). The study proclaims to all concerned with the instruction of VTE that the days of regarding HODs as lone or heroic instructional leaders for the entire department are over (Hallinger and Heck, 2010; Spillane et al., 2001; Elmore, 2000). This objective should however not be mistaken for inciting disharmony between the HODs and their peer teachers as has been common practice for Kilimanjaro of School C. It should be clear that there is no evil in HODs observing teachers teach or assessing their records, although the most ideal practice would be for teachers to get the opportunity to learn through observing the HODs teach, as well as seeing the quality of work in their records.

It was also established that interactions become more meaningful if departments are structured according to specific areas of specialisation. Teachers echoed the sentiments that interactions could be made more meaningful if members from the same subject background cross-pollinate ideas. For example, Kilimanjaro argued that being assessed by the HOD from a different subject was useless because of the differences in subject content. Similarly, DEO 1 disagreed with her subject area of specialisation falling under the HOD of another subject. In a country like Zimbabwe, where the Instructional Leadership post of HOD attracts no financial remuneration, I see no reason why the subject areas should be merged. I have a strong feeling that structuring vocational subjects according to specific subject areas may result in interactions about instruction that support teacher and student achievement. The commonality of the members' subject background and jargon could possibly build a supportive and positive departmental culture that is conducive to effective teaching and learning. The issue of subject terminology may be taken for granted but it is very critical if knowledge gaps among the teaching staff are to be minimised. As identified by Timperley (2006), interactions that are influenced by some common practice can facilitate improvement in teaching and learning. However, this observation should not condemn distributed leadership practices: it comes from a sense that the distribution of leadership within the VTE departments based on the same subject background would enhance the quality of knowledge and skills acquisition by the learners.

4.10 SUMMARY

By definition, instructional supervision is a set of activities which are enacted to improve teaching and learning for the learner. The Ministry of Education, and Culture, Zimbabwe's (1993) view is that effective supervision of personnel and programmes is critical for providing quality education especially in the VTE subject areas. One of the major findings of the study was that lesson observations were carried out as a 'dead end'. This is contrary to TTA (1998) which claims that lesson observation should be treated as a means to achieve the primary goal of instructional leadership viz. improvement of teaching and learning. The VTE teachers expressed mixed feelings about supervised lesson delivery and this suggested their ignorance about effective instructional leadership practices. For example, some teachers wanted only the beginning teachers to be observed. The other teachers preferred no lesson observations at all. There were also some teachers who expected to be observed only once. The researcher was not surprised by the displayed levels of ignorance which she attributes to the marginalisation and stigmatisation that the system of education (VTE) has suffered from the colonial period to date. Literature on the history of VTE, in Chapter two reveals the low-status image that has always been attached to VTE. The literature on the history shows that VTE was devalued for various. I was amazed to note that decades after the establishment of instructional leadership practices for the improvement of learner achievements, lesson observation is still treated as a preserve of designated school leadership. Positive instructional leadership developments need to assume Rorrer et al.'s (2008) encouragement of practising lesson observations in collegial atmospheres in order for the supervisors and supervisees to work cooperatively.

The use of tools such as written tests, speed tests, diaries and lesson observation protocols was common among the HODs. In some schools, for example School D, the HOD indicated use of policy document circulars from subject associations and ZIMSEC examinations result schedules. They also encouraged tools that explore, among other issues, the 'how' aspect of skills acquisition. An analysis of the tools identified by the HODs reflects the dominance of tests, lesson observation protocols and the national syllabus. There was silence on the matter of the tools that promote continuous assessment of student performance. This presents a situation where teaching and learning of practical subjects are focused towards passing examinations when the major goal of VTE should be to equip learners with the knowledge and skills required in the job-market or to

equip learners with self-help skills (Boateng, 2012). VTE is relegated to the periphery of curriculum implementation. Since instructional leadership is about teachers engaging in the best possible practices to improve student performance (Marks and Printy, 2003), then tools that guide or monitor teaching of practical subjects should foster the intended teaching and learning experiences. It is the intention of this study to emphasise the importance of providing appropriate environments and cultures which promote effective instructional practices among both teachers and learners.

According to Timperley (2006), one of the HOD's tasks is procuring and distributing resources. Some of the critical resources for VTE are specialist facilities, for example, specialists' rooms or machinery. Lack of workspace, for example, can put pressure on teachers when students do not have adequate working space (Turner, 2003). This concurs with findings from FGDs in School D where participants indicated that lack of appropriate and adequate teaching and learning resources sometimes rendered lesson observations valueless. Zvobgo (1999) also attests that a lack of resources for practical lessons denigrates teachers' commitment and is likely to affect student performance negatively.

In view of the effects of globalisation, there is need for VTE departments to keep pace with modern and emerging technological advancement (Kennedy, 2012). Instructional experiences offered in adequately- equipped VTE learning environments would enable individual learners to: a) acquire relevant vocational and technical skills; b) become aware of career options in the world of work; c) acquire a clear understanding of the increasing complexity of technology; and d) become more creative (Phillips, 2009). It is important to note that effective teaching and learning of VTE subjects can be best demonstrated by quality of technical skills displayed by the students during both formal educational lives as well as after leaving school. The next chapter summarises the major findings of the study, provides conclusions and make some recommendations that may help to ensure improve student performance.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter four presented, analysed and discussed qualitative data collected for the study that was aimed at examining how HODs for VTE enacted leadership roles in their respective departments. In chapter five, I summarise the key findings and then draw up the conclusions and recommendations on how to improve instructional leadership practices in VTE teaching and learning in the secondary schools. The analysis of the major findings also helps to reveal the gaps in research and enables the development of suggestions for future studies. Firstly, however the next sections, section 5.2, will summarise the aim of the study and the study itself.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The current study sought to establish what policies and regulations guide the instructional leadership practices of VTE HODs. Furthermore, it sought to explore the nature of the roles and expectations of these HODs in executing their instructional leadership mandate and was guided by the following research questions and sub-research questions.

5.2.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study examines the leadership practices of HODs for vocational subjects in five secondary schools in the Gutu district of Zimbabwe. The main question of the study is how do HODs enact instructional leadership practices in selected vocational education departments?

The following sub-questions will help answer the main research question:

- What are the roles of the HODs in instructional leadership for vocational and technical subjects?
- What are the expectations of HODs for vocational and technical teachers and students?
- How do HODs in vocational and technical education execute their mandate of instructional leadership within the selected secondary schools?
- What suggestions can be made to improve the role of HODs for vocational subjects?
- How can HODs' work for vocational subjects be understood?

5.2.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY CHAPTERS

Chapter one of the study presented the background, which gave the overview of the study. The chapter also provided some examples of VTE subjects as offered in the Zimbabwean contexts to distinguish the VTE subjects from those offered in other countries. For example, a difference is noted when agriculture is used as a remedial subject by the new vocationalisation concept (Marjanee and Zeeba-Kalam, 2008) whilst in the Zimbabwean context, it takes the position of an entirely independent subject.

This chapter also provided the historical background of VTE as a way of examining the origins of the problems persistently surrounding the status of VTE with regard to its instruction in Zimbabwe. The statement of the problem, research questions and the objectives are also presented. The study sought to explore how vocational and technical HODs enacted leadership practices in order to improve instruction in VTE. In addition, the research approach methodology, conceptual framework and limitations of the study are highlighted in this chapter. Furthermore, important terms were defined to provide their contextual application. A brief summary of the chapters was given to keep the study focused.

Chapter two reviewed literature related to the study. The research questions from chapter one guided the literature review process. Literature reviewed is obtained from books, research journals and the internet. Scarcity of literature on instructional leadership for VTE leads to the review of literature focusing on instructional leadership for subjects such as mathematics, science or literacy. Literature on instructional leadership of principals and other education authorities is also reviewed to inform our understanding of the instructional practices of the HODs. Literature reviewed thus focused on shedding light on VTE concepts, instructional leadership, teacher leadership, distributed leadership, instructional practices and behaviours and staff development, all of which are critical to the current study. It also reviewed literature on instructional guidance policies. Literature reviewed showed that although much research has been done on vocationalisation of the secondary schools, very little has been said regarding HOD leadership practices in VTE. There is also evidence in the literature on HODs for other subjects in the curriculum but there is a lack of evidence for VTE (Brown *et al.,* 2010; York-Barr and Duke, 2004). In this chapter, the theoretical

frameworks that guide the study are also provided. The distributed leadership theory (Spillane, 2001) and the contingency theory (Owens, 1981) were found to be important for organising instructional leadership by HODs and were thus used as lenses through which the instructional practices for the HODs would be perceived.

Chapter three provided an account of the research methodology and design that were used to obtain detailed descriptions of what stakeholders expected from HODs and how the HODs enacted their instructional leadership practices in the VTE departments. The decision to use the qualitative approach through a multiple case study design was discussed and justified. The sample size and sampling procedures were also justified. In addition to this, the use of tools that sought qualitative data was explained and justified. The chapter also presented Tesch's open data coding model (Creswell, 2012) as the data analysis procedure used in the study wherein the data were repeatedly analysed and thematically presented. The ethical considerations, as discussed by scholars such as Cohen *et al.* (2011), Gray (2009), Maree (2008), helped with observing the participants' rights to voluntary participation. Trustworthiness of the findings was ensured by using multiple data collection tools.

Chapter four of the study presented, interpreted, analysed and discussed data from the study. Data collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, participant and non-participant observations, focus group discussions and document analysis were all at the heart of this chapter. The findings of the study were presented according to three themes that emerged from the analysis of the data on instructional practices and behaviours of VTE HODs. The first involved the selection criteria for HODs, while the second involved stakeholder perceptions and expectations of HOD functions and the third enacted instructional leadership practices and behaviours by the HODs for VTE. Sub-themes, categories and sub-categories (in some cases) were generated from the themes to obtain the detailed descriptions of how HODs enacted leadership in an effort to improve instruction and student achievement in VTE. Literature from the study and particularly from chapter two was used to confirm or cast doubt on some of the findings.

Chapter five is the final chapter of this study. The chapter provides the overview of the whole study. It also presents the summary of the major research findings from which the conclusions are drawn, recommendations suggested and highlights the gaps that indicate unresolved questions, which would serve as possible focus areas for future studies.

5.3 SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS

The study presented case studies of five VTE HODs from five secondary schools in the Gutu district of Zimbabwe, which offered two or more VTE subjects. The case study method was used because it enabled the studying of the phenomena in its natural setting. Qualitative data were sought through interviews, observations, focus group discussions and document analysis. The study was conducted in phases where a full week was spent at a school in each phase. Six in-depth interview sessions were conducted with each HOD as a major participant. Furthermore, data were obtained through observation of departmental meetings to establish the nature of the interactions for instruction between the HOD and the teacher and teacher and teacher. The specific documents that were analysed included the policy circulars, meeting agendas, lesson observations, book inspection protocols and assessment programmes

The findings from the study are presented according to the themes that emerged from the analysed data while answering the three major research questions and their sub-questions, viz. selection criteria for vocational and technical education HODs, stakeholder expectations of HODs' role enactment and the HODs' enacted instructional leadership roles.

5.3.1 THEME ONE: SELECTION CRITERIA FOR VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION HODS

Data on selection criteria were provided by HODs, principals, DEOs and PEOs through interviews. It emerged strongly that HODs are primarily appointed by principals or school heads. The study found that the school principals appointed five HODs and their appointments were based on seniority, experience, professional qualifications and/or maturity. In church-run schools, selection was further influenced by the religious affiliations of the appointee. I also found that the qualifications that influenced selection were not homogenous. In some cases, university degrees were considered for appointment, while in others college teaching diplomas mattered most. In School C, for example, Cayla held a diploma in Education (Dip. Ed.), but was appointed to lead some peers who had degrees. Believe (in School B), indicated having equal experience and professional qualifications with some members of the department. She believed that being a church member of the responsible authority influenced her appointment.

Amina (in School C) has a degree but she saw her appointment as being based on seniority. Dee (in School D) failed to justify his appointment given that he had less than two years' experience at the school. He attributed the appointment to an assumption that, "…Maybe he noted outstanding performance in me". This response does not provide a convincing justification for the principal's decision, rather it problematises the issue further and draws attention to the need for further investigation to establish the criteria used. Earning's appointment (in School D) was based on teacher qualifications. Earning held a Dip. Ed. and he said at the time of his appointment that he was the only qualified teacher in the department.

The study discovered that the appointment of HODs was rather subjective. The five HODs were not aware of how exactly their appointments were negotiated and recommended. The almost arbitrary practice on the appointment of HODs was also evidenced in the principals' responses. Mr Masvingo considered teacher qualifications and prioritised university degrees in his appointment. Mr Mwenezi and Gutu, on the other hand, considered teacher maturity. This was different from Mr Chiredzi who appointed the HOD from the subject area, which had the largest enrolment. Based on the evidence gathered, it can be concluded that the appointment of HODs depended on the school principals and was relatively arbitrary in that there were no standard procedures and requirements.

PEO 1 and 2 held the view that the appointments for the posts of HOD needed to be guided by policy as is with all other promotional posts in the civil service sector. The informal criteria used by the principals were found to be subject to bias. The problem with this kind of practice is that some HODs may lack the credibility required to influence effective teaching and learning in their departments. The nature of HOD appointments established were consistent with the traditional considerations where subject leaders were appointed not to promote teaching and learning but to serve as an extension of administrative structures to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing system (York-Barr and Duke, 2004). The latter study found that HODs appointed in this manner tended to be more loyal to the school principal than to paying the necessary homage to instructional leadership requirements. The appointment criteria used by the principals suggest a static view of management in which the super-ordinate leader leads unquestioning followers (Silva, *et al.* 2000). This practice does not fit the requirements of improving teaching and learning in the 21st century with its increasingly complex world of technology. The work of leadership

requires diverse expertise and forms of leadership that are flexible enough to meet the changing instructional challenges and new TPACK demands collaboratively. This necessitates the development of appropriate policies for appointing HODs that will enable the appointment of leaders who possess the necessary expertise on instructional leadership practices that can bring about improved student performance in the VTE area (Harris and Spillane, 2008).

It becomes apparent that the Zimbabwean practices of nominating subject leadership seem to be lagging behind developments in other countries. For example, in countries like the United States of America, South Africa, Sweden and many other European countries, appointment of subject leaders is guided by pluralistic policies that seem to emphasise subject expertise. It is perhaps opportune for Zimbabwe to adopt the practice of making subject leadership an open activity, with the freedom for all participants to apply and be considered and/or appointed. It is also disheartening that while other subject areas, for example mathematics and science have reached high levels of instructional leadership practice, the VTE area seems to be operating from an outdated framework where the school leaders still assume the heroic status, an approach which has been criticised by Hallinger and Heck (2010) as naïve. Clearly, the policy circular that was distributed to schools by the Ministry of Education and Culture, Zimbabwe (1993) seemed to condone the heroic leadership approach by assigning authoritative powers of appointment to the principals. There is thus a need to review the policies guiding the recruitment and appointment of HODs in the country to take account of recent developments in the field of leadership that rejects heroic and individual leadership cultures.

When arbitrary appointments result in the appointment of junior members as in the case of Cayla in School C, sour relationships that are detrimental to instructional improvement may result. The consequences may be a lack of purposeful interaction for learning, insubordination and even disharmony. This could be the reason why focus group discussions in the school's VTE department yielded a number of controversial responses as reflected in responses such as the following, "The HODs in the past were more senior than any other… I am almost due for pension, what do I learn from a junior member… Knowledge is by age…". Such responses provide some evidence of the teacher discontent in the manner in which the HODs are appointed. Southworth (2010) posits that for subject leadership to be received positively by followers, the phenomenon should be socially constructed so that a harmonious relationship prevails among the department's members.

To overcome such challenges, it may be instructive for principals to employ a more pluralistic policy that takes account of the federal nature of VTE so that an inherently variegated nature of leadership is achieved. It is always essential to bear in mind that the purpose of having HODs in the post is to spearhead effective instruction and student achievement. This purpose tends to be defeated when there is disharmony in the department. Given that unity breeds collaboration and togetherness, where there are differences, the opposite may come about.

DEO 1 expected the principals to decide on the leaders for VTE. He viewed the post as school-based and thus within the purview of the school heads. This view resonates with the current international trends in educational reform of devolution of decision- making powers from central appointment at either district or provincial levels to the school levels (Botha, 2007), as a way of promoting instructional autonomy. However, it is important that this approach not be construed as licensing principals to make arbitrary appointments of office bearers. Southworth (2010) argues for policies that point out the selection of leadership for the school's VTE school-based departmental management.

5.3.2 THEME TWO: STAKEHOLDERS' OPINIONS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR HOD ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

To understand the effectiveness of the instructional leadership practices enacted by the HODs, stakeholder perspectives and opinions were considered and analysed. Principals and education officials at district and provincial levels were involved in addition to governing bodies and subject teachers as part of the instructional leadership or departmental management teams. The findings were generated from the following sub-themes: HODs' clarity on instructional leadership standards, HOD visibility, teachers' opinions about the frequency of lesson observations, demonstration lessons and departmental meetings, among others.

5.3.2.1 HODs' CLARITY ON STANDARDS OF INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Findings from focus group discussions (FGDs) were mainly characterised by varying opinions from each department. In School A, teachers expected the HOD to present her instructional expectations explicitly to them.

In School B, teachers were of the opinion that the HOD clearly explained the quality of classroom management that facilitated effective teaching and learning in VTE teaching and learning.

Furthermore, this HOD was apparently more ready to clarify any unclear instructional requirements to her peers. One of the participants summarised this view as follows, "The HOD is approachable, we are free to ask where we are not clear." This view provides evidence of a collegial atmosphere the HOD seems to have created.

There are mixed opinions in School C with one participant expressing the view that the HOD was clear on the quality and quantity of work and encouraged members to observe the timetable so that students did not miss lessons.

Another participant, however, expressed the desire to be more involved in the formulation of departmental goals and the instructional strategies to achieve them. There was another opinion that teachers needed to be given the official circulars to read themselves. This constituted more of an issue of transparency and trust.

Kilimanjaro expected HODs to set measurable and achievable standards. His response illuminates the lack of clarity on the part of the HOD. To drive his point further, he argued as follows. "We do not want to be accused for doing wrong before clarity is given". This kind of sentiment may be very telling about the poor relations in the VTE department.

5.3.2.2 FREQUENCY OF LESSON OBSERVATIONS

According to the Director's policy number 6 of 2006, teachers should be observed at least once a term. The teachers' expectations of the frequency of lesson observations were however mixed. Some teachers took the view that lesson observations should be conducted with novice and less competent teachers only. They argued that experienced and expert teachers did not need to be observed. For example, Percy expected novice teachers to be seen frequently while experienced teachers could be seen once or not at all. It is important to note the suggestions by scholars that changes in the VTE landscape require that instructional leaders in the area focus attention on classroom activities as critical influences for improving students' performance or achievement (Graczewski *et al.,* 2009). Hence, Percy's suggestion to focus lesson observation more on novice than experienced teachers could be problematic when examined against the perspective of Graczewski *et al.* (2009). Literature also states that effective HODs use regular lesson observation as a means of achieving high quality teaching and learning (Hammond, 1999).

On the other hand, Shingai's expectation to be observed once per term resonates with the policy outline. Some teachers expressed the desire to be observed twice per term or more. For instance, Nhopi preferred to be observed teaching about "four times per term or as much as possible". Contrary to the other views, participants like Kilimanjaro and Acacia did not want to be observed at all. The latter group of teachers did not see lesson observation as an aspect of supervision that is crucial for influencing teaching and learning (Firestone and Martinez, 2007).

Besides some of the resistance to lesson observations, it also emerged that lesson observations are sometimes difficult to conduct in departments with merged subjects. This finding concurs with Turner's (2003) view that confederate departments have a weak centre resulting from the departmental members facing problems especially in unifying the content knowledge (CK) from different areas of specialisation. For example, one of the participants argued that, "the HOD could not assist us understand changes in the agriculture syllabus some few years ago. We got solace from seminars". Four of the departments included in this study comprised two or more practical subjects. The question that arises is how effective can the HOD's leadership be in subject areas of the department where s/he is not an expert? This is a possible area for further research, not only in VTE subjects but in other confederate departments as well.

5.3.2.3 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Further findings from lesson observations unravelled the issue of staff development. The evidence in this study suggests that the HODs identified the staff development needs from the weaknesses in instructional practice displayed by the teachers during lesson observations. One of the HOD roles is to identify opportunities for teachers to increase their technical knowledge (TK) on the assumption that deeper knowledge and understanding leads to changes in instruction, which in turn would promote higher student achievements. The use of self-designed lesson observation protocols revealed the teachers' ability or inability to use complex pedagogic strategies effectively, as is required by the complex nature of VTE subjects. Common instructional practices in VTE require the use of pro-active teaching and learning techniques such as demonstrations, fieldtrips, experiments, problem solving and research. These strategies require well-informed technocrats or teachers (Siyakwazi and Siyakwazi, 2014). Furthermore, content and technology changes require innovative teachers who are abreast with pedagogy so that quality VTE is ensured. Since no teacher knows everything, the role of HODs in identifying the teachers' instructional needs and arranging

professional development interventions becomes important. Further research is required concerning the strategies available to HODs for identifying and acting on such needs of teachers within their departments.

5.3.2.4 HOD VISIBILITY

In School A, teachers were of the opinion that the HOD needs to be present and strategically positioned. Comfort expected the HOD to be all over the school and described the suggested practice as "management by wandering". This is similar to what Blasé and Blasé (2000) call the "walk through".

In School B, mixed feelings were expressed regarding the HOD's visibility. Some teachers expressed opinions about the HOD's presence at work in a 'tit-for-tat manner': one of the participants remarked that since teachers are required to be at work, HODs should also be present. In this view, the teachers' expectations regarding the HODs' visibility is not instructionally motivated but rather subjective. On the other hand, the other members of the VTE department in School B were content that the HOD was always visible and they always received the required instructional support.

In School C, contradictory views were also expressed. Whilst all the participants expected high HOD visibility, which they also reported as being the case in their school, one participant (Kilimanjaro) described the HOD's visibility as worthless. This participant said, "I do not see the value of the HOD's presence". Similarly, in School D, the HOD was always visible but the significance of her presence was hampered by a lack of resources. An important point from these findings therefore is the question of "visibility for what purpose?" It is thus clear that the strategies and practices of HODs need to be linked more closely to their instructional leadership goals for them to be meaningful and to answer the question: "visibility for what?"

5.3.2.5 DEMONSTRATION LESSONS FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Findings from focus group discussions with teachers revealed that demonstration lessons rarely occurred. The HODs also confirmed this during their interviews when they pointed out that no demonstration lessons were conducted. Participants seemed to place minimal or no value on demonstration lessons. They gave several reasons for this state of affairs. For instance, one participant expressed the view that "engaging veteran teachers in demonstration is like

demonstrating how to eat *sadza*" (porridge that is a staple food in the country). Apart from this, teachers also lamented the fact that timetables for practical subjects were concurrent and classes could not be left unattended in order to attend a demonstration lesson. It was also pointed out that there were no hard and fast rules compelling all teachers to be in the same venue for a demonstration. Interestingly, even though no demonstrations were performed, a few teachers expected demonstrations to be conducted at subject unit levels.

Another important finding that seems to discourage subject teachers from diligently engaging in effective instructional improvement in VTE was the issue of what I have labelled as "unfulfilled promises". For example, teachers asserted that they expected rewards for outstanding performance. Providing incentives and rewards is regarded as one useful aspect of instructional leadership practice for school leaders to consider (Hallinger, 2012; Quinn, 2002). However, other scholars have criticised incentives and rewards for de-motivating workers especially when they are not sustainable for everyone. In developing countries where incomes are generally low, Makaye (2014) and Quinn (2002) argue that incentives may have a motivational influence on teachers to work even harder and commit themselves to provide effective teaching and learning and to improve student performance.

5.3.2.6 DEPARTMENTAL MEETINGS

The opinion that two meetings should be held per term was prevalent among members and across the VTE departments. The finding confirmed the TTA (Hammond, 1999) claim that effective HODs utilise departmental meetings as strategies for enhancing quality teaching and learning. The other participants' view was that meetings should be only held when the need arises. This option may be suggestive of the need for more regular informal meetings that are not necessarily planned but are more situational. The suggestion further captures the fluid nature of instructional leadership practice where any teacher can start an instructional leadership discussion, which can sometimes develop into an informal meeting for the members present (Sherer, 2007). Although informal meetings are also critical for providing guidance to teachers on effective teaching, the current study found that the formal departmental meetings were by far the most common forums for providing equal opportunities to all teachers within a department. Findings from the participant observations of departmental meetings revealed that all the departmental members attended these meetings, even though member interactions varied with each group. For example, one meeting was

dominated by the interactions between the HOD and two teachers only. During another meeting, the HOD engaged in a monologue because most of the agenda items were announcements and not up for discussion.

5.3.2.7 HODs' Technical, Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK)

Effective instructional practices in VTE are shaped by the teacher's pedagogical knowledge, technical knowledge and content knowledge. For this reason, the opinions of peer teachers, principals and district education officers were sought regarding their expectations of the HODs. Most teachers expect HODs to exhibit TPACK expertise particularly in their areas of specialisation. For example, participants mentioned expectations such as providing consultancy services, keeping abreast of technological changes and exhibiting superior knowledge in TPACK for VTE. Phillips (2009) concurs with the view that HODs must be capable of transferring knowledge, skills, techniques and proficiencies to teachers in order to influence teachers' performance and students' achievement. It is important to remember, as Spillane *et al.* (2003) advises, a single leader cannot have all the necessary expertise, thus the notion of distributing leadership is based on expertise and situations. Therefore, it is naïve to expect one subject teacher to be an expert in handling the federal expertise that vocational and technical education requires (Lee *et al.*, 2012).

It is important to note that a clear demonstration of the HODs' instructional expertise helps to enhance their credibility within departments. In other words, HODs need to display strong grounding in their subject areas to be able to influence effective teaching and learning in the complex subject areas. Teachers however, also need to understand that VTE comprises a set of practices and technologies that make them more complex than other subjects (Avidov-Anger and Eshet-Alkalai, 2011). The federal nature of VTE refers to the involvement of an array of pedagogies, technologies and the dynamism of content. The most appropriate practice would be for the HOD to be accommodative of other teachers' views in order to create opportunities for learning from peers. Sherer (2007) argues that HODs also need to assume the follower's position at times.

The teachers' expectations of HODs' TPACK corresponds with those of the PEOs as PEO 1 and PEO 2 expected HODs to operate above board in terms of interpreting the VTE curriculum framework and teaching and learning so that the examination results for their subject departments

would improve the overall school performance. In Zimbabwe, the practice of ranking schools based on their examination performance has become a strategy for stimulating improved teaching and learning (Mufanechiya *et al.,* 2013). As a result, PEOs viewed the departmental performance as a reflection of the HOD's leadership. The prescriptions of the policy document on the duties of the HOD are also consistent with PEO 1's perspectives. The policy clearly stipulates what the HOD is expected to do in terms of controlling instructional activities. The similarity of teachers and PEOs' expectations can be attributed to the universality of the policy circular that was used in all the departments. Guided by Harris and Spillane (2008), there is need to perceive HODs' leadership practices from distributed lenses where instructional leadership is situational and instructional practices are focused on interactions rather than the actions of the leaders alone. The distributed perspective on leadership acknowledges the work of all individuals who contribute to leadership practices whether or not they are formally assigned or defined as leaders. PK, TK and CK are critical to the current study and yet to achieve these key aspects in VTE teaching, a collaborative effort is not optional. In support of the latter view, sources in Jita and Mokhele (2014), assert that networking among teaching staff enables departmental members to work together on problems they experience in their teaching practice. The expectations for HODs to dominate leadership practices in their departments are also contrary to the contingency theory that discourages reliance on one "best leader". It was unfortunate that the VTE subject teachers also seemed to be trapped in the traditional view that places instructional leaders in a heroic position. The teachers appeared to distance themselves from the instructional leadership practices of the HODs. This indicates a lack of understanding of the concept of teamwork or what is referred to as distributed leadership.

Proponents of the contingency theory argue that shared leadership at departmental level can be achieved through different strategies such as seminars, workshops or subject conferences, which can be done even outside the school timetable.

5.3.3 THEME THREE: HODS' ENACTED INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

To elucidate the influence of HODs on the effective teaching of VTE, the major findings focus on the following three instructional leadership practices. Firstly, the supervision of instruction, which

included lesson observation, tools and artefacts used and the procurement and distribution of resources. The second instructional leadership practice deals with, the quality of observation tools that are used to supervise teaching and learning, including instructional documents. The third and final practice is departmental meetings as an avenue for interactions and the culture created by the HOD during departmental meetings.

5.3.3.1 LESSON OBSERVATION

Data from the lesson observations were analysed mainly to complement data from teachers' opinions about lesson observations. In all the five VTE departments, the HODs used the lesson observation and book inspection protocols as modes of supervising and interacting with their peers. However, the instructional practices varied from one HOD to another. One HOD for example, conducted lesson observations twice per term for every teacher and inspected instructional documents four times per term. The reason given for inspecting documents several times was "to keep teachers on their toes". Although instructional leaders (HODs) should set high expectations for performance, it is essential that they do so in a manner that helps teachers to perceive instructional supervision as a welcome process that promotes their professional growth and that of the HOD (Ghavifekr and Ibrahim, 2014).

Another HOD observed teachers and inspected their books once per term. Her practices were easily identifiable because she organised and scheduled the supervision of the lessons and documents. She designed a schedule and checklist to guide the supervision activities as a way of ensuring adequate coverage of the supervision exercise.

Yet another HOD inspected students' exercise books as a prelude to lesson observation. Investigations found that the HOD did this in order to separate lesson observation and book inspections. It was argued that separating the practices allowed the HOD adequate time to reflect on the teachers' instructional practices. Elliotte and Clifford (2014) point out that lesson observation provides the evidence for teacher and learner performance and thereby enables appropriate feedback.

Further analyses suggest that lesson observation was a preserve of the HODs since teachers did not have the opportunity to observe the HODs or peer teachers. The nature of supervision thus appears to be predominantly top-down. This practice is not consistent with the key proposals from

the educational reform movement where leadership is seen as a departure from the traditional practice of hierarchical leadership, to a reconceptualised model of leadership that spreads it across a variety of roles and situations (Spillane *et al.,* 2004). Arguing against bureaucratic leadership, Smylie and Denny (2002) and Alger (2005) posit that to achieve the intended educational reforms, distributed leadership must be adopted as a move from the individual and role-based conceptions. Hence, for effective VTE teaching and learning, every teacher should have the opportunity to voluntarily lead instructional activities and learn from others.

5.3.3.2 TOOLS AND ARTEFACTS

The study found that the tools that were used in all schools were lesson observation and book inspection protocols, written tests, speed tests, lesson observation schedules and diaries. The last two tools were only applicable to School B. The rest applied relatively to all schools. However, there was no homogeneity of focus on observation protocols. For example, two departments used protocols that were tailor made to suit their supervision needs while the other three adopted the protocol provided by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MoESC). The document I was provided with was a photocopy of the protocol information distributed to schools by the MoESC for use in the schools' departments. The tool from the MoESC, however, was not focused on the key issues around the teaching and learning of VTE. The discussion of the protocols is dealt with later in this chapter.

5.3.3.3 RESOURCE PROCUREMENT

Despite the need for the distribution of leadership in VTE instructional practices, procurement of resources was found to be one of the HODs' roles. The findings of this study revealed that VTE resources were rather thin on the ground. The findings run contrary to the focus of the New Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which, as Kennedy (2012) points out, includes the need to keep up with modern and emerging technological advancements. Competence in technical skills is the core focus of VTE (Phillips, 2009). It is most likely that the shortage of relevant and adequate resources within the system would lead to an emphasis of theoretical knowledge at the expense of technical or practical learning. Whilst materials such as charts and video clips may be useful in teaching topics on some technical gadgets, this may not be enough for skills-oriented topics which require students to interact with the actual equipment to gain appropriate experience.

5.3.3.4 INSTRUCTIONAL OBSERVATION PROTOCOLS

Observation protocols developed by two of the departments appeared to have been tailor made to suit the needs of VTE. The protocols indicated specific areas that the department felt were critical for supervising effective teaching and learning of vocational and technical subjects. This confirms the need for a pragmatic view in schools where local needs drive innovations (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2013). The lesson observation protocols for the two schools sought to explore things such as methods used, student involvement, and the use of media (see fig 4.2). Based on the practical nature of VTE, the protocol sought to elicit the use of pedagogical strategies that are more likely to promote the development of actual skills by the students. Spillane *et al.* (2004) writes that instructional leadership artefacts such as supervision forms may help in providing guidance on how to improve teaching and learning. By seeking to establish the nature of student involvement, the tool may be described as attempting to harness the 'No Child Left Behind' concept in an alternative way to that outlined by Cannon *et. al.* (2003), where high student participation was expected in academic subjects.

Teachers from the schools that used tailor made protocols indicated that they benefited immensely from the use of these tools during feedback deliberations with their HODs.

5.3.3.5 POLICIES GUIDING HOD'S INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

The contingency theory holds that leadership varies from setting to setting. This demonstrates the need for policy frameworks, which address themselves to the individual subject departments. Data in this study showed that the same policy frameworks were used in all the departments. The practice of using the same policy guidelines is ideal in the sense that the protocols were adopted without alteration, hence emphasising the issue of universality within a national education system. The dynamic nature of VTE, however, somehow requires engagement of different instructional pedagogies and skills in a manner that enables students to achieve the set goals. The contingency theory is against the 'one best way' of doing things. Policies should be relative and situational. The policies observed in the VTE departments in the Gutu district were applied equally to academic and VTE departments. For example, the MoE (1993) Policy Document was universally used in all departments. This is an undesirable development with the likelihood of promoting one category of subjects while prejudicing the others. A detailed study on the relevance of policy, regulations and circulars to effective VTE curriculum practices is thus needed.

There is no doubt that HODs' instructional leadership for VTE departments in the Gutu district of Zimbabwe has suffered from the lack of differentiation. In the same vein as it is believed that learners are psychologically all different, so it needs to be understood that HODs are also individuals who can display a variety of instructional leadership behaviours. Policies need to be more pluralistic in order to provide meaningful guidance towards effective teaching and learning of VTE in Zimbabwean secondary schools (Moss and Liang, 1995).

The shortcoming of the policy that guides the practices in VTE departments needs to inspire an investigation into how HODs can construct relevant individual departmental policies from the national document(s). The next section discusses some of the challenges that may militate against the HODs' efforts to improve teaching and learning of vocational and technical education.

5.4 CHALLENGES IMPEDING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN VTE DEPARTMENTS

This study also uncovered an abundance of challenges that influence the effective teaching and learning of VTE. While HODs were aware of their resource procurement role, they confirmed that the failure to influence timely resource procurement was a major challenge for them. Resource shortage was one of the major challenges experienced in four of the cases studied. There was a high student-equipment ratio. Given that every student should acquire practical competence using the available resources, the state of equipment in schools was a severe drawback. For example in one school, there was a ratio of one sewing machine to fifteen students in fashion and fabrics while in another subject there was a ratio of one garden fork to twenty students. Teachers also acknowledged the same problem during the focus group discussions. Literature affirms that learning resources are the foundation of a hands-on approach to teaching and learning of practical subject (Mureithi, 2009). A shortage of teaching and learning resources may not only affect the quality of skills intended for the learners but may also lead to a lack of commitment to effective instructional activities (Nziramasanga, 1999). This is evidenced by the FGD findings wherein teachers overwhelmingly expected HODs to assist with student discipline.

Only one department seemed to enjoy an adequate provision of the relevant subject resources. The HOD attributed the resource status of her department to the mutual understanding that prevailed between the school principal and the department. The principal's high visibility was also reported

as contributory to this efficient resource provision. Even though high student-teacher ratios were noted in Earning's department it was, however, surprising to find that the school had scooped the national first prize in student performance in fashion and fabrics and also the district first prize in ICT in the ZIMSEC final examinations. The next section, section 5.5 will give a summary on the significance of collaboration between the principal and VTE instructional leadership for the improvement of teaching and learning.

5.5 THE PRINCIPAL'S NEED TO COLLABORATE AND INSPIRE TRUST

Apart from material resource challenges, in some findings human resource challenges were also experienced. Despite the emphasis literature places on collaborative instructional practices in a building (Harris and Spillane, 2008; Spillane, 2005), it was sad to note that some principals did not interact cooperatively with members of the VTE department. The HODs displayed an absence of informal interactions for instruction, a lack of high visibility and distrust, all of which are critical in explaining the nature of instructional support expected from principals for effective teaching and learning. Teachers were also not satisfied with the criteria the principal used to appoint HODs. In one case, the data depicted one of the principals (School C) denying VTE departmental members use of the teaching and learning materials they frequently required in their usual teaching and learning sessions. This resembled long-outdated leadership behaviour. The behaviour also revealed that the principal did not trust teachers. To bridge the gap between some principals and the VTE departments, I recommend a further study on school-based interactions for effective VTE teaching and learning as a strategy of improving in-school relations. The next section will suggest the possible roles HODs engage in order to improve the instructional experiences for the subject teachers and learners.

5.6 SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE ROLE OF HODS FOR VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS

The data in this study suggest that factors such as experience, qualifications, capacity and church affiliation in the case of church-run schools seemed to guide the selection and appointment of HODs for vocational and technical subjects. The findings concur with most instructional leadership scholars who regard teacher qualifications and experience as major determinants for the appointment of leadership. This study found that the appointment criteria are silent regarding the

issue of consideration of individual interest in taking up the post. On the backdrop of the criterion suggested by the participants, a model can be drawn up to suggest the major criteria that principals can use to make their selection of HODs in order to appoint effective subject leaders. The following model is suggested.
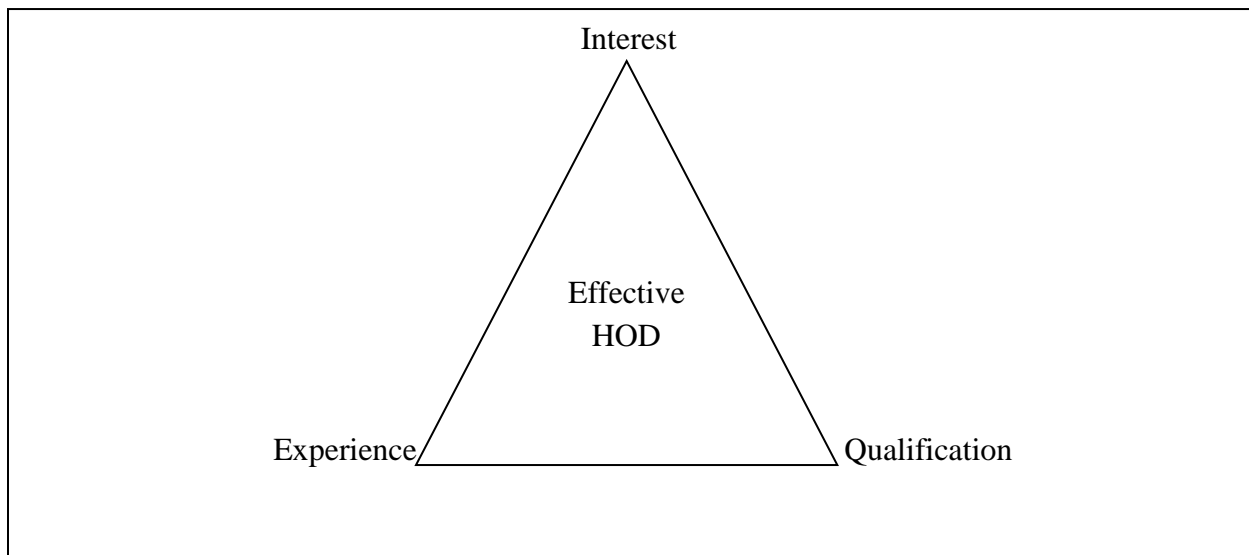
Fig. 5.1: The great triangle leadership appointment criteria

The model shown in fig. 5.1 above is one of the contributions this study has brought to the instructional leadership discourse. Furthermore, it is also in the interest of this study that the selection criteria or policy that may be used by individual schools should be socially constructed so that the practice is not shrouded by secrecy. This may result in VTE departments being led by HODs who are self-sufficient and are recognised by the followership.

Whilst lesson observation and book inspection are common instructional leadership practices employed by HODs to improve the teaching and learning of all subjects, it was surprising to find that VTE teachers held varied and contrasting perspectives regarding supervision. Some teachers suggested that lesson observation should target beginning teachers and less competent teachers, while others felt that it should be done once a term for every teacher. There were extreme cases like Kilimanjaro who did not want to be observed at all. This study wishes to draw the attention of HODs and teachers to Graczewski, *et al.*'s (2009) view of considering lesson observation as a critical activity for improving both teachers and students' performance. It also wishes to dismiss

the idea of bureaucracy in lesson observation and advocates for networked interactions so that even the HODs' followers observe their teaching.

The findings on teaching and learning resources unravelled an unpleasant situation where VTE departments are operating on thinly equipped departments. All the HODs from **RCS** reported being unhappy with the state of the learning resources in their schools. On the other hand, HODs from **CRS** reported on satisfactorily equipped departments but they complained about outdated resources. Surprisingly four of the sample schools were elated as they produced the best ZIMSEC results in these skills oriented subjects. Under normal circumstances, advanced technology is the foundation of effective inculcation of technical skills that prepare learners to fit in the global economies and the job market (Afeti, 2013). This study suggests the establishment of VTE resource centres entitled 'District VTE Prep Centres.' These centres should be equipped with appropriate equipment at all the time. Since schools alone cannot afford to erect standard centres, collective and collaborative participation from various participants is required. Fig. 5.2 below shows the structure of the participants who can contribute towards the establishment of the District VTE Prep Centre.
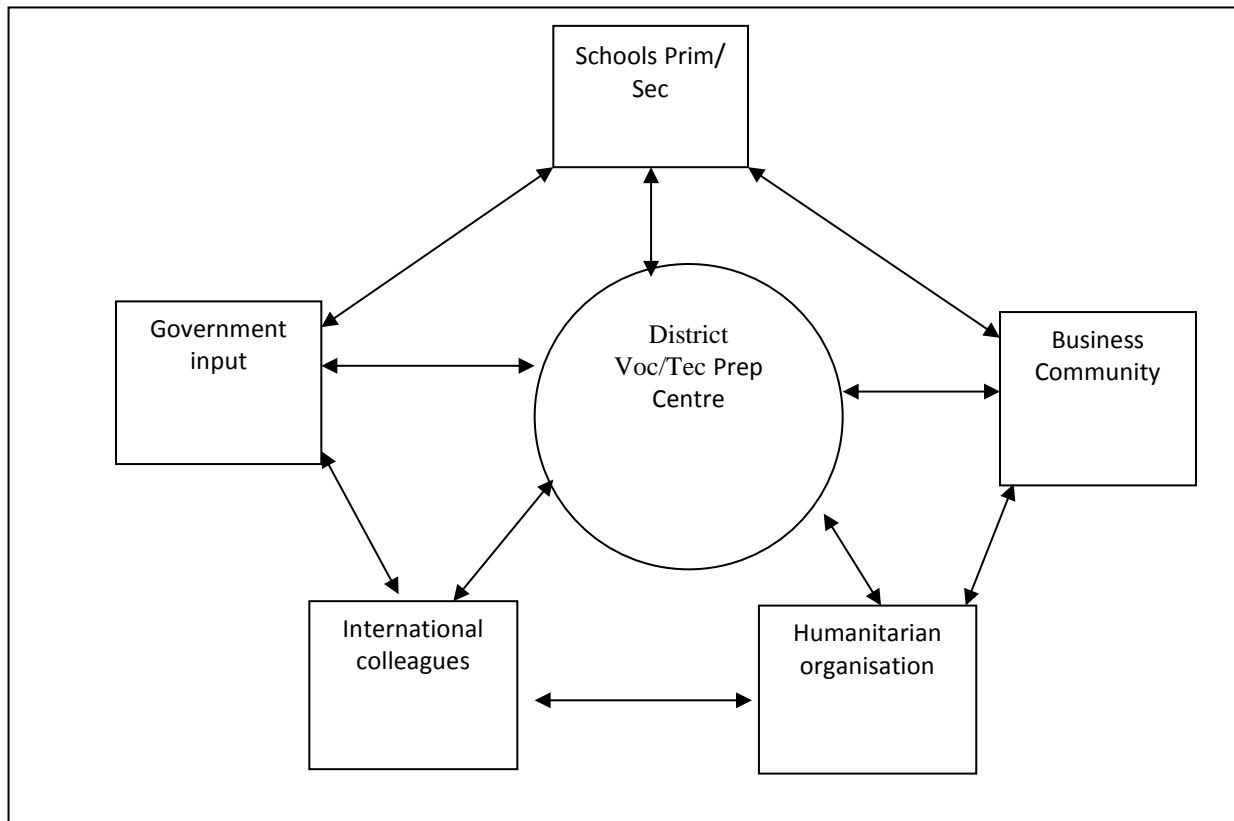
Fig. 5.2: District VTE Prep Centre

Fig. 5.2 above shows the institutions that may build centres that may provide learners the experiences that will help them to acquire skills and give them a strong background of the knowledge and skills accepted by the 21st century socio-economic world. In order to afford all the learners an opportunity to interact with the advanced subject technology, the HODs should team up to design a timetable showing when and how long a school or schools can visit the centre during school vacation periods. There will also be a need to have suitably qualified technicians for the different subject areas to maintain the equipment and assist the teachers. HODs should also organise staff development sessions for teachers whenever there is new machinery in a subject area.

5.7.1 SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS

- The HODs could not define the criteria that were used to appoint them. They could only describe their appointment by qualification, seniority and/or religious affiliation.

- The principals seemed to have arbitrarily appointed the HODs for vocational and technical education. They could not provide any official instrument on which they relied. This led to the appointment of instructional leaders with very little to offer towards improved teaching and learning.

- Education officials wanted the principals to observe policy when appointing HODs.

- HODs were guided by an old policy document that was formulated by the Ministry of Education and Culture (1993). The policy perpetuates heroic instructional leadership practices, which tend to instil traditional beliefs of instructional leadership in both leaders and followers.

- In schools where principals tended to look down upon VTE as inferior to other subjects, the instructional relationships between HODs and teachers were threatened by a lack of harmony.

- Stakeholders expected HODs to display outstanding instructional leadership behaviours but they seemed not to have the adequate knowledge of instructional practices that VTE demands.

- Instructional supervision was predominantly top-down. Failure to engage in teacher-teacher or teacher-HOD lesson observation is an indication of ignorance on the part of the HODs and teachers that effective instructional leadership thrives on networking rather than individualism. They lack the knowledge that teachers professionally grow when they learn from one another.

- Exemption of demonstrative lessons showed the poor grounding of the HODs and teachers in effective PK in VTE.

5.7 CONCLUSIONS

An old adage states that every long journey begins with one-step. The departmental leadership journey, thus, also begins with the appointment of suitable personnel who are capable of influencing improved student performance in the subject area. The selection of HODs in Gutu secondary schools was based on the principal's discretion. If the principals were guided by Botha's (2007) consideration of HODs as key role players in both departmental and school improvement, then they would not make their appointments an arbitrary process but would be more systematic. To make a good beginning of effective teaching and learning in the complex area of VTE,

principals' decisions regarding HODs for VTE need to be guided by clearly defined policies. Contrary to the above view, this study found that the available policy viewed the HOD post as an individual social construct where the HOD was arbitrarily appointed by the school principal.

There are several challenges surrounding the teaching and learning of VTE subjects. The learning resources problem was critical to the current study because it affected a number of instructional behaviours for example, lesson observations could not be conducted effectively without some essential technological items. Teamwork in some cases was also compromised by the disharmony that emanated from the scramble for resources. Some principals seem to cling continuously to the traditional ways of instructional leadership. By not maintaining high visibility and refraining from informal interactions, they are denying HODs and subject teachers opportunities for staff development, further distancing themselves from instructional leadership practices. I conclude that this kind of behaviour emanates from ignorance of instructional leadership literature. In addition, they are perpetuating the colonial legacy of treating VTE as low-status education, education for intellectually challenged students. The HOD and teacher relationships in the school where the principal distanced himself from the department's instructional activities were not in harmony. The findings reveal a partial understanding of instructional leadership practices for improved teaching and learning by the HODs and teachers. Teachers indicated that they seldom have informal discussions with the HOD or with one another. HOD-teacher interactions were usually formal and took place after lesson observations or during departmental meetings and book inspection.

5.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited to secondary schools in the Gutu district of Zimbabwe due to time and financial constraints. As a result, the findings of the study may not be generalised to all secondary schools in Zimbabwe. The findings therefore, apply mainly to the five cases studied and others that may share similar features.

Furthermore, it has to be acknowledged that this piece of research has just scratched the surface on instructional leadership issues by HODs for the VTE subjects. It is hoped that more studies of an empirical nature will be conducted at macro levels (district, provincial or national) with a larger sample of HODs and other stakeholders to produce more detailed and generalisable findings.

5.9 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Although it is good that the appointments of school-based management such as HODs, senior master or woman and others are decentralised, it is critical that the appointment of office bearers for the posts be guided by well-defined policies. While this practice is no longer an option in countries such as the United Kingdom, United States of America, Japan, Germany, and even in South Africa, Zimbabwe has not yet come to terms with the practice. There is need for research on how this can be done so that improvement in quality technical and vocational skills is realised.

- Failure by teachers to assess themselves on their perceived performance as HODs shows that the task is too difficult for them. There is need to expose newly appointed HODs to organised induction programmes, workshops and seminars so that they are empowered to enact the roles effectively. The programmes should not be once-off activities. Reading literature by scholars who write about instructional leadership at school, district and provincial levels may help to shed light on how to organise the induction programmes. Zimbabwe is also advised to explore induction programmes such as the TTA of the United Kingdom to fully prepare HODs for this demanding task.

- In this 21st century where emphasis on instructional leadership reforms has become a global topic, Zimbabwean instructional leadership practices are still inclined towards traditional leadership practices, which uphold and cherish heroic leadership. To keep up with educational changes there is a need to engage educational leadership at all levels in the Zimbabwean education system in joint instructional leadership awareness and development workshops that highlight new approaches to such leadership.

- It is suggested that cluster or district VTE resource centres be provided and resourced with relevant advanced teaching and learning technologies to enable extended exposure to equipment that can promote the development of skills by students. For effective use of the suggested resource centres, schools would need to be timetabled properly in order to bring students for lessons that schools cannot manage due to a lack of the appropriate technology.

- The study also suggests that cluster or district workshops be organised where HODs and subject teachers come together to share issues such as developing the school syllabus from the national curriculum framework and most importantly design supervision tools that can be used by all members as guides to learn about the instructional practices from their peers.

The challenges that were observed during the study reflected departments that were struggling to produce quality skills to benefit the learners. At a policy level, the study recommends that the government designs some cost-effective materials (as subsidy) and distributes these to schools to facilitate hands-on learning as demanded by the subjects. With this, I am suggesting a programme that is similar to the Zim-Science project of the 1980s, where the government provided science kits to schools to enhance effective teaching of general science in schools that could not afford laboratory equipment.

• Academic subjects received many textbooks from UNICEF donations but there was no such parallel development for VTE. The study therefore recommends that the government encourage a balanced instructional support programme for all subject areas. If the policy makers lobby for equal donations for holistic educational reforms, I am sure the donors would be ready to comply.

• Although the study did not dwell much on technical knowledge requirements for VTE, I find this type of knowledge as unique and critical to the teaching and learning in the subject area. The study recommends that teachers be attached to industry during school holidays, perhaps as one of the staff development activities.

5.10 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The major questions of the study were focused on the roles and expectations of VTE HODs and how the HODs executed their mandate. Furthermore, the study sought to establish how the HODs were appointed.

The researcher has learnt from this study the importance of considering individual interest to assume leadership positions so that they are fully committed to their work. Interest is a critical issue because it brings into leadership the aspect of 'will'. It is pivotal to understand that in the context of effective instructional leadership, capacity and will are different variables. From willingness, there is commitment and commitment breeds success.

I found that VTE-HODs are not familiar with the term 'distributed leadership' espoused in instructional leadership. This was evidenced by the participants' failure to use the term in their explanations. This explains the lack of instructional leadership knowledge in the VTE subject areas. This study therefore wishes to raise the VTE-HODs and subject teachers' awareness of

instructional leadership practices and distributed leadership in just the same way as they are practised in the other subject areas. It is also within the interest of this study to identify the knowledge gaps that can be pursued as further study for publication and seminar presentations at various forums in Zimbabwe. To inspire instructional leaders' scholarship attention to skew their instructional leadership research expertise on VTE, I intend to make presentations at international instructional leadership conferences. This will also develop my research skills in the area of VTE.

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APPENDICIES :

APPENDIX A

Curriculum Vitae for Jinga Nyaradzo

A. Personal details

      Name: Nyaradzo Jinga
      Student number: 2012128902
      Contact number: +263773041624
      Identity Number: 27-038763J-27

B. Work experience

      Teaching in schools: 1982 -2000
      Lecturing in Teachers College: May 2000 to-May 2005
      Lecturing in the University: June -2005- date

C. Qualifications

      Degree   B.E.D Home Economics (1998, UZ)
      Post Grad   M.ED Curriculum Studies (UZ)
                 M.ED Technical Education (UZ)
              PhD (Enrolled 2013 to 2015 UFS) Instructional Leadership

Thesis Topic: Instructional Leaders for vocational education: Case studies of selected secondary school Heads of Departments in Zimbabwe.

APPENDIX B1

Letter of Request to conduct a study to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education of Zimbabwe

House No.6490 Muredzi Crescent,

Mucheke D,

 Masvingo.

03 February, 2014

The Permanent Secretary,

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education,

P.O. Box

Causeway,

Harare.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

 Ref: Request for permission to carry out Educational Research in Gutu District Secondary Schools.

My name is Nyaradzo Jinga. I'm currently studying for a PhD with the University of the Free State (UFS).As part of my studies, I'm required to carry out a research on issues of interest in Instructional Leadership and I'm interested in the teaching and learning of vocational and technical subjects. My thesis title is: **Instructional leaders for Vocational Education: Case studies of selected secondary school Heads of Departments in Gutu district of Zimbabwe.**

 The study aims to investigate the effectiveness of HODs' instructional leadership practices in improving teaching and learning of practical subjects. The study will be carried out in Gutu district secondary schools and will involve vocational subjects HODs, principals, vocational subject teachers, district and provincial education officials. The study seeks to observe collaborative interactions between the HODs and the other stakeholders, both inside and outside the classroom, and also in departmental meetings. The study will be carried out in two phases where one week will be spent in each school observing and interviewing the leaders and this will be repeated again after five weeks for the second phase. HODs will be involved in three different interviews and some follow up interviews if necessary. The principal, district and provincial education officers will be interviewed once. Subject teachers will be engaged in focus group discussions once during each phase. Informed consent will be requested from each of the participants and schools.

I hereby apply for permission to conduct the study in your ministry. Information obtained will be used specifically for this research study and confidentiality will be highly observed.

It is hoped that this study may help in improving teamwork among vocational subject instructors and this may lead to improved teaching and learning of practical subjects.

I assure you that no disruptions will be made to the normal school activities.

Please find included my conduct details and those of my PhD supervisor in case of any further information that may be needed regarding my study.

Yours Faithfully,   **Supervisor**

Nyaradzo Jinga   Professor Loyiso C. Jita

0773041624   +2751401722

nyajinga@yahoo.com   JitaLC@ufs.ac.za

Appendix B2

all communications should be addressed to
"The Secretary for Primary and Secondary
Education
 Telephone: 732006
 Telegraphic address : "EDUCATION"
 Fax:794505

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT,
ARTS & CULTURE (MSV. PROV.)
MASVINGO PROV. EDU. DIRECTOR
2014 -02- 05
P.O. BOX 89, MASVINGO
ZIMBABWE

REFERENCE: C/426/3

Ministry of Primary and
Secondary Education
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
HARARE

23 January 2014

Nyaradzo Jinga
House No. 6490
Muredzi Crescent

Re: **PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH AT SELECTED
      SCHOOLS IN GUTU DISTRICT: MASVINGO PROVINCE**

Reference is made to your application to carry out research at selected
schools in Gutu District, Masvingo on the title:

**INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: CASE
STUDIES OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOL HEADS OF
DEPARTMENTS IN GUTU DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE**

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the
Provincial Education Director Masvingo who is responsible for the schools
which you want to involve in your research.

You are also required to provide a copy of your final report to the Secretary
for Education, Sport, Arts and Culture.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT,
ARTS AND CULTURE
POLICY PLANNING
1 9 FEB 2014
P.O. BOX CY 121, CAUSEWAY
HARARE, ZIMBABWE
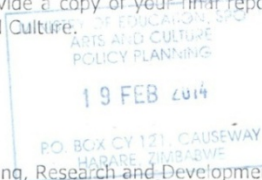
Z.M. Chitiga
Acting Director: Policy, Planning, Research and Development
For: **SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

APPENDIX C1

Letter of Request to be a participant in observations and interviews for vocational subject HODs

Researcher	**Supervisor**

Nyaradzo Jinga   Professor Loyiso C Jita

No 6490 Muredzi Crescent

Masvingo

Cell +263773 041 624   +277514 017 22

nyajinga@yahoo.com   JitaLC@ufs.ca.za

CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant

RE: REQUEST FOR YOU TO BE A PARTICIPANT IN A RESEARCH STUDY: leadership for vocational education: case studies of selected secondary school HODs in Gutu district of Zimbabwe.

My name is Nyaradzo Jinga. I'm currently studying PhD with the University of the Free State. As part of my studies, I'm required to conduct a research on issues of interest on Instructional Leadership and I'm interested in the teaching and learning of vocational and technical subjects. The title of my thesis is **Instructional Leaders for vocational education: Case studies of selected secondary school Heads of Departments in the Gutu district, Zimbabwe.**

You have been identified as a potential participant in the research. The study will involve you being observed and responding to interview sessions which will be conducted by the researcher. Each interview and observation will not be more than 1 hour for each session. With your permission, the responses will be tape recorded for transcription and data analysis. The transcribed data will be shown to you for verification and checking. Your participation is voluntary and confidential. You will also have the right to withdraw your participation at any time should you feel like withdrawing.

They desire to carry out this study was prompted by the dearth of research on instructional leadership for vocational subjects. It is hoped that the study may help to shed light on the instructional leadership practices that may help to improve the teaching and learning of vocational subjects.

I kindly request you to become one of the participants for my study. I promise not to interfere with your normal teaching programmes during the process of data collection.

You can keep this letter for your information but fill in the consent form below and send it back to me.

Thank you.

Participant's Consent

I ………………………………. do hereby give my informed consent to participate in interviews and/or observations that are conducted by Nyaradzo Jinga for her PhD studies in Instructional Leadership. I understand that the information that I am going to provide will be used for research purposes as stipulated in her letter.

Signature…………………………………. Date…………………..

Researcher   **Supervisor**

Nyaradzo Jinga   **Professor Loyiso. C. Jita**

+263773041624   **+27751401722**

Nyajinga@yahoo.com   JitaLC@ufs.ca.za

APPENDIX C2

Letter of Request to be a participant in focus group discussions for vocational subject teachers

Researcher   **Supervisor**

Nyaradzo Jinga   Professor Loyiso C. Jita

No 6490 Muredzi Crescent

Masvingo

Cell +263773 041 624   +277514 017 22

nyajinga@yahoo.com   JitaLC@ufs.ca.za

CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant

RE: REQUEST FOR TO YOU TO BE A PARTICIPANT IN RESEARCH STUDY: instructional leaders for vocational education: case studies for selected secondary school HODs in Gutu district, Zimbabwe.

My name is Nyaradzo Jinga. I'm currently studying for a PhD with the University of the Free State. As part of my studies I'm required to conduct a research on issues of interest on Instructional Leadership and I'm interested in the teaching and learning of vocational and technical subjects. The title of my thesis is: **Instructional Leaders for vocational education: Case studies for selected secondary school Heads of Departments in the Gutu district, Zimbabwe.**

I request you to kindly take part in my study by participating in focus group discussions which are scheduled to take about one hour per session. The information you provide will be invaluable and inform the study on how HODs can help to improve instructional leadership practices for increased student achievement in vocational subjects. As teachers who are directly involved in the teaching of vocational subjects under the leadership of HODs, you may have critical information that will help to broaden my knowledge of the expectations that stakeholders have for HODs as instructional leaders for vocational subjects as well as how they actually carry out their mandate.

The desire to carry out this study was prompted by the dearth of research on instructional leadership for vocational subjects. I request for your participation in the study. You are assured that the information you are going to contribute will be treated anonymously and/or confidentially. You are also informed that you have the right to choose to participate or not. You will be also allowed to withdraw your participation whenever you feel like doing so. Your invaluable cooperation is sincerely appreciated.

You can keep this letter for your information but fill in the consent form below and send it back to me.

Thank you.

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Participant's Consent

I …………………………………. do hereby give my informed consent to participate in interviews and/or observations that are conducted by Nyaradzo Jinga for her PhD studies in Instructional Leadership. I understand that the information that I am going to provide will be used for research purposes as stipulated in her letter.

Signature…………………………………. Date…………………..

Researcher   **Supervisor**

Nyaradzo Jinga   **Professor Loyiso. C. Jita**

+263773041624   **+27751401722**

nyajinga@yahoo.com   JitaLC@ufs,ca.za

APPENDIX C3

Letter of Request to be a participant in interviews for principals

Researcher	**Supervisor**
Nyaradzo Jinga	Professor Loyiso C Jita
No 6490 Muredzi Crescent	
Masvingo	
Cell +263773 041 624	+277514 017 22
nyajinga@yahoo.com	JitaLC@ufs.ca.za

CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant

RE: REQUEST FOR YOU TO BE A PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY: instructional leaders for vocational education: casa studies of selected secondary school HODs in Gutu district Zimbabwe.

My name is Nyaradzo Jinga. I'm currently studying for a PhD with the University of the Free State. As part of my studies I'm required to conduct a research study on issues of interest on Instructional Leadership and I'm interested in the teaching of vocational and technical education. The title of my thesis is: **Instructional Leaders for vocational education: Case studies for selected secondary school Heads of Departments in the Gutu district, Zimbabwe.**

You have been identified as a potential participant in the research. The study will involve you being observed and responding to interview sessions which will be conducted by the researcher. Each interview and observation will not be more than 1 hour for each session. With your permission, the responses will be tape recorded for transcription and data analysis. The transcribed data will be shown to you for verification and checking. Your participation is voluntary and confidential. You will also have the right to withdraw your participation at any time should you feel like withdrawing.

They desire to carry out this study was prompted by the dearth of research on instructional leadership for vocational subjects. It is hoped that the study will help to shed light on the instructional leadership practices that may help to improve the teaching and learning of vocational subjects.

I kindly request you to become one of the participants for my study. I promise not to interfere with your normal teaching programmes during the process of data collection.

You can keep this letter for your information but fill in the consent form below and send it back to me.

Thank you.

……………………………………………………………………………………………..

Participant's Consent

I …………………………………. do hereby give my informed consent to participate in interviews and/or observations that are conducted by Nyaradzo Jinga for her PhD studies in Instructional Leadership. I understand that the information that I am going to provide will be used for research purposes as stipulated in her letter.

Signature…………………………………. Date…………………..

 Researcher   **Supervisor**

Nyaradzo Jinga   **Professor Loyiso, C. Jita**

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APPENDIX C4

Letter of Request to be a participant in interviews for district education officials

Researcher   **Supervisor**

Nyaradzo Jinga   Professor Loyiso C Jita

No 6490 Muredzi Crescent

Masvingo

Cell +263773 041 624   +277514 017 22

nyajinga@yahoo.com   JitaLC@ufs.ca.za

CONSENT FORM

RE: REQUEST FOR YOU TO BE A PARTICIPANT IN A RESEARCH STUDY: instructional leaders for vocational education: case studies for selected secondary school HODs in Gutu district, Zimbabwe.

Dear Participant

My name is Nyaradzo Jinga. I'm currently studying for a PhD with the University of the Free State. As part of my studies, I'm required to conduct a research study on issues of interest on Instructional Leadership and I'm interested in the teaching and learning of vocational and technical subjects. The title of my thesis is: **Instructional Leaders for vocational education: Case studies for selected secondary school Heads of Departments in the Gutu district, Zimbabwe.**

You have been identified as a potential participant in the research. The study will involve you being observed and responding to interview sessions which will be conducted by the researcher. Each interview and observation will not be more than 1 hour for each session. With your permission, the responses will be tape recorded for transcription and data analysis. The transcribed data will be shown to you for verification and checking. Your participation is voluntary and confidential. You will also have the right to withdraw your participation at any time should you feel like withdrawing.

They desire to carry out this study was prompted by the dearth of research on instructional leadership for vocational subjects. It is hoped that the information you may provide about the policies and regulations that

guide instructional leadership practices of HODs may help to improve the teaching and learning of vocational subjects.

I kindly request you to become one of the participants for my study. I promise not to interfere with your normal work schedule during the process of data collection.

You can keep this letter for your information but fill in the consent form below and send it back to me.

Thank you.

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Participant's Consent

I …………………………………. do hereby give my informed consent to participate in interviews and/or observations that are conducted by Nyaradzo Jinga for her PhD studies in Instructional Leadership. I understand that the information that I am going to provide will be used for research purposes as stipulated in her letter.

Signature…………………………………. Date…………………..

Researcher   Supervisor

Nyaradzo Jinga   Professor Loyiso C. Jita

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nyajinga@yahoo.com   JitaLC@ufs,ca.za

APPENDIX C5

Letter of Request to be a participant in interviews for provincial education officers.

Researcher	**Supervisor**

Nyaradzo Jinga   Professor Loyiso C Jita

No 6490 Muredzi Crescent

Masvingo

Cell +263773 041 624   +277514 017 22

nyajinga@yahoo.com   JitaLC@ufs.ca.za

CONSENT FORM

RE: REQUEST FOR YOU TO BE A PARTICIPANT IN A RESEARCH STUDY: instructional leaders for vocational education: case studies for selected secondary school HODs in Gutu district, Zimbabwe.

Dear Participant

My name is Nyaradzo Jinga. I'm currently studying for a PhD with the University of the Free State. As part of my studies, I'm required to conduct a research study on issues of interest on Instructional Leadership and I'm interested in the teaching and learning of vocational and technical subjects. The title of my thesis is: **Instructional Leaders for vocational education: Case studies for selected secondary school Heads of Departments in the Gutu district, Zimbabwe.**

You have been identified as a potential participant in the research. The study will involve you being observed and responding to interview sessions which will be conducted by the researcher. Each interview and observation will not be more than 1 hour for each session. With your permission, the responses will be tape recorded for transcription and data analysis. The transcribed data will be shown to you for verification and checking. Your participation is voluntary and confidential. You will also have the right to withdraw your participation at any time should you feel like withdrawing.

They desire to carry out this study was prompted by the dearth of research on instructional leadership for vocational subjects. It is hoped that the information you may provide about the policies and regulations that guide instructional leadership practices of HODs may help to improve the teaching and learning of vocational subjects.

I kindly request you to become one of the participants for my study. I promise not to interfere with your normal teaching programmes during the process of data collection.

You can keep this letter for your information but fill in the consent form below and send it back to me.

Thank you.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Participant's Consent

I …………………………………. do hereby give my informed consent to participate in interviews and/or observations that are conducted by Nyaradzo Jinga for her PhD studies in Instructional Leadership. I understand that the information that I am going to provide will be used for research purposes as stipulated in her letter.

Signature…………………………………. Date…………………..

Researcher   Supervisor

Nyaradzo Jinga   Professor Loyiso C. Jita

+263773041624   +27751401722

nyajinga@yahoo.com   JitaLC@ufs,ca.za

APPENDIX D1

Interview Protocol: Head of vocational subject department

Phase one: interview 1

(Before the interview identify the following: Name of interviewee, school and date)

1. Can you tell me about your professional background? How long have you been a teacher? What is your subject area of specialization?
2. How did you become an HOD for the vocational subjects department? (*Probe.* What policies, regulations or circulars were used to guide the appointment?)
3. How was your job responsibilities communicated to you?
4. How did senior management ensure that you are able to perform your expected roles? *(Probe,* what was done by the principal, district officials and provincial officials?)
5. How many vocational subjects are you leading? If more than one, what are the practical subjects for your department? How many teachers do you work with?
6. What are some of the roles you perform? What is your goal/aim? (*If it did not come up.* What has been your role in helping teachers implement the vocational and technical ideas? Do you sometimes organise demonstration lessons? *(Probe.* For details on how they are organised, how often, by whom. How they have changed the ways teachers in the department teach. How they have helped the way HODs teaches. How they have helped to change the ways of teaching).
7. What kind of interactions do you have with your principal? (*Probe.* Formal or informal). What topics do you include in your conversations? How does your principal let you know what needs to be done in the school? (Probe: give me details of one example of such a meeting or interaction with the principal)
8. How are you trying to improve instructional practices in your department? What things do you do that influences teacher practices? (Probe: details of each practice or activity that is identified: why it is done, how it is done, by who, who assists, and what its effects are on the participants)
9. What are teacher's attitudes in the department towards improving teaching? (probe for how the HOD knows about these attitudes).
10. What are the challenges your department faces? (*Probe.* Why each one is an issue? Who said it was an issue? How it is addressed)

APPENDIX D2

Interview Protocol: Head of Department

Phase one: interview 2

(Before the interview identify the following: name of interviewee, school and date)

1. What different ways do you use to assess your student progress? Which ones are the most useful? For the most useful: what do you look for when you use this approach?

2. How easy is it to get materials that are needed for teaching in the Vocational and Technical department? To whom do you go to when you want these materials? How helpful is that person?

3. How easy is it to get time to meet with other teachers (*Probe,* how often they meet)? Are they any other times you get together to talk about teaching?

4. As an HOD, do you engage subject teachers in instructional leadershisp practices concerning vocational and technical subjects (*Probe,* how and how often they meet to deliberate on curriculum planning instructional activities professional development and growth issues informal education talks). Also *Probe* the nature of HOD-teacher interaction that takes place?

5. Asked to rate your engagement in administrative and instructional charges, which one would you say takes much of your work time? Explain what exactly you do and the amount of time in a day/ per week that you engage in the identified activities (e.g. assessing teachers, reviewing students' work, planning for professional growth, attending board meetings etc.)

6. Are teachers at this school allowed to experiment with teaching strategies? (Probe: for details and examples)

7. What are the best strategies to teach vocational and technical subjects? Why do you consider these as best strategies? (*Probe,* one's knowledge of the nature of vocational education, the guiding theory. NB: in this case consider pro-active philosophies, and teaching experiences in the area. What characteristics make these strategies the most appropriate? What personnel and materials are needed to carry out these strategies?

8. Do you have opportunities to do lesson observations at this school? Please tell me more about this.

If yes: Lesson observation is an essential reflector of the quality of instruction experienced during teaching and learning. How effective is the *tool* that you use to assess teachers teach? (P*robe,* is it clear to both the assessor and the assessed? How objective is the instrument? Does it promote professional development and growth for vocational subject teachers?

APPENDIX D3

Interview Protocol: Head of Department

Phase one: interview 3

1. How often in this year have you had conversation with colleagues about what helps students learn best? (probe for details: who arranged the discussions, how and why. Ask for actual examples)
2. One of the expectations of the HOD as an assistant administrator is to coordinate and organize school activities, how have you incorporated teachers' input towards supporting the principal in doing the school activities? How does this contribute towards improving students' achievement in vocational subjects?
3. As a resource provider at department level are you happy with the state of resources in your department? Please explain. If not, how can the resources available be improved?
4. Instructional leadership underscores the importance of collaboration and dialogue concerning effective instructional practices among subject teachers. What have you done to create such a culture in your department? (*Probe* how this is initiated and who are involved. How do the teachers respond?)
5. Do you have major textbooks per subject for the different class levels? (*Probe* who prescribes the textbooks? Are the books good content materials for secondary school classes? Are the textbooks in adequate supply?)

APPENDIX D4

Interview Protocol: Head of Department

Phase two: Interview 1

1. How important is student's achievements in vocational subjects in this school? (*Probe why*? What gives you that impression?)
2. What are the principals' expectations for your department?
3. What are the district/ provincial officers' expectations for the vocational/technical department?
4. What forms of communication does the principal use in relation to instruction in your subject area?
5. What forms of communication does the district and provincial officer use with regards to the teaching and learning of vocational and technical subjects? Do they give supportive encouragement?
6. Do you accommodate teachers and student's needs in your instructional leadership practices? (*Probe*. How do you identify the needs? Have any teachers or students in your department been identified as having special needs? What have you done to satisfy the needs been catered for?

APPENDIX D5

Interview Protocol: Head of Department

Phase two: interview 2

1. What tools do you use to assess student performance in your department? *(Probe*, whether the tool reflects the department's curriculum standards and how?)
2. Do you have any policies or regulations that guide your instructional leadership practices? If yes what do they say about lesson observation? (Probe whether there are specifications about the number of times and HOD must observe peer teachers teach? the number of times for teacher-teacher lesson observation? Is there anything said about colleagues observing HODs teach? what do they say about invitation of resource persons to help teach certain topics or concepts?) If the response reflects absence of policy or any guiding document, find out, what guides the department's teaching and learning practices?
3. Where are you often found in the school? (Find out, is the HOD frequently in his/her office, classroom(s), hallways, principal's office, or other on-site places?)
4. How many years have you served as HOD? (Round up to the nearest whole number including this current school year.) What Instructional Leadership successes can you count on up to this date? What Instructional Leadership challenges can you identify as militating against your leadership practices in vocational and technical subject teaching and learning?

APPENDIX D6

Interview Protocol: Head of Departments

Phase two: Interview 3

1. Quality vocational education is premised on clear and meaningful educational goals? Do you start your instructional leadership endeavours by defining departmental goals? Do you also have well-defined learning expectations for all the classes in your department?

   a) If your response is YES, who designed the departmental goals? Who designed the curriculum framework which you are implementing? What guided curriculum planning and designing for the department?

   b) If your response is NO, what are your reasons for not defining goals first? What then guides curriculum implementation in your department?

2. Are there tools or material artefacts' that help you to structure your instructional leadership practices?

3. Do you allow teachers wide participation on departmental decisions? (*Probe,* how much influence the teachers have and in what respect?)

4. Do you consider student input when making departmental decisions? If so, what contributions do you expect or allow them? When and how do you include students?

5. How do you enforce teachers to fulfill their instructional mandate?

6. Are there any other issues, that we have not discussed, about your work as an HOD for vocational subjects that you would like me to know about?

APPENDIX E1

Focus group discussion: Vocational subject teachers

Phase one: First Session

Before engaging in the discussion, explain to participants that the study requires them to be free to give their opinions about the matters asked. Ensure participants security by not writing down their names for confidentiality of data. Allow each participant to speak in detail before moving on to another participant. Also identify the number of interviewees, school and date.

1. Looking at the following items what are your opinions about your HOD regarding?
    - His/her clarity on standards for instructional practices.
    - His/her expectations for meeting the department's instructional goals
    - HOD's visible presence inside and outside the classroom. (*Probe* how often they have informal or formal educational discussion and establish were the discussions take place)
    - Frequency of lesson observation and demonstration/model lessons (find out if feedback forms part of the interaction or not.)
    - Frequency of departmental meetings (*Probe* relevance of agendas, worthiness of discussions, teacher involvement distribution of leadership opportunities.)
    - Subject and pedagogy expertise displayed by the HOD (*Probe* ask if teachers have confidence in their HOD, why/why not?)
    - Teacher involvement in instructional leadership? Are you given opportunities to lead others in areas of expertise or not? (ask for examples and details) Are you keen to get the opportunities?
2. How would you describe your HOD's kind of instructional leadership? (Does his or her personality permit discussion of feelings and frustrations in his or her presence? Ask for details and examples)
3. What kind of departmental is climate estimated by your HOD? Do you feel respected or undermined by the HOD? Does he or she create a caring attitude among group subject teachers?
4. How has the leadership of your HOD contributed towards the improvement of your teaching? (ask for specific examples and details) How has the leadership of your HOD contributed towards the improvement of the overall quality of the school? (details and examples)
5. Are there any other issues that we have not discussed, about the work of your HOD for vocational subjects that you would like me to know about?

APPENDIX E1

Focus Group Discussion: Vocational subject teachers

Phase two: Second session

1. Do you sometimes get chances to lead other teachers in the department? (*Probe* What kind of opportunities, how often?) Do you find your leadership influential? How might your level of influence be increased?
2. What things have you learnt working with this HOD? How has that influenced your practice?
3. What have you learnt from the leadership role of peer teachers? How has that influenced your practices?
4. What are your expectations regarding, your HOD in the following:
   ➢ Provision of instructional support?
   ➢ Buffering teachers from distractions to their instructional time?
   ➢ Giving specific ideas for how teachers can improve instruction?
   ➢ Making suggestions to improve classroom behaviour or classroom management?
   ➢ Involving teachers in planning meetings. How often? What is discussed?
   ➢ Conditions of motives and intentions expressed. Good or bad?
   ➢ Presentation of new curricular topics or pedagogies?
5. When thinking about the leadership behaviours of your HOD; if you had the chance to become an HOD, what would you do differently?
6. Are there any other issues that we have not discussed, about the work of your HOD for vocational subjects that you would like me to know about?

APPENDIX F

Interview Protocol: Principal

(*Before the interview, the researcher must introduce oneself and then, identify the following: Name of interviewee, school and date)*

1. How long have you been a school principal supervisor?
2. How did you become a principal? What position(s) did you hold before becoming a curriculum supervisor? (*Probe* what experiences he/she has with the vocational/technical education.)
3. What criteria did you use when appointing or recruiting HODs for vocational subjects? *(Probe*, if there are guiding policies, regulations or circulars?)
4. How does the HODs instructional leadership practice influence your work at school level?
5. What is the vocational subject HOD's role in supporting the implementation of the technical/vocational curriculum in your school?
6. How does your office support the work of HODs (Probe: details of what the principal does, how, how often, why and with whom, etc.).
7. Ask for specific examples of how principals support and monitor the work and practices of HODs
8. What comments have you received your senior management concerning student performance in vocational subjects in the past two years?
9. Are there any other issues, that we have not discussed, about the work of your HOD for vocational subjects that you would like me to know about?
10. Can I contact you again if I need more information what we have been discussing today?

APPENDIX G

Interview Protocol: District officials

(Before the interview, the researcher must introduce oneself and then, identify the following: Name of interviewee, district and date)

1. How long have you been a school district supervisor?

2. How did you become a district official? What position(s) did you hold before becoming a supervisor? (*Probe* what experiences they have with the vocational/technical education?)

3. How does the district influence recruitment or appointment of vocational subjects HODs? *(Probe,* do they have guiding policies, regulations or circulars?)

4. How does the instructional leadership practice for vocational education HODs influence your work at district level?

5. What are the roles of HODs in supporting the implementation of the technical/vocational curriculum?

6. How does the district support the work of HODs, if at all (Probe: details of what is done, how, how often, why and by whom from the district office).

7. What comments have you received from the province and stakeholders, in the past two years regarding the teaching and learning of vocational subjects in your district?

8. Are there any other issues, that we have not discussed, about the work of HOD for vocational subjects that you would like me to know about?

9. Can I contact you again if I need more information

APPENDIX H

Interview Protocol: Provincial Officers

(Before the interview, the researcher must introduce oneself then, identify the following: Name of interviewee, school/district/province and date)

1. How long have you been a Provincial supervisor?
2. How did you become a Provincial official? What position(s) did you hold before becoming a provincial supervisor? (*Probe* what experiences they have with the vocational/technical education.)
3. How does the provincial office influence or guide the recruitment of HODs for vocational subjects? *(Probe*, are the policies, regulations or circulars that guide appointment?)
4. How does the HOD's instructional leadership practice influence your work at provincial level? What are your expectations regarding their instructional leadership practices
5. What is the role of the HOD in supporting the implementation of the technical/vocational curriculum? How does this influence your work?
6. How does the province support the work of HODs, if at all (Probe: details of what is done, how, how often, why and by whom from the provincial office).
7. What comments at national level have you received in the past two years regarding student performance in vocational and technical competences?
8. Are there any other issues, which we have not discussed, about the work of HOD for vocational subjects that you would like me to know about?
9. Can I contact you again if I need more information?

APPENDIX I

Observation guide for Instructional Leadership elements.

Date………………………………………… Station………………………………………

Time…………………………………………

The same guide will be used for either Lesson observation or Department meeting observation.

1. Aspect observed (departmental meeting, lesson observation)

………
………
……………………………………………

2. Participants observed (HODs, subject teachers, learning environment)

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………
………
…

3. Purpose of observation: (Meetings-who chairs, nature of interactions, who dominates meetings, and who says what)
(Lesson observation;-observe tools used, their quality, effectiveness of pedagogy, teacher content mastery, student performance, agreement of observations by the researcher and the HOD.)

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4. Leadership distribution (Meetings;-who convene meetings, how often, what items are addressed, leadership opportunities for teachers, quality of interactions).
(Lesson observation;-demonstration and individual class lessons, what is done, why is that done, with what resources?)

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APPENDIX J

APPENDIX J : LESSON OBS. PROTOCOL A

GUTU HIGH SCHOOL

Private Bag 901, Gutu
030 2444   030 2475   030 2286   0912 262 150

LESSON OBSERVATION   Protocol A

Name: .... EC# ....

Subject: .... Class .... Date ___ / ___ / 20___

Topic ....

Preparation & Planning (e.g. objectives) ....
....
....
....

Teaching Procedures (e.g. lesson development, pupil involvement and methods) ....
....
....
....

Media: (Preparation and use) ....
....
....
....

Classroom Management: ....
....
....

Suggestions & Recommendations: ....
....
....

Name of Supervisor .... Designation ....

Signature of Supervisor....................................... Signature of Teacher ....

Date ____ / ____ / 20____

APPENDIX K

Ref/..
EC No....................................... ...

CONFIDENTIAL
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE
Distribution

H/O .
P/O ·
Head
Teacher

SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS

....   Ec No...

Qualifications   a) Academic ....

         b) Professional ....

Type of Appointment :   ....

Date joined service   ....

Teaching Experience   ....

Name of School   ....

Registration No:0014   DPT/stn..

Responsible Authority   ....Reg No......

Region............................   District................................

District.............................. ....   Date last assessed...................................

Date of current assessment ....

Purpose of Assessments

....

....

Subject/ Lesson Observed..

SECTION B: TEACHING ASSIGNMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

i.   Teaching assignment...

ii.   Post of special Responsibility...

iii.   Co- Curricular responsibility..

iv.   Comment on the three above:

....

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SECTION C: PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES AND COMPETENCE

Lesson
Introduction...

....

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Development...

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Conclusion...

....

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Use of media...

Comment..

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Teacher's records
Scheme- cum
plan...
Register...
Individual Record...
Text Record Book...
Extension and remediation..
Asset record...
Other..
Comment..
....
....

Children's Written work

Subject	Work given	Work expected	Variance

Comment
....
....

Classroom Appearance
....
....

SECTION D PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Participation in curriculum development and examinations
....
....
Carrying out Action Research and Educational Survey......................................
....
Involvement in school development projects...
....
Improvement of professional and academic qualifications
....
....

Summary and Recommendations
....
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Signature.....................Date....................................
Reporting Officer: ....
Designation

Teacher Acknowledgement
Name...........................Signature.......................Date..................

E

Ref/...
EC No...

CONFIDENTIAL
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Distribution

    H/O
    P/O
    Head
    Teacher

SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS

....   Ec No...

Qualifications   a) Academic ....
    b) Professional ....

Type of Appointment :   ....
Date joined service   ....
Teaching Experience   ....
Name of School   ....
Registration No:0014   DPT/stn...
Responsible Authority   ....Reg No......
Region................................ District...
District................................ Date last assessed...
Date of current assessment ....

Purpose of Assessments
....
....
Subject/ Lesson Observed...

SECTION B: TEACHING ASSIGNMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

i.   Teaching assignment...
ii.   Post of special Responsibility...
iii.   Co- Curricular responsibility...
iv.   Comment on the three above:
....
....
....

SECTION C: PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES AND COMPETENCE
Lesson
Introduction...
....
....
Development...
....
....
....
Conclusion...
....
....
Use of media...
Comment...
....
....
....
....
....

Teacher's records

Scheme- cum
plan...
Register...
Individual Record...
Text Record Book..
Extension and remediation..
Asset record..
Other..
Comment...
....
....

Children's Written work

Subject	Work given	Work expected	Variance

Comment
....
....

Classroom Appearance
....
....

SECTION D PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Participation in curriculum development and examinations
....
....

Carrying out Action Research and Educational Survey..............................
....

Involvement in school development projects..
....

Improvement of professional and academic qualifications
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Summary and Recommendations
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Signature......................Date...............................
Reporting Officer: ....
Designation

Teacher Acknowledgement
Name...........................Signature......................Date..................