THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER IN IMPROVING LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

by

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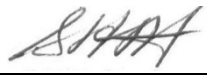
DECLARATION

Student number: **O6871461**

I declare that TITLE OF THESIS: **THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER IN IMPROVING LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS,** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE:  DATE: 29 May 2015

ABSTRACT

The role played by the principal as instructional leader worldwide is critical due to its direct and indirect impact on learner achievement.In South African primary schools **t**he role of the principal as instructional leader in improving learning achievement is a pressing issue since most South African primary school learners perform far below par as determined by benchmarking carried out by local and international education assessment agencies with reference to curriculum goals and literacy and numeracy milestones.This descriptive exploratory study examined the role of the principal as instructional leader in primary schools in South Africa with special reference to the Tshwane South District, Gauteng Province. The study was informed by a literature review of local and international sources related to theoretical perspectives on instructional leadership, the features of instructional leadership that impact on learner achievement and selected models of instructional leadership. An overview of contextual and school factors which shape primary school learner achievement in South Africa with reference to the rural and township communities also framed the empirical inquiry. A mixed method study was conducted according to two phases: Phase 1 comprised the quantitative component (questionnaires); Phase 2 comprised the qualitative component (interviews). Both phases were conducted in the Tshwane South District, Gauteng Province. In both phases data were gathered from primary school principals and Institute Development Support Officials (IDSOs) selected by random and purposeful sampling respectively. The questionnaire findings indicated that the principals and IDSOs had adequate qualifications and experience, and that key school policies are in place. However, the principals are less confident about policy implementation, particularly with regard to educator and learner discipline. They face many systemic problems, such as inadequate school resources and additional funds in no fee-paying schools to improve the infrastructure and reduce the learner-teacher ratios. The findings from the interviews indicated that the principals struggle to maintain participative management with the school governing bodies; are hampered by contextual factors, especially poor school infrastructure; and are challenged to meet the requirements of annual benchmarking assessments. Based on the findings of the literature study and the empirical inquiry recommendations are made to improve practice, including a call for the professional development of principals in project management and fundraising.

KEY WORDS

Role of principal

Instructional leadership

Learner achievement

Annual National Assessment

Gauteng Department of Education

Disadvantaged schools

Performing

Under-performing

Qualitative design

Quantitative design

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- My Creator, Almighty God, for blessing me, and for making my dreams come true.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the following:

My wife: Matilda

My daughters: Molebogeng, Mokitlana, Amogelang and Catherine.

Thefollowing people who have already passed away: My mother, Raisibe Catherine Maponya,and my eldest brother, Papi William Maponya.

ABBREVIATIONS

ANA	Annual National Assessment
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DG	Director General
ESSP	Extra School Support Programme
ECD	Early Childhood Development
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
GPLMS	Gauteng Province Literacy and Mathematics Strategy
HL	Home Language
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDSO	Institute Development Support Officials
LoLT	Language of learning and teaching
LiEP	Language in Education Policy
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Materials
MM	Mixed Method
MLA	Monitoring Learning Achievement
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MRTEQ	Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications
MGSLG	Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NSES	National School Effectiveness Study
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
OBE	Outcomes-based Education
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
SGB	School Governing Body
SES	Socioeconomic Status
SMT	School Management Team
SACMEQ	Southern African Consortium on Monitoring Education Quality
SA-SAMS	South African School Administration Management System
TIMSS	Trend in International Mathematics and Science Study

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY, PROBLEM FORMULATION, AIMS AND METHOD

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The principal is a key agent in school improvement. He or she is responsible for promoting a healthy culture and climate, for supporting teacher leadership, for building and sustaining the school improvement teams, and for planning, organizing and monitoring school improvement endeavours (Zepeda 2013). His or her role is characterized by instructional, transformational and managerial leadership responsibilities (Valentine & Prater 2011). In this regard the principal's role as instructional leader relates directly to student achievement and its improvement. To unpack this role requires a comprehensive understanding of the many facets and functions of instructional leadership (Van Deventer & Kruger 2003).

Principals are, as instructional leaders, responsible for linking their daily on-the-job tasks to the goals for student[1] achievement(Girvin2005).Instructional leadership affects the core activity of the school, namely teaching and learning. It involves the decisions, strategies and tactics which principals employ to ensure instructional effectiveness in the classroom. In this respect the principal should provide direction, resources and support to both the educators[2]and the learners (Van Deventer & Kruger 2003). The principals, as instructional leaders, should ensure that theschool's instructional programme coheres with the curriculum, envisions the instructional goals, sets high academic standards, stays informed of education policies and legislation, is sensitive to the educators' instructional problems, makes frequent classroom visits to monitor the quality of instruction, creates incentives for learning, and maintains student discipline so that an orderly environment for instruction is maintained (Gumus&Akcaoglu2013). All in all, principals

[1]The terms pupil, learner and student are used interchangeably according to the literature of origin, thus following the preferred terminology within the context of a specific national education system.

[2]The term educator has been predominantly used throughout this text; the term teacher(s) has been used in certain instances where it reflects the preferred terminology within the context of a specific national education system.

as instructional leaders are accountable for ensuring a sound culture of teaching and learning in the school. Instructional leadership should not be seen as a separate function distinct from the principal's managerial duties; instead, the most direct way for a school principal to exercise instructional leadership is through the managerial tasks he or she engages in every day.

Gupton (2003) states that instructional leadership consists of direct or indirect behaviours that significantly affect teacher instruction and, as a result, student learning. According to Gupton (2003:32),five key behaviours characterize the principals as instructional leaders. Instructional leaders should:

- Provide a sense of vision to their schools: they should formulate their own vision, collaborate with stakeholders to develop a shared vision and sustain the vitality of the school's vision and mission throughout in the routine school operations.

- Exercise participatory management: they should empower others by engaging the stakeholders appropriately in the school's operational and decision-making processes.

- Provide support for teaching and learning: they should recognise good instruction by the educators as the most important tool to attain the school's main goal, which is student learning.

- Monitor instruction: they should be aware of what is happening in the classrooms by means of regular monitoring.

- Exhibit resourcefulness: in the face of obstacles they should develop strategies and plans to accomplish the school's goals.

Wing (2013) argues that instructional leadership and effective school management are interwoven. Effective managers are also instructional leaders who are concerned about the quality of teaching and learning and the level of learner achievement. This involves creating a shared purpose among all the staff members in the implementation of the school development

programmes. The principal as instructional leader must inspire, engender and ensure educator collaboration. He/she should portray learning as the most important reason for being in a school, and emphasize the importance and value of the high achievements of the learners in the school. Thus, he or she should have a clear understanding of the school's mission and vision, and be able to state them in direct and concrete terms. As instructional leader he/she should believe that all the learners can learn and achieve, and that the school can make the difference between success and failure (Nuku2007). Wing (2007) adds that principals should have strong ethical values and interpersonal skills, as these are important qualities of instructional leaders and are necessary to inspire and motivate all the stakeholders. In other words, principals should be good communicators, and be committed to the school's vision and goals. Such principals are visible in their schools, and they support their professional staff in order to realize the achievement of their learners. They are sensitive to the educators' problems and assist them in developing the curriculum and in identifying and evaluating the learning goals, and communicate departmental policies and procedures effectively to the entire school community (Mbatha2004).

In summary, the principal as instructional leader has a task that is multifaceted, combining task and people-oriented management tasks to create a school environment in which teaching and learning can be effectively realized, whereby a spirit of cooperation among the learners and the staff is established, and the academic achievement of the learners is sustained and continuously improved (Van Deventer& Kruger 2003).

1.1.1 General functions of the principal as instructional leader

In the foregoing discussion the role of the principal as instructional leader in determining excellence in terms of learner achievement was stressed. In this task the principal as the instructional leader should give priority to the following aspects of the school's functioning:

a) Management of the curriculum: The school principal must keep abreast of the school curriculum, including new curriculum documents and amendments. Without expertise in this respect, he or she cannot control and monitor the performance of both the educators and the learners. Van Deventer and Kruger (2003) suggest that the school

principal should communicate a system of instructional standards to the educators, and co-ordinate the school curriculum and instruction.

b) Management of human resources: The effective utilization and development of human resources in a school depends on the management and leadership skills of the school manager. The principal as instructional leader should direct people's actions and motivate them to realize the school's stated aims and objectives in order to develop an effective school. The effective school manager should be able to provide for the most efficient use of human and other resources, be able to establish priorities, and handle priorities in logical order. He or she should be able to delegate authority and responsibility clearly and appropriately (Zepeda 2013).

c) Management of school finances: In order for the finances of the school to run smoothly, the principal as instructional leader, in collaboration with the School Governing Body (SGB) and School Management Team (SMT) should manage the school financially, commencing with drafting a budget. A budget is a mission statement of the school expressed in monetary terms. The effective school manager should involve everyone who will be part of the implementation of the budget in drawing it up. This process of involving other staff members will make them feel productive, and they will be conscious during its implementation (Knight 2013).

d) School administration: Van Deventer and Kruger (2003) define *school administration* as the management of various administrative matters. It is the responsibility of the principal as instructional leader to create a structure for administrative work and to determine the procedures and means for the efficient functioning thereof. This will create an environment in which a sound culture of learning and teaching will prevail, and will ensure the successful execution of the instructional programme.

e) Management of physical facilities: Pollard(2002:76) argues that the principal as instructional leader should be able to secure adequate material and human resources, in spite of seeming constraints.

d) Time management: The principal as instructional leader should avoid wasting time. He or she must be prepared to use the necessary techniques and skills in time-planning and management to eliminate, or at least decrease time-wasting factors. The learners'

contact time should be respected at all times (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom2004).

f) Involvement of the school community: The principal as the instructional leader of the school should, with the assistance of the social and political authority to which he/she is responsible, involve all the stakeholders in supporting the school, i.e. the parents and the community.

1.1.2 The need for effective instructional leadership in South African primary schools and shifts in the role for principals

Based on his publication dealing with the quality of education in South Africa from 1994-2011, Spaull (2013:3) indicates that South African learners perform extremely poorly. Research undertaken by the Umalusi Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (2006:21) indicates a very low level of competence in Mathematics, reading and writing in the majority of the formerly disadvantaged primary schools in South Africa. The situation is worse in rural primary schools. In this regard, Dhawan (2004:20) indicates that the government has not fully succeeded in providing the formerly disadvantaged communities with sufficient and appropriate access to education.

According to Spaull (2013:3), most South African primary school learners perform far below par as determined by benchmarking carried out by local and international education assessment agencies with reference to curriculum goals, and have not reached the normal literacy and numeracy milestones. The underperformance of South African primary school learners in literacy and numeracy has been confirmed in the nation-wide standardised assessments of learners in Grades 3, 6 and 9 carried out annually by the Department of Basic Education [DBE] (2011; 2012; 2013) and by large-scale international standardised assessments in reading skills (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy & Foy 2007; Mullis, Martin, Foy & Drucker 2012).

With particular reference to primary schools in the Gauteng Province, the location of this study, the Gauteng Department of Education (circular 15/2009) classified schools into two categories, namely performing schools and under-performing schools, in accordance with Section 58(B) that

is read in conjunction with Section 16(A) of the Education Laws Amendment Act of 2007. In terms of secondary schools, under-performing schools are identified as those schools that obtain an average of 0% to 20% in their matric results. In the primary schools the criteria used to identify under-performing schools are the results of the Annual National Assessment conducted in 2013 as benchmarking surveys based on the assessment of Grades 3 and 6 learners in the learning areas: Numeracy and Literacy (DBE 2014).

Consequently, since 2011the Gauteng Department of Education has developed Annual Performance Plans to improve the quality of schooling. The 2014/2015 Annual Performance Plan responds to the call of provincial "Outcome 1: Quality basic education" and the national Action Plan 2014that have been established within Schooling2025which represents South Africa's first long-term vision for schools. The implications of this goal for the principal as instructional leader is to ensure that teaching takes place as it should, according to the national curriculum. Through responsible leadership, they promote harmony, creativity and a sound work ethic within the school community and beyond (DBE 2011: 26-27).With regard to improving the instructional leadership skills of principals, the Gauteng Department of Education (2011) has introduced the Advanced Certificate of Education (ACE) leadership training for principals and deputy principals in conjunction with the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance. This is aimed at furthering the studies of principals and deputy principals in the ACE-leadership schools. The purpose of this programme is to improve the leadership skills of the principals and deputy principals as members of the School Management Team (SMT) in order for them to be instructional leaders.

In the light of this need the principal is seen as the key agents for change in school improvement in South Africa. Since 1994 the role of the principal in South African schools has shifted from manager to multi-faceted leader (DBE 2014). This is borne out by the new standard for the principalship (DBE 2014). The Department of Basic Education (DBE) (2014) proposes a standard for principalship that defines the "key aspects of professionalism, image and competencies required" (DBE 2014: 1). The document (DBE 2014:5) identifies the main functions of school principalship as follows:

- Leading the learning school: the school principal works in conjunction with the School Management Team (SMT) to guide other staff members, as this is their core responsibility, to promote a successful learning environment within the school. The core business of the principal's leadership is to manage the curriculum with the objective of bringing about quality teaching and learning for the benefit of learner achievement. This goal could be achieved through the principal's ongoing monitoring, assessment and evaluation of the learning outcomes, and his/her commitment to continued improvement.

- Shaping the direction and development of the school: the school principal cooperates with the School Governing Body (SGB), the SMT and the school community to create a shared vision, mission and strategic plans. Working together with the school community ensures that these are developed, implemented and sustained as an ongoing school improvement strategy.

- Managing quality and securing accountability: the principal has the responsibility to promote quality assurance and accountability. He/she should maintain effective quality systems and procedures within the learning and teaching environment. In order for proper school performance and its continuing improvement, all the stakeholders should fully participate.

- Developing and empowering the self, others and the wellness of the staff members: the principal should establish an effective communication mechanism within the school and its community. He/she should encourage the development of shared leadership, participation and decision-making. He/she should also value and respect other people's contributions.

- Managing the school as an organization: in supporting effective teaching and learning, the principal should develop and improve organizational structures and functions, that is, ensure that the school and its people, assets and all other resources are organized and

managed properly. There should be good control, monitoring and maintenance of all the school's assets, including the finances.

- Working with and for the immediate school community as well as the broader community: the principal's responsibility is to ensure that teaching and learning in the schools are linked to and related to the school's wider community. This can be a success if there is a good and effective working relationship among the principal, SGB and SMT, because the school's improvement is based on the mutual relationship of all the stakeholders.

- Managing human resources (the staff) in the school: one of the principal's responsibilities is to manage and support his or her staff. He/she is accountable for the staff establishment, creating an enabling environment in terms of control and monitoring, advertising posts, and the filling of vacant posts. The principal should advice and support the staff regarding conditions of service in relation to departmental policies, departmental regulations, and Acts.

- Management and advocacy of extra-mural activities: it is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that cultural diversity in terms of extra-curricular activities is practiced in the school, however, taking into account effective teaching and learning with the aim of building the image of the school in totality.

The implications of this document, particularly of the function of leading the learning school, are: to pronounce the typical actions which principals need to be familiar with, and to provide some illustrative indication of related knowledge requirements, to indicate that the leadership management of the learning school focuses directly on the principal's responsibility for the creation and maintenance of a learning environment for both the learners and the educators, to build upon the quality of leadership and successful outcomes observed in the best schools within the context of their communities, and to focus on the fundamental responsibility for the management of the curriculum, which has the objective of improving the quality of teaching and learning with the aim of improving the level of learner achievement in South African schools (DBE 2014:2 & 10).

It is in the light of the above discussion that this study has been undertaken.

1.1.3 Rationale for and assumptions of the study

I am currently the principal of a primary school with teaching experience in formerly disadvantaged primary schools (rural and township schools). Most South African primary schools in the rural and township areas are not producing satisfactory results in terms of literacy and numeracy, according to the ANA (See section 3.8.3). In particular, my experience as principal has highlighted a need for principals to act as instructional leaders who will create a safe, nurturing and supportive learning and teaching environment which will enable effective teaching and learning to take place and, hence, will improve learner achievement. Thus, certain factors which have an impact on learner achievement have influenced me to focus on this study (e.g., leadership skills, management skills, the school climate, school resources and school discipline). My assumption is that the type of leadership and management exercised in a particular school by a particular principal influences learner achievement. This assumption is grounded in the literature on the benefits of instructional leadership. Van Deventer and Kruger (2003:8) indicate that good instructional leadership is the path to good learning and teaching, as the principals will, as instructional leaders, ensure that there is at all times an effective culture of learning and teaching in their schools. The importance of principal instructional leadership behaviours continues to emerge as critical to the principal's impact on learner achievement. As such, the relationship between the principal as instructional leader and the learners' achievement in South African primary schools can be enhanced if the principal as instructional leader is in the position to assume responsibility for the key management aspects that build a productive school culture. The principal is, as the instructional leader of the school, responsible for informing the educators about new educational strategies, technologies, and other tools that promote effective instruction. Effective school managers are those who serve as instructional leaders, as they are concerned about the quality of teaching and learning, and the level of learner achievement (Vanderhaar, Munoz & Rodosky 2007:18). The Department of Basic Education (2014:2-5) intends to build upon the quality of leadership and the successful outcomes observed in the best schools within the context of their communities, and to address the concern of poor leadership

and inadequate outcomes of schooling in others. It believes that leadership and management, supported by well-conceived needs-driven leadership and the development of management, are critical to the achievement of its transformational goals for education. From this view point the Department of Basic Education and the Provincial Education Departments of the nine provinces, as well as their providers, will be able to design programmes of professional leadership and management development for aspirant and serving principals with the aim of improving learner achievement in South African schools.

It is further my assumption that a whole-school approach to improvement, which includes all elements of the learning environment, is the most effective approach for improving the school culture and learner achievement. The role of the principal as instructional leader is to create a culture that is conducive to teaching and learning, or a culture where educators, learners and parents work together to carry out the task of education. Instructional leadership consists of direct or indirect behaviour that considerably affects teacher instruction, and as a result, promotes learner achievement (Van Deventer & Kruger 2003:7). The principal as instructional leader should create a positive school climate, as it is generally accepted that the principal plays a decisive role in initiating and maintaining the school climate (Mullen 2007:100).

1.2 PROBLEM FORMULATION

Against the background of the above discussion, the following research question is formulated:
What is the role of the principal as instructional leader in improving learner achievement in primary schools in South Africa?

This research question is sub-divided into the following research questions:

- What theoretical perspectives inform the instructional role of the school principal? Which features of instructional leadership impact on learner achievement? What models of effective practice exist in this regard? These questions are dealt with in chapter 2.

- What are the contextual factors which shape primary school learner achievement, with special reference to rural and township communities? What are the findings of international and national assessments of the performance of primary school learners in South Africa, with particular emphasis on critical literacy and numeracy skills? What initiatives had been undertaken by the Department of Basic Education and the Gauteng Department of Education to improve the quality of primary schooling? These questions are addressed in chapter 3.

- What are the findings of an empirical inquiry which investigates the instructional leadership role of the principal in supporting learner achievement in primary schools in the Gauteng Province? This question is addressed in chapters 4 and 5.
- Based on the findings of the literature and the empirical inquiry, what recommendations can be made for the improvement of practice? This question is addressed in chapter 6.

1.3 THE RESEARCH AIMS

The main aim of the study is to explore the role of the principal as instructional leader in improving learner achievement in primary schools in South Africa.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To identify and explain the theoretical perspectives which inform the instructional role of the school principal, to determine which features of instructional leadership impact on learner achievement, and to identify models of effective practice in this regard.

- To determine the contextual factors which shape primary school learner achievement with reference to rural and township communities, to present the findings of international and national assessments of the performance of primary school learners in South Africa with particular emphasis on critical literacy and numeracy skills, to outline the initiatives taken by the Department of Basic Education and the Gauteng Department of Education to improve the quality of primary schooling.

- To design and carry out an empirical inquiry which investigates the instructional leadership role of the principal to improve learner achievement in primary schools in the Gauteng Province.

- To make recommendations for the improvement of practice based on the findings of the literature and the empirical inquiry.

1.4 METHOD

A sequential mixed method, informed by a literature review, is the research method to be used in this study.

1.4.1 Literature study

A *literature study* can be defined as an extensive, exhaustive, systematic and critical examination of publications relevant to the research project. The aims of a literature review is to create a conceptual or theoretical framework, to illustrate how the study will make a contribution to meaningful practice, to identify the methodological limitations of prior research, and to identify the findings which may be contradictory or ambiguous (McMillan &Schumacher 2010). A literature study of local and international sources on the principal as instructional leader in relation to learner achievement has been undertaken to uncover suitable theoretical frameworks and to determine the current state of the research in this area. The sources included journals, official documents of South African education, recognized authoritative books, research documents, periodicals, newspapers, media broadcasts and the Internet. The literature is focused on South African public education in general, however, is based on the Gauteng Province, in particular, the Tshwane South District.

1.4.2 Synopsis of empirical inquiry

Full details of the research design are contained in chapter 4. Only a brief overview is given in this section. A mixed method research design has been used whereby the researcher

systematically used the qualitative research paradigm for one phase of the research study and the quantitative research paradigm for the other phase (Johnson & Christensen 2004).In particular, a sequential strategy was used (Creswell 2003). The mixed method study was done in two phases: Phase 1 comprised the quantitative component (a survey); Phase 2 comprised the qualitative component (interviews), and was informed by the results of Phase 1. Both phases were conducted in the Tshwane South District, Gauteng Province, South Africa.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), *quantitative research* presents statistical results represented by numbers. It is usually based on some tenets of logical positivism, which assumes there are stable, social facts with a single reality, separated from the feelings and beliefs of individuals. It is further indicated that quantitative research seeks to establish relationships and to explain causes of change in measured social facts. It furthermore denotes that the researcher employs correlational designs to reduce error, bias and extraneous variables. Qualitative research provides a detailed description and analysis of the quality. It is further explained as any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Marvasti 2004). This is the research method which investigates data which are in the form of words rather than numbers (McMillan & Schumacher 2010). The phenomena are observed in its natural setup, that is, in the real world (Leedy & Ormrod 2001). Qualitative research aims at understanding the reality by discovering the meanings that people in a specific setting attach to it. This means that qualitative research studies qualities, and seeks to understand them in a particular context. By combining these two approaches in a mixed method study, the advantages of both approaches can be achieved. For this reasons, I have opted for a mixed method approach which will allow for a range of participant perspectives as well as depth and richness in terms of experience and opinion. See also chapter 4.

1.4.2.1 Phases 1 and 2: The selection of the schools

The schools represented in both Phases 1 and 2 of this research comprised public primary schools in the Tshwane South District, Gauteng Province.

1.4.2.2 Phase 1: The sampling of the respondents for the survey

Lior (2012:53) defines a *population* as an entire group of people or institutions, events or any other objects of study that one wants to describe and understand. The population in this study is defined as the total number of primary school principals in the Tshwane South District (N=128) and all the IDSOs employed by the Gauteng Department of Education, Tshwane South District(N=15).By means of a simple random sampling strategy, a sample was compiled of 60 principals of formerly disadvantaged public primary schools in the Tshwane South District, Gauteng Province. Furthermore, a comprehensive sample of 15 IDSOs was constituted. The rationale for including IDSOs in both phases of the research was, namely the fact that IDSOs possess extensive experience of instructional leadership in various schools; they were thus chosen because of being expert informants. According to Maponya (2010), expert informants are individuals who possess special knowledge, status or communication skills and are willing to share that knowledge with the researcher. In this context, the IDSOs are district officials with extensive knowledge of the principal as instructional leader. It was argued that they would be able to provide rich information regarding the role of the principal as instructional leader, and learner achievement in primary schools. IDSOs are based in the District Office and are allocated certain schools. Their main functions are to support, monitor and develop the principals in their daily managerial activities. I regarded these participants as being in the best position to provide information regarding instructional leadership and learner achievement.

1.4.2.3 Phase 2: The sampling of the participants for the interviews

With the view to the interviews, ten (N=10) primary school principals in the Tshwane South District were selected purposefully using the maximum variation sampling technique. The aim in maximum variation sampling is to obtain maximum differences of perceptions about a topic from information-rich informants (McMillan& Schumacher 2010). In this case all 60 primary schools as used in Phase 1 were listed; this time according to their status as performing or non-performing schools. In the group of performing schools, the five school principals in the schools were purposively selected. In the group of underperforming schools, five school principals in the schools were purposively selected. Systematic sampling was used to identify four IDSOs of the

Tshwane South District. The names of fourteen IDSOs were arranged in alphabetical order, and every 3rd name was selected, that is 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15.

1.4.3 Data-collection

The collection of the data is described in accordance with the research phase.

1.4.3.1 Phase 1: The survey

Data were collected from the two groups of respondents (principals and ISDOs) by means of two different questionnaires (cf. Appendix B & Appendix C) designed for each group respectively. The technical format of existing questionnaires (Khumalo 2009; Wang2013) was consulted during the design process and adapted; however, the questionnaires were predominantly self-designed. A covering letter to the questionnaires included the aim of the research, and conditions for participation. Both questionnaires consisted of six sections (comprising 60closed items) and one open-ended question. The questionnaires were pilot-tested and scrutinized by two expert reviewers. The refinement of the questionnaires took place accordingly. The questionnaires were e-mailed to the respondents after a telephonic invitation to participate in the survey. The respondents were asked to return the completed questionnaires by e-mail. A follow-up SMS message and a second e-mailed questionnaire were sent to the respondents a week after the initial distribution in order to encourage return.The response rate for the principals' questionnaires was 95% and for the IDSOs it was 53%.

1.4.3.2 Phase 2: Interviews and observation

Individual semi-structured interviews with the participants (10 principals and 5IDSOs) were used for data-gathering purposes in this phase. The interviews were based on a set of open-ended questions guided by an interview schedule for the principals and the IDSOs respectively (Appendix D& E)(De Vos, Strydom, Fouché &Delport2005). The participants were invited by e-mail, requesting interviews at a time and venue of their preference. The interviews were conducted in English and recorded on an audio recorder. Each group of respondents was asked

its own questions, according to an interview guide (Appendix D & Appendix E). I transcribed the interview data verbatim for close analysis.

1.4.4 Data-analysis

1.4.4.1 Phase 1: The survey

The data from the questionnaire were captured and subjected to statistical analysis with the help of an expert statistician, by means of the SPSS (Version 22) software programme.

1.4.4.2 Phase 2: Interviews

The interviews were transcribed, and its analysis commenced as soon as the first set of data was gathered, and ran parallel with the collection of the data, because each activity (data-collection and interim analysis) informs and drives the other activity (McMillan & Schumacher 2010). The data were coded and clustered into appropriate themes, guided by the interview questions. Suitable quotations were selected as rich data to illustrate and substantiate the themes (LeCompte & Schensul 2010:223).

1.4.5 Ethical issues

Ethical issues were dealt with as follows. Firstly, ethical clearance was obtained from the College of Education, University of South Africa (cf. Appendix I);permission was sought from the Gauteng Department of Education; and the written consent from all the participants of Phase 1 and Phase 2. Ethical issues and a request for permission for Phase 1 were dealt with in the covering letter to the questionnaire (see Appendices B and C). The participants gave their written consent to take part in the interviews during Phase 2 by signing an agreement (see Appendices H and G). The participation in both phases was voluntary and anonymous, and the right to withdraw or refuse certain questions was upheld. The participants and the schools with which they were associated were coded rather than being referred to by their names (McMillan & Schumacher 2010). An electronic summary of the findings would be made available to the

Gauteng Department of Education and to participants on request after the successful completion of the study.

1.5 DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPTS

Key concepts as used in this study receive attention in the following paragraphs in order to define them clearly so as to eliminate any misunderstanding.

1.5.1 Instructional leader

An *instructional leader* is an individual whose behavior is officially designed by the school and directly affects the behavior of the educators in such a way as to facilitate the pupils' learning and to achieve the goals of the school. In this research the principal is viewed as the instructional leader whose responsibility it is to create a trusting relationship between the educators and the learners, and to explain the vision of the school (Glatthorn, Jones & Bullock 2006). Wing (2013) adds that the principals as instructional leaders in highly productive schools are not only educational managers but they are instructional leaders as well, because they spend more time in the direct supervision and support of the educators.

1.5.2 IDSOs

IDSOs are Institutional Development and Support Officials; these officials were formerly called Circuit Managers. The IDSOs are in most cases formerly school principals who had been promoted to senior positions within the Department of Education at District level. In this study, they are the key informants; they possess extensive experience of instructional leadership from various schools. Their duties are to monitor and report the performance of the schools under their jurisdiction and to give support to the principals of such schools (GDE 2011/12:109).

1.6 CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter one: This chapter presents an orientation to the problem, and comprises of the introduction, background to the study, the problem formulation, the aim of the study, and the method.

Chapter two: In this chapter the theoretical perspective that informs the instructional role of the school principal, the features of instructional leadership that impact on learner achievement, and the models and examples of effective practice that exist in this regard are dealt with.

Chapter three: This chapter provides an overview of the current situation regarding the performance of primary schools in South Africa, the contextual factors which shape primary school learner achievement, with special reference to the rural and township communities, and also initiatives which have been taken by the Department of Basic Education and other bodies in this regard.

Chapter four: The chapter includes the research design and a brief explanation of the theory underpinning the methodology, as well as the way that the researcher planned to do the research.

Chapter five: This chapter provides the findings of the empirical inquiry.

Chapter six: Based on the findings of the literature and the empirical inquiry, recommendations are made for the improvement of practice.

1.7 CONCLUSION

In most schools in South Africa, particularly in the formerly disadvantaged schools, learner achievement is a matter of great concern. The principals as instructional leaders should play a key role in creating an environment conducive to learning in order for the learners to achieve and to produce better results.

In the following chapter a review of the existing literature regarding the role of the principal as instructional leader is given in the light of key theoretical perspectives.

CHAPTER 2
THE INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL: THEORIES AND APPLICATIONS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the literature study related to the theoretical perspectives that inform the instructional role of the school principal, the features of instructional leadership that impact on learner achievement and the models of instructional leadership that exist in this regard. The literature review in this chapter has been presented to inform the empirical inquiry. No single perspective or model has been used to frame the study.

The emphasis is on instructional leadership in the primary school. The reason for this emphasis is based on the tenet that education is a progressive and cumulative process of acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes. Many pervasive pedagogical problems in secondary schools are rooted in educational deficits that were acquired in primary schools. Learners who did not master the skills of numeracy and literacy or acquire the necessary orientations to meaning that the secondary school requires will not be able to assimilate new information or acquire new skills. Economically, it is also more cost-effective and effective for citizens to acquire the basic educational skills in the early years of schooling since the opportunity cost of the learner's time is at its lowest (Spaull 2012:11).

2.2 LEADERSHIP

Firstly, it is appropriate to define the concept of leadership in order to lay a foundation for the understanding of the notion of instructional leadership. According to Northouse (2013:2), the literature is replete with varied and sometimes conflicting definitions of the term.

Leadership is the ability and the potential to influence any group or organization towards the achievement of the identified goals (Department of Education 2004:11). The process of leadership is the use of non-coercive influence to direct and co-ordinate the activities of the members of an organized group towards the achievement of the objectives held in common by the group. According to Niyazi (2009:436), leadership is the ability to gather individuals around some specific goals by inspiring them to reach these objectives through collaboration. To do this the leaders require qualities such as vision, confidence and firmness. Supovitz, Sirinides and May (2009:36) argue that leadership is not exclusively related to a position but rather is grounded in the act of establishing influence over others; it involves a process whereby one person intentionally exerts influence over other people to guide, structure and facilitate the activities and relationships in a group or organization. Applied to educational settings, the principal is the school's leader who has the responsibility to influence the educators, the support staff, the learners and the parents towards the realization of the objectives of the school as organisation.

Daresh (2001:105) sees *leadership* as an interaction between persons in which one presents information of a sort and in such a manner that the other becomes convinced that his or heroutcomes will be improved if he or she behaves in the recommended manner. This definition suggests that the predominant feature of leadership is an interpersonal relationship where one individual influences, guides or controls the behavior of another. The Department of Education (2008:18) states that *leadership* is the ability to influence people towards the achievement of the goals; it is conceptualized as an influence process that depends on a person's behavior being recognized and at least tacitly acknowledged to be 'leadership' by others who thereby cast themselves into the role of followers, thus consenting to be led. From this perspective, leadership is the process of being perceived as a leader through the social construction of the meaning of leadership by one's followers.

The effectiveness of schools in educating learners to achieve better is highly dependent upon the nature and style of the leadership provided by the individual principal within the particular school. Wing (2013: 274) argues that scholars in educational leadership agree that distributed leadership is the most recent significant conceptual development to emerge in the field.

Distributed leadership is characterized as a form of collective leadership in which educators develop expertise by working together. The distributed leadership perspective therefore recognizes that there are multiple leaders and that leader activities are widely shared within and between the organizations. Distributed leadership acknowledges the work of all individuals who contribute to the leadership practice, where they are formally designated or defined as leaders or not. It contains the elements of effective team-work, shared collaborative and participative leadership concepts, democratic leadership and teacher leadership. Thus, the principal as the leader should see herself/himself as a key part of a flat organization and a member of a team, rather than a projected image of someone too important. It is further stipulated that leadership is about developing a shared vision with all the players and living the dream or vision with them (Australian Education Leader, 2007:36).

In the definitions of the concept *leadership* above, there is recurrence of the word *influence*. The word *influence* means the power to change a person's actions, character or beliefs. Leading is persuasion through influence. In leading the principal stimulates, co-ordinates and directs group interactions and activities in a given situation to achieve certain goals. The principal as instructional leader should be able to give the educators clear direction on the work they are supposed to carry out. Furthermore, the above definitions stress the importance of relationships, particularly the relationship between leader and followers. Another element of leadership that was identified is the importance of a vision with which to inspire followers.

2.2.1 Leadership and management

According to Ali (2013), the terms *leadership* and *management* are distinguishable, but more often than not they are used interchangeably. Leadership is frequently seen to be associated with visionary flair and the ability to motivate and inspire others and to implement innovation. Managers are more often associated with administration and the standard functions of planning, organizing effectively, leading and controlling resources**.** In support of the above definition, Heystek (2007:496) defines *management* as a process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling, with the objectives of effectiveness in an organization. Frequently, in the school context, the principals increasingly focus on the daily managerial tasks arising from educational

policies, regulations and rules. Leadership, on the other hand, as indicated by Heystek (2007:493), emphasizes relationships with people on communication, motivation and emotional intelligence. It is further indicated that a leader is more open to risk-taking while being less restricted by prescribed policies.

Jones (2012:3) differentiates between the two terms, leadership and management, as applied to the school, by stating that the instructional manager predominantly supervises the more predictable aspects of an organization such as the budget and equipment. Instructional leaders oversee the less certain and more fluid aspects of curriculum and classroom instruction. Jones (2012:43) stipulates that school managers are concerned with directing and monitoring what is already in place, by knowing the rules, attending to detail, reducing tasks to procedures, persevering, and negotiating. In this sense a school manager is focused on getting things right, while school leaders assume the responsibility for 'purposing' a school. Jones (2012) adds that leadership is not only about leadership style, but is also a key element thereof. The leader must have knowledge, properly acquired by formal training and experience, communicate his or her insight to others, and carry out purposes. Jones (2012:44) identifies the following as the key qualities of leadership, namely "passion, curiosity, discipline, entrepreneurships and humility". The latter is essential to inspire a vision, enthusiasm and direction in order to ensure an effective school.

Kadalie (2006:21) believes that every leader must have some management capacity and every manager must have some leadership capacity. Kadalie (2006:20) tabulates the following differences between the two concepts, leadership and management.

Table 2.1: Kadalie's differences between a leader and a manager

LEADER	MANAGER
The leader does the right things (effective).	The manager does things right (efficiently).
The leader innovates (introduces new things).	The manager administers (controls the affairs of the business).
The leader focuses on people (relationships must work).	The manager focuses on the system (orderly, and arranges things) and structures.
The leader inspires trust, and knows how to empower his/her followers.	The manager relies on control (regulates affairs).
The leader has a long-range perspective (interested in the future).	The manager has a short-range view (focuses on the present).
The leader is interested in change.	The manager prefers stability (making sure that business is firmly established).
The leader is caught up with vision (farsighted, entrepreneur, adventuresome).	The manager is pre-occupied with rules and regulations.
The leader has the courage of his/her own convictions.	The manager is consensus-driven (collective agreement and opinion).
The leader is more concerned with the issues of substance (the essential part of the business).	The manager is motivated by the question of procedures.
The leader asks what and why.	The manager asks how and when.
The leader knows how to simplify.	The manager enjoys complexity.
The leader has his/her eyes on the horizon (knows what is about to happen or that which is apparent).	The manager has his/her eyes on the bottom line (the crucial factor or essential point).
The leader uses intuition (the understanding of or feeling things immediately without conscious reasoning).	The manager relies on logic (the ability to reason).
The leader challenges the status quo (the state of affairsas it is now).	The manager accepts the status quo.

The leader initiates.	The manager follows orders.

Source: Kadalie (2006:20)

The quality of leadership and management determines the success or failure of a school; as such, a school principal has to be both a leader and a manager. The school principal should embrace all the qualities of a leader as well as of a manager equally.

2.3 THE PRINCIPAL AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER

In this section the literature on the role of principal as instructional leader in improving learning achievement is reviewed. According to Gumus and Akcaoglu (2013:290), principals are instructional leaders whose primary aim is the improving of the learning environment and the teaching practices in their schools. The principals of effective schools focus more on curriculum and instruction and less on managerial tasks, making instructional leadership the dominant paradigm for school leaders (Gumus & Akcaoglu 2013:290). Vanderhaar et al. (2007:18) further emphasize that instructional leadership behaviors are critical to teacher instruction, and hence to learner achievement. The principal is, as the instructional leader of the school, responsible for informing the educators about new educational strategies, technologies, and other tools that promote effective instruction. Nelson and Sassi (2005:125) point out that principals as instructional leaders fulfill the following tasks, namely hiring and supervising educators, monitoring the quality of instruction in the school, and communicating with the parents and district officials about the school's academic programme. Thus, instructional leadership requires expertise and knowledge of subject matter content, pedagogy, good instruction and knowledge of how to lead. Principals should retain a stance of enquiry about learning, teaching and the effectiveness of certain instructional strategies, and a variety of ideas about instructional practice. This stance may be motivated by external demand, such as the need to improve instruction so that the learners will achieve high academic performance, or by a genuine inquisitiveness as instructional leader about the process of learning, about subject instruction, or how children of diverse abilities and backgrounds should be taught. According to Mamabolo (2002:30), the instructional leader is an individual whose behavior is officially designed by the school, and directly affects the behavior of the educators in such a way as to facilitate the pupils' learning

and to achieve the goals of the school. Niyazi (2009:437) points out that the principal in highly productive school is not only the educational manager but he or she is an instructional leader as well, because he/she spends more time in the direct supervision and support of educators.

Girvin (2005:10) argues that the principal as instructional leader is a key player in ensuring the success of any staff development programme designed to improve teacher efficiency and learner achievement; the classroom educators are the practitioners who ultimately deliver instructional and curricular innovations. The principal as instructional leader is at the heart of the effort as the visionary, organizer, cheerleader and evaluator. Girvin (2005:10) adds that as the instructional leader of the school, the principal has the obligation of developing and promoting the school's goal and objectives in order to enhance the learners' achievement. With the macro-picture of the school in mind, the principal as instructional leader identifies a current need and future curricular and instructional innovation that reflects the learners' needs.

Similarly, Gumus and Akcaoglu (2013:29) point out that traditionally the instructional role of the principal included several aspects, namely goal-setting, promoting a positive school climate, coordinating curriculum activities and supervising instruction. According to this viewpoint, principals were primarily responsible for managing all the instructional processes in the school. However, in current practices, it is expected from the principals to do more, namely share their leadership responsibilities with the educators and collaborate with them on the curriculum, instruction and assessment in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. In addition, one of the main responsibilities of today's instructional leader is gathering data on learner achievement and analyzing and using it to improve the teaching and learning in the school. According to Vanderhaar et al. (2007:18), educational researchers have continually identified the principal as an essential force in school reform efforts, and the principal can account for about 20% of the school's impact on learner achievement.

According to Van Deventer and Kruger (2003:8), the instructional leadership of the principal relates to the core activities of the school, which are teaching and learning in the classroom. It also involves beliefs, decisions, strategies and tactics which the principals utilize to ensure instructional effectiveness in each classroom. Instructional leadership occurs when the principal

provides direction, resources and support both to the educators and the learners, with the aim of improving learning and teaching, hence improving learner achievement. A good principal as instructional leader paves the way for good learning and teaching, and ensures that there is at all times a sound culture of learning and teaching in the school.

In reviewing the literature Wing (2013:274) ascertained that the instructional leader should create a shared sense of purpose in the school, nurture continuous improvement through school development planning, develop a school culture aimed at innovation and the improvement of teaching and learning, coordinate the curriculum and monitor learner outcomes, shape the reward structure of the school, organize and monitor a wide range of activities and be a visible presence in the school. Wing's (2013) overview illustrates the multifunctional and demanding role of the principal as manager and as leader.

According to Gumus and Akcaoglu (2013:292), the three most effective leadership practices in the school are as follows:

- Situational awareness: The principal is aware of the details and nuances of interactions in the school, and uses information to address the current potential problems.
- Intellectual stimulation: The principal ensures that the teaching staff members are up-to-date with the relevant pedagogical theories and practices, and incorporates discussions of these during professional development sessions.
- Input: The principal ensures that the educators collaborate in the design and implementation of important decisions.

Furthermore, Gumus and Akcaoglus (2013:291) add that computer competence is another important skill expected from the principal as instructional leader. Competence in the use of technology is not widely mentioned in the literature on instructional leadership. Technology makes it easier for today's principals to effectively fulfill their instructional leadership duties, such as tracking information related to instruction, analyzing and making sense of data, communicating with and providing information or feedback to the educators about instructional matters, making presentations on professional development activities, and finding and reaching

outside resources for school improvement. In this context, Gumus and Akcaoglus (2013:292) propose that 21st century school principals should be able to use technology in order to carry out their daily tasks effectively.

Green (2000:22.) argues that instructional leadership should not be confused with educational leadership. While both are important, educational leadership relates to the school's vision and the principal's overall knowledge of the curriculum, programmes and educational thinking. Instructional leadership is concerned with what a teacher actually does, and the principal's support in this respect. Green (2000:23) lists the following aspects of teaching and learning that fall within the sphere of the principal as instructional leader. Although the principal is not necessarily directly involved in all these functions on a daily basis, he or she should ensure that the teaching staff carries out the following:

- establish routine start-up and end-off lesson procedures;
- give clear classroom instruction;
- develop classroom rules with the learners, the educators and the classes;
- allocate sufficient time to individual learners within the class;
- manage the learners' behavior;
- implement classroom rules in a fair manner;
- mediate between learner and learner, or learner and teacher, when things are not working well;
- understand and apply a school-wide educational philosophy at classroom level;
- integrate learning technology into mainstream class activities;
- prepare for and model scientific experiments;
- incorporate experiential learning and enterprise education into the classroom for relevance;
- give considered attention to literacy development in the class;
- test for learning difficulties and take remedial action;
- develop and implement educational plans and behavior for individual learners;
- counsel and support learners who have left school with redefined objectives;

- account for gender and ethnic differences in the selection and teaching of subject content;
- incorporate drug education and the principle of harm minimization into all subjects;
- assist the educators to prepare lessons and homework assignments to cater for a varied learning style;
- utilize adult citizens to expand the curriculum and experiences of the learners in the classroom; and
- plan for and hold successful conferences with the parents.

According to Daresh (2001:119), principals who spent nearly all of their time either teaching classes or observing educators were legitimately serving as instructional leaders. As instructional leaders the principals should coordinate the school's instructional programme, solve instructional problems collaboratively with the educators, help the educators to secure resources, and create opportunities for staff development. The role of the principal as instructional leader is to create a culture that is conducive to teaching and learning, and a culture where the educators, learners and parents work together to accomplish the task of education. Instructional leadership consists of direct or indirect behavior that significantly affects teacher instruction and as a result, learner performance.

Wing (2013:272) elaborates that the principal as instructional leader needs to be, more than ever before, professionally and internationally equipped with the necessary skills and competence so as to face the ever-changing challenges and to meet the ever-increasing demand of the 21st century. The principal should play an important role in helping the senior educators to attain the school's goal – to improve learner achievement - by sharing instructional leadership with them and by working side-by-side with them in every aspect of administration. Thus, the school principals will have to act like strategic leaders who need to take the initiative and responsibility for addressing the identified insufficiencies in their skills and capacities so as to ensure they are able to respond adequately to their new roles and responsibilities. Mbatha (2004:31) argues that the leadership behaviors of the principal that are described as instructional leadership behaviors should be those associated with high levels of learner academic achievement.

In the next section the particular features of instructional leaders that impact on learner achievement are expounded in full.

2.4 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL FUNCTIONING

Important aspects of school functioning determine the success of teaching and learning in the school and hence affect learner achievement, directly or indirectly. As instructional leader, the principal should manage these appropriately and efficiently. These features are as follows, namely the school climate, the classroom climate, instructional programmes, the management of different types of resources, and community and parent involvement. In the following sections these features will be discussed in detail.

2.4.1 The school climate

The term *school climate* is not easy to define. It refers broadly to the feelings and attitudes that are evoked by the environment and the atmosphere in the school as experienced by the educators, the learners, the parents, and any other persons (Loukas 2007). According to Sebastian and Allensworth (2012:4), the *school climate* refers to the beliefs, values, and everyday interactions among the school personnel, the parents and the learners. It includes the basic needs, such as order and safety at the school, which can have a strong effect on the motivation and the learning of both the educators and the learners. The concept of school climate is not meant as a tool for judging the quality of a particular school, even if some climate profiles may seem more appealing than others. The value of the conceptualization of school climate is in its usefulness for analyzing a school, for understanding how to introduce new ideas to the school and how to encourage the educators to engage in more goal-related behavior. The principal plays a dynamic and vital role in creating and nurturing a positive school climate.

Loukas (2007:1-2) identifies three important dimensions of the school which affects the school climate, namely the physical environment of the school, the social environment and the academic environment. The *physical environment* refers to the attractiveness of the infrastructure, orderliness, safety and comfort. The *social environment* refers to the quality of the relationships

among the stakeholders, and fair treatment and participation in decision-making. The *academic environment* refers to the quality of instruction, assessment and the reporting of learner progress. The school principal as instructional leader is responsible for a positive climate in all three domains.

Daresh (2001:96) identifies the following kinds of school climate:

- Open climate – a dynamic school that is moving towards its goals while its staff members are satisfied in their personal needs.
- Autonomous climate – the school in which leadership emerges primarily from different groups and the formal leader exerts little control over the staff members.
- Control climate – a highly personal, but over-controlled environment in which the personal needs are satisfied, but with little attention being paid to task-accomplishment.
- Paternal climate – the school in which the formal leader tries consistently to constrain leadership emerging from the group; the leader tries to do it all.
- Closed climate - the school that demonstrates considerable apathy by all its members.

Creating the right kind of school climate is essential, as the school climate has a strong directive influence on the motivation and achievement of the educators and the learners. The principal as instructional leader of the school should therefore consciously strive towards creating a positive and open school climate. According to Tienken (2010:31), an environment that promotes strength and possibility is better able to deal with the problems that may occur in the school. The principals should anticipate problems before they occur, realize that problems have solutions, and see themselves as part of the solution.

2.4.1.1 The principal's role in creating a positive school climate

Mullen (2007:100) argues that a principal can change the school climate but cannot create an entirely new climate in the school. He suggests that the school principals should reshape school climate by firstly understanding the school's history and current culture. Then the principals should identify the core values of the school and identify the aspects that are healthy or

unhealthy. The positive elements of the school should be reinforced and the negative aspects should be addressed.

The following points are regarded as the basic components of the principal's task as initiator and caretaker of a particular positive school climate (Van Deventer & Kruger 2003:11-12).

The principal should:

- Ensure that there are professionally-oriented school structures in place to increase the educators' job satisfaction and an open atmosphere.
- Formulate and articulate the school's mission and vision by means of the participative engagement of all stakeholders to establish a positive and sound climate of cooperation in the school.
- Ensure a balance between teacher autonomy and responsibility so that the educators are both accountable and empowered. Although the professional status of an educator depends on a number of factors that are often outside a principal's control, the most essential of these is in his/her hands, namely the capacity to regard the educators' contribution as meaningful both to him/herself and to the school.

Mullen (2007:99) maintains that the school climate powerfully influences the educators in how they dress, what they talk about, their willingness to change, the practice of instruction and the emphasis given to the learners for learning. Van Deventer and Kruger (2003:12) identify the following educator behaviors which may lead to a positive school climate, namely respectful treatment of colleagues and learners, a high educator morale and commitment to teaching, and openness among the educators, and the establishment of friendships. Conversely, where the educators are not committed to the task of teaching or do not get along with their colleagues, it may lead to a negative or closed-school climate.

Kearney, Kelsey and Herrington (2013:318) elaborate that any leader striving to change an organization benefits from working on the areas of identified needs collectively, continuously and thoughtfully. The ability of the principal as instructional leader to lead intentionally and

thoughtfully has a powerful effect on the school and the educators' ability to take risks. Where the educators and the learners are secure, they enjoy optimal opportunities to teach and to learn. Despres (2008:121) stresses the need for a safe and supportive environment. If the staff members feel safe to take risks and to be creative, individual strengths and abilities emerge and they feel empowered to make personal choices about pedagogy.

Based on this discussion, the principal as instructional leader should make the school climate one where the educators enjoy teaching and the learners feel at home and enjoy learning.

2.4.2 Classroom conditions

Learning and teaching takes place primarily in the classroom, and the children's learning is directly influenced by the conditions in the classroom. Classroom conditions require the attention of the principal as instructional leader who aims at improving learner achievement (Leithwood et al.2004).

Pollard (2002:115) defines the *classroom environment* in terms of the perceptions of the educators and the learners, rather than on relying on outside observers. Three basic qualities are required if the educators are to establish a warm, person-centered relation with the learners, namely acceptance, which involves acknowledging and receiving children as they are; genuineness, which implies that such acceptance is real and heartfelt; and empathy, which suggests that the teacher is able to appreciate what the classroom events feel like to the learners. The warmth and positive regard which the educators may wish to offer their classes should be unconditional (Pollard 2002). Sebastian and Allensworth (2012:5) agree that it is the quality of instruction that the learners receive in the classrooms that matters for their learning. Good relationships in the classroom must be based on the teacher having earned the respect of the learners by demonstrating empathy and understanding, and by establishing a framework of order and authority. As instructional leader the principal should model positive relationships with the educators and the learners and monitor the relationships between the educators and the learners in the classroom.

Brooks, Solloway and Allen(2007:9) note that classrooms should be pleasant spaces for learning. This is an aspect which requires the attention of the principal as instructional leader. He or she should ensure that the display areas, the learners' portfolios, the graded assignments and papers, and the teacher's desk should affirm curricular objectives and instructional practices. By visiting the classrooms regularly, the principal can, as instructional leader, detect health or safety issues in the classroom environment, such as faulty lighting, the lack of adequate ventilation, and broken furniture or equipment. However, Leithwood, Patten and Jantzi (2010:419) note that principals as instructional leaders exercise an indirect influence on achievement by ensuring that the school conditions are acceptable. Where conditions are not acceptable, the principal should identify the resources that are needed, rally support for renovation or repairs, and organize funds.

2.4.2.1 Class size

The contribution of the appropriate class size to the learners' learning, particularly in the primary schools and during the first two years of schooling, is well-documented, namely that a reduction from approximately 30 learners to approximately 15 learners in the class has the potential to significantly increase learner achievement. (Leithwood et al. 2004:59). In South Africa Spaull (2011:27) identified the important effect of class size on reading performance. Where the class size comprises of more than 30 learners, there was a negative and moderately large impact on reading performance. The benefits of small classes to the learners are most significant where the learners are socially and economically disadvantaged (Finn 2002). According to Pollard (2002:98), an incorporative classroom is one which was consciously designed to enable each learner to act as a full participant in class activities and also to feel himself or herself to be a valued member of the class. This is more difficult to achieve in large classes where the educators experience curriculum pressure and discipline issues. The educators have the responsibility to distribute their efforts in the class equitably. Small classes have the effect of improving the teacher's morale, increase the time spent by the educators on individual instruction and less on classroom management, and give rise to fewer disruptions and discipline problems (Van Deventer &Kruger 2003:17-18).

Overcrowded classes imply that more fundraising is required in order to recruit and hire more staff members who would increase the number of the teaching staff and reduce the teacher-learner ratio. However, this aspect is not always easy for the principals because changing the class sizes needs extra finances, and getting sponsorship is a difficult matter. The average for Gauteng Department of Education for state paid educators to learners in primary schools is 35:1; however, a number of schools exceed this ratio (Maringe & Prew 2014: 123).

2.4.2.2 Teaching load

According to Leithwood et al. (2004:60), *teaching load* refers to both the total number of the learners and the subjects being taught by the educators, as well as the diversity of the learners' needs. This view is based on the premise that effective instruction depends on a deep understanding of the cognitive resources brought to the classroom by the individual learners.

According to the Employment of Educators Act, Act 76 of 1998 (Education Law and Policy Handbook, 1999), in respect of the teaching load in South Africa, it is indicated as follows:

a) All educators should be at school during the formal school day, which should not be less than 7 hours per day.
b) Scheduled teaching time per post level: The time allocated for teaching in respect of different posts will differ according to the size of the school. In smaller schools the principals and their deputies are required to do more teaching than in larger schools with more staff members. The actual hours must therefore be established in relation to the curriculum needs of the school, the timetable and the staff establishment of the school.

The following may be considered as guidelines in determining the scheduled teaching time:

- Post level: 1 - between 85% and 92%
- Post level: 2 - between 85% and 90%
- Deputy Principal: 60%
- Principal: - between 10% and 92%, depending on his/her post level.

Leithwood et al. (2004:60) further elaborate that evidence indicates that a reduction in the teaching load may be achieved by means of making use of teaching assistants in order for the educators to be able to contribute to the efforts of sustained development and to devote their energies to the priority of teaching. These measures all have cost implications which must be considered by the principal as instructional leader within the parameters set by the school system.

2.4.2.3 Homework

Homework is a form of informal or daily assessment, and is used for monitoring and enhancing the learners' progress. The types of homework given should be appropriate to the age and the developmental level of the learners in the phase. The homework should be carefully designed to cover the content of the subject (DBE 2011:3). Leithwood et al. (2004:61) argue that homework has both a positive and a negative effect. On the positive side, homework may contribute to the immediate achievement in learning, the long-term academic outcomes, independent problem-solving and greater self-discipline, and the parents may be more involved in the schooling of their children. Conversely, the learners may lose interest in the academic material, become fatigued, lack the opportunities for leisure and community activities, and come under pressure from their parents. Homework sometimes exacerbates the differences between high and low achievers. Brodie, Lelliott and Davis (2002:548) highlight the fact that educators who maintain a culture of homework are in the minority, since many pupils do not do their homework, and as such many educators find it difficult to enforce it. The principal as instructional leader should ensure that the school designs and implements an appropriate homework policy.

2.4.2.4 Classroom climate

Classroom climate is an outflow of the school climate (cf. 2.4.1) According to Sebastian and Allensworth (2012:5), the climate of the classroom includes the beliefs, values and everyday interactions among the educators and the learners, including the order and safety of the classroom. Educators who create positive learning climates in the classroom hold their learners

to high expectations, pressing them to engage in academic work with depth and rigor. Charles and Senter (2005:53) indicate that classrooms function best when they provide a positive and structured climate that reflects warmth, support and pleasant circumstances with very low levels of fear. Fear should be limited to the anxiety of not living up to one's own potential, of letting others down, or of not acting in one's own best interests. It should never be fear of personal danger. The educators should establish and maintain a positive psychosocial environment where the learners feel safe from any fear. In this respect two aspects are considered, namely the positive aspect of how the educators use their power constructively to encourage, to reinforce appropriate learner actions and to enhance self-esteem; and the potential for the destructive use of such power (Charles & Senter 2005:54). Another important concern is the manner how the educators enforce the rules and penalize the learners when the rules are broken. Effective educators will enforce discipline while preserving individual dignity.

According to Pollard (2002: 125), a positive climate is created when the educators use their power constructively to encourage and reinforce appropriate learner actions and to enhance the learners' positive feelings. For a learner to be positive involves constant attempts to build on success. The point is to make maximum use of the learners' achievement to generate still more; the target for learning achievement is appropriate and is the subject of genuine praise. The appropriateness of the achievement is a matter for each teacher to judge, but the aim should be to encourage all the learners to accept challenges and to achieve success. Lunenburg and Ornstein (2008:13) maintain that classroom practices such as identifying similarities and differences, summarizing and note-taking, receiving re-enforcement for their efforts and recognition for their achievements, doing homework and practicing, using non-linguistic representations, learning cooperatively, setting objectives and asking questions, generally increase learner achievement. Thus, effective educators are likely to attempt to use their power positively and constructively, and they will be particularly aware of the potential damage which can be done to relationships by over-hasty reactions to some classroom crisis.

The principal as instructional leader should monitor the classroom climate and encourage the educators to establish a positive climate.

2.4.2.5 Classroom rules

Classroom rules are related to the issue of a safe classroom environment. Docking (2002:21) indicates that when a class has no clear rules, the relationships will be poor and the children will 'test the limits' to see what they can get away with. Rules for individual classrooms constitute one way of pre-empting misbehavior. They help to establish a framework within which the children are helped to understand what counts as acceptable behavior, and to which the educators can easily refer in reminding the children of what is expected of them. Sebastian and Allensworth (2012:12) further stipulate that clear classroom rules dictate the level of order and reduce interruptions to teaching and learning. Learner misbehavior or other negative events easily hamper potential learning. Classes with effective management techniques have better achievement levels. In developing rules for the classroom, the teacher needs to address a number of issues (Sebastian & Allensworth 2012:12), such as the content of the rules, the number of rules, the formulation of the rules, the learners' say in the designing of the rules and the communication of the rules to the learners. Classroom rules should ensure safety and personal welfare, provide effective conditions for teaching and learning, and help the learners to develop considerate behavior and respect for school property.

The classroom's rules emanate from the general Code of Conduct of the school. This simply implies that the classroom rules support the objectives of the Code of Conduct of the school, which is, namely maintaining classroom discipline, among others. It is therefore imperative for the school principal to approve the classroom rules before the learners can be exposed to them and they can be implemented in the classroom.

2.4.3 The curriculum

The principal's instructional leadership role is directly linked to managing the instructional programme or curriculum of the school. Despite the complexity and volume of a principal's task, his/her main responsibility remains that of ensuring that effective teaching and learning take place in order to enhance learner achievement. The principal as instructional leader should know and co-ordinate the curriculum and instructions as well as supervise and evaluate the learners'

progress. Van Deventer and Kruger (2003:8) allude to the fact that the principal is a central role-player in ensuring the success of the teaching and learning outcomes of a school by supervising teaching, monitoring learner progress, and promoting an instructional climate in the school and the classroom.

According to Kennedy and Lee (2008:90), the word *curriculum* is used to describe a national or regional document. The word has, however, also other meanings, and the official curriculum needs to be seen in relationship to other forms of the curriculum. At school level it is usually interpreted to suit the local conditions, and then interpreted even further as the educators plan their lessons. The above researchers further emphasize that it is a document used to indicate directions in the form of objectives, goals or expected outcomes. Daresh (2001:261) simply defines the curriculum as 'what' the schools and the individual educators choose to do in their encounters with the learners. However, Charles and Senter (2005:24) argue that there exists no consensus as to what the term *curriculum* means. Some researchers define it as experiences under the auspices of the school; others consider it as a series of planned events intended to have educational consequence; while some researchers refer to a curriculum as activities, processes and structural arrangements intended for and used in the school and classroom as a means of accomplishing the educative function. Others describe it as formal and informal content and as a process used to help the learners grow in respect of knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, appreciation and values. According to Charles and Senter (2005:27), a school curriculum is intended to expose the learners to important subjects and topics, thereby causing them to acquire certain knowledge, attitudes and values. These goals are expressed in health, good citizenship, literacy and mathematics. In addition, a curriculum is intended to produce attitudes of openness to ideas, a willingness to try, and acceptance of others, knowledge of facts and their application, and growth in thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Charles and Senter (2005) further indicate that the concern here is not with preparing and organizing a curriculum, but with managing it. In curriculum management, the principal as instructional leader should bring about purposeful interaction between the learners and the information and the skills they are intended to acquire. The principal as instructional leader should accomplish this interaction as effectively and efficiently as possible.

2.4.4 School time

According to Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006:239),the efficient allocation of time spent on a task can increase learner achievement. This includes the allocated time, the amount of time that is actually assigned for a class, engaged time, the amount of time allocated where the learner is actively engaged in the learning activity, and academic learning time, a refinement of engaged time which reflects the quality of the learning. According to Leithwood et al. (2010:679), there are four distinct ways in which instructional time could be conceptualized and measured.

- The total amount of time potentially available for instruction, typically measured as learner attendance rates, has reported effects on the learners' learning varying from weakly significant to quite strong.
- The total amount of time actually devoted to instruction has moderate effects on the learners' learning.
- The content of the curriculum in which the learners spend time studying, and the opportunity to learn, has quite strong effects on learning.
- The learners' total amount of academically engaged time is strongly associated with the learners' learning.

The decisive factor, as regards the principal as instructional leader, is how to control time or to use it appropriately within the school environment.

2.4.4.1 The principal's deployment of time

Not much research has been done on leadership practices for optimizing the instructional time in schools. Prinsloo (2009:70) explains that school principals and educators often declare that the lack of time is the biggest obstacle in the fulfillment of their duties and responsibilities, and therefore a major problem. However, many educators, while working long hours, do not work effectively. Effective time management aims at improving one's quality of life by directing the limited time at one's disposal to activities that are satisfying and worthwhile. Time management, like any other management task, benefits from analysis and planning.

The principal as instructional leader can implement the following practices to model the effective use of time to his or her staff:

a) Be at work a few minutes early. This will give you the time to prepare yourself for the day ahead and sets a good example to the staff members.

b) Make use of a diary. Work according to a diary which allows a check on what lies ahead for the day and the rest of the week.

c) Follow an annual-objectives plan. This will assist you as instructional leader to achieve your objectives.

d) Take time to prepare. Be prepared for meetings with staff members, appointments with parents and other stakeholders, and for school assemblies and other events. This will ensure that you move quickly through the key issues without wasting time on unimportant points.

e) Keep to time allocation. Decide ahead of time how long you need to spend on a task, and keep to time limits.

f) Be punctual. Arriving early for meetings and appointments sets a good example and ensures that the meetings start on time, and thus protects the educators' contact time in the classroom.

g) Take positive action against things that waste time, such as interruptions. Schedule appointments for specific times during the day, which then must coincide with the periods set aside by you for consultation. You should not allow visits or phone calls to educators during learner contact time, unless in the case of an absolute emergency.

h) Do not leave things unfinished. If you have not finished all the objectives by the end of the day, plan to stay late, or finish them at home. Start each new day with the objectives of the previous day having been completed.

2.4.4.2 The school timetable

The school principal as instructional leader plays a vital role in organizing and structuring the school curriculum by drawing up a timetable for the school. The school timetable is the main

tool to ensure that the flow of teaching and learning goes on in the most predictable and ideal circumstances.

In the South African context, the timetable for the primary schools should be drawn up according to the parameters set by the departmental guidelines. Instructional time for Grades R, 1 and 2 is 23 hours, and 25 hours for Grade 3. Ten (10) hours are allocated for languages in Grades R-2, and 11 hours in Grade 3. The instructional time for Grades 4, 5 and 6 is 27.5 hours. It is important to note that the time allocated for breaks, assemblies and extramural activities is excluded from the time allocation (DBE 2011:7,12). The principal should ensure that all the subjects receive the correct time as stipulated in the guideline, and should monitor that the educators use the learner contact time appropriately. According to Prinsloo (2009:74), the educators should determine how to use their time. They should be clear about the curriculum priorities, and relate their activities to them. It is critical to distinguish between what is important in relation to curricular and extra-curricular activities. The time available for learning should correlate with the degree to which the material is learned. Initial studies of time on-task conducted by Bloom (1974) indicated that an increase in time on-task was strongly associated with improved learning: those learners who were on-task most of the time learned more than the others.

2.4.5 The teacher's professional development

Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006:294) define *professional staff development* as any activity or process intended to improve their skills, attitudes, understanding or performance in their present or future roles. The educators recognized that training is critical in helping the schools to achieve the high standards that are expected of them. Staff development should address both individual learning and organizational improvement, namely improving learner achievement. Staff development is a significant vehicle for school improvement. If educational institutions are to improve, the principal as instructional leader should ensure that the individual within the institution is developed.

In examining recent research, Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006:295) identified a growing consensus of guiding principles as ongoing professional learning that is tied to new standards for the curriculum, assessment and learner performance, professional development connected to the educators' work and the school communities that foster shared learning and professional development that is integrated into the school schedule. Effective programs are on-going, collaborative and collegial, highly connected to what the educators are doing in their classrooms. Concrete hands-on activities, meaningful applications and simulations, linked to concrete teaching tasks, reflecting current research, and conversation are example of effective approaches that can be more practical and relevant. Specifically, the educators are interested in developing pedagogical skills and classroom management strategies. The major function of the principal as instructional leader is to create a school culture that values professional development and involves the educators' planning and the learning activities that best support the educators.

The teacher is a central figure in school effectiveness and improvement, as such the development of the staff, and is therefore perceived to be the best approach for leading the educators and schools towards better achievement. This should be a professional development. According to the Department of Education (2008:108), *professional development* refers to all the activities that aim at empowering an educator to perform his/her duties better or more efficiently and effectively towards achieving enhanced learner performance. It is concerned with improving the teaching skills and subject knowledge of the educators to enable them to provide quality education to the learners. It is further stated that teaching requires from its practitioners to keep abreast of new developments, otherwise they may become worn-out, unimaginative and unenthusiastic educators who no longer enjoy teaching, and constitute a danger to the academic performance of the learners. An educator who prefers to remain in the same post without aspiring to professional advancement and promotion and has never attempted to acquire higher qualifications, is a well-known phenomenon in teaching in the post-apartheid era. As a result, in South Africa the government has put pressure on under-qualified and unqualified educators to up-grade their qualifications. The Department of Education (2008:109) further emphasizes that in order to achieve continuity in professional development the schools should also conduct their own professional development programmes. It indicates that it is crucial to the principal as instructional leader to view professional development within the school as his/her task, with the

aim of improving learner achievement. Staff development is treated from the following perspectives, namely staff development as a vehicle for better achievement, school effectiveness, and effective teaching and learning.

2.4.5.1 The principal as leader in professional development

Gumus and Akcaoglu (2013:291) argue that a way for the principal to ensure quality in the classroom is to be able to lead the educators and to help them in their professional development, as the educators are the implementers of the curriculum in the classrooms. Niyazi (2009:440) further elaborates that the principal as instructional leader should place a non-judgmental value on providing assistance, designing collegiality as a particular style of work, improving the educators' self-esteem, using different approaches to assistance, making provision for continuous learning and support for the educators at the school site, and providing the necessary courage or confidence to others in order to provide leadership to their peers.

The principal is, as instructional leader, also responsible for the educators' growth. According to Gumus and Akcaoglu (2013:291),the principals have five essential instructional tasks, which includes directing assistance, grouping development, developing professionally, developing the curriculum and doing action research. All of these tasks, directly or indirectly points to the principal's role in supporting the educators' growth. In addition, providing the educators with professional development is one of the most influential instructional leadership behaviours. It was also found that two important behaviours of successful principals who positively affected the learners' learning were talking with the educators – making suggestions, modeling, giving feed-back, and so on, and providing professional development opportunities. The principals have to be knowledgeable about instruction in order to advise, monitor, evaluate and direct the educators. The principal as instructional leader must make sure that the educators prepare challenging lessons by their attending developmental workshops.

Furthermore, as instructional leader the principal must give other educators the opportunity to fulfill leadership roles in staff development programmes because it results in a feeling of ownership of the programme. According toNiyazi (2009:440),the head educators must be

prepared to support the new learning of the educators. They must create conditions for the other educators to refine, practise, reflect on and improve their practice over time. The head teacher must then become the promoter and facilitator of a purposeful professional learning community. The leadership considerations of the educators are based on their strong desire to improve the quality of teaching and learning for all the learners. The educators should serve as advisor-mentors for novice educators, and also facilitate professional development activities as master educators. Despres (2008:97) indicates that data from his studies and other studies on educational reform suggest that teacher stability may be crucial to sustained reform efforts. In some schools where the staff remained stable, and where they participated in the selection process, the training, and the implementation, both the quality and the quantity of delivery remained high. This caused learner achievement to gain.

2.4.6 School resources

The proper management of the existing resources is an important issue if the principal as instructional leader and his/her management team wish to establish a sound culture of learning and teaching in the school. The best equipment and stock available should be obtained, used and maintained in each classroom. The principal as instructional leader should ensure that adequate resources are available in the school.

Pollard (2002:80) distinguishes four types of resources, namely people, buildings, equipment and materials. In both quality and quantity, these resources have an impact on what it is possible to happen in the schools and the classrooms. Prinsloo (2009:13) mentions people (educators and support staff, learners and parents), school finances, physical resources (buildings, furniture, textbooks, exercise books, educational aids, etc.) and time (tuition timetable) under the rubric of resources. Pollard (2002:78) adds national resources that are accessible to all the schools, particularly in relation to information technology, to this list. Information and communication technology (ICT) includes the interconnection of learning networks and education services as delivered via the internet. Associated funds should be available for the training of the educators to use it. Continuing work is being done by various agencies to provide software and other forms of support through the medium of information and communication technology. From the point of

instructional leadership, the number, quality and range of expertise of classroom educators are major factors in determining what is being done and what it is possible to do in the schools. The educators are, however, the most important resource.

The effective utilization and development of resources in a school is dependent on the management and leadership skills of the educational leaders. The principal as instructional leader should exercise the leading and management skills necessary in using the school resources to realize the school's stated aims and objectives (Pollard 2002:78).

2.4.6.1 Human resource management in the school

According to Lunenburg and Ornstein (2008:3), many people are involved in the life of a successful school. For this reason, collaboration and team-work are needed, irrespective of the person's status. Apart from the principal and the teaching staff, there are many others, such as the cleaners, secretaries, food handlers, patrollers and care-takers who all have very important supportive roles to play. Furthermore, the learners are the essential components of the school community, and the principal as instructional leader has to be focused on their development to their full potential.

a) The educators

The educators are the most important resources in the school. According to Pollard (2002:81), classroom life can be seen as being created by the educators and the learners as they respond to the situations in which they find themselves. Niyazi (2009:440) maintains that the educators are no longer isolated from their classrooms. Instead, they are authorized by high authority and are responsible for the whole school environment and the school programme. Effective educators participate in out-of-classroom activities. It has been indicated that educators are people who hold a particular position in the schools. Each person is unique, with particular cultural and material experiences making up his or her biography. This provides the seedbed for his or her sense of "self", and influences his or her personality and perspective. Having the capacity to empathize and having the confidence to project and assert oneself are important in teaching.

Much of what a particular teacher is able to achieve in the classroom will be influenced by him or her. People have strengths and weaknesses, and most educators would agree that classroom life tends to reveal these fairly quickly. Reflective teaching has therefore much to do with facing such features of ourselves in a constructive and objective manner and in a way which incorporates a continuous capacity to change and develop. The educators as people have opinions, perspectives, attitudes, values and beliefs. This particularly human attribute of being able to review the relationship of 'what is' and 'what ought to be' is one which the educators often manifest when considering their aims and examining their educational values and philosophies. Ideally, a very important factor which influences the educators' perceptions in the classroom is that the teacher has to cope personally as well as professionally with the classroom situation. For this reason, it is suggested that a fundamental element of coping in the classroom or of survival is very deeply personal, for it involves educators with a particular image of themselves, acting in the very challenging situation which the classroom represents (Pollard 2002:81). What is possible for the educators to do is hindered by the basic facts of the large numbers of learners in the classroom, limited resources, compulsory attendance, a legally-defined curriculum policy and other external expectations that exist about what should and what should not take place.

The principal as instructional leader should deal with the following aspects in the management of the educators as the most important human resources in the school.

i) Teacher absenteeism:

As indicated by Brodie et al. (2002:548), and supported by Ngcobo and Tikly (2010:209), Van der Berg, Taylor, Gustafsson, Spaull and Armstrong (2011), Mbali and Douglas (2012:529) and Lam, Ardington and Leibbrandt (2011:122), late-coming and absenteeism in the South African school system is rife on the part of both the educators and the learners. This results in considerably reduced time for teaching and learning, and is especially significantly negative for both Mathematics and reading. According to Chisholm (2006:121), in township and rural schools in South Africa the rate of absenteeism and non-involvement by the educators in the affairs of the school is high. Spaull (2012:80) further elaborates that the high rates of teacher absenteeism

are associated with lower learner performance, because of the fact that the educators are essential to the learning process. The lower learner performance is largely due to the inadequate coverage of the curriculum and shorter time on-task. The high rates of teacher absenteeism can also have a reciprocal effect on learner absenteeism, whereby the learners choose not to attend school because they are unsure about whether their educators will be at school on that particular day.

ii) The teacher's content knowledge:

A powerful factor that impacts on learner performance is the teacher's content knowledge. Leithwood and Jantzi (2010:421) indicate that the quality of instruction which is dependent on the teacher's knowledge of the content and pedagogy exerts a powerful influence on the learners' performance. According to Niyazi (2009:440), educators with poor content knowledge, outdated teaching practices and low expectations are in dire need of focused professional development. When the educators improve their content knowledge and the knowledge of the best practices planned to increase the learners' involvement and performance, they develop higher expectations of their own and their learners' performance. As their sense of self-efficacy increases so does their teaching success. The principal as instructional leader must continually ensure that the educators stay abreast of the latest knowledge. Spaull (2012:81) agrees that the educators cannot teach what they do not know. While pedagogical skills, teacher motivation and classroom resources are all important inputs into the learners' learning process, sufficient teacher content knowledge of the subject being taught is a necessary condition for the learners' learning.

b) The learners

The principal as instructional leader has a role to play in managing the learners as a resource in the school. School populations worldwide are diverse, and this is also true of South Africa. Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006:93) maintain that diversity is the norm in all schools. The staff and the learner populations are diverse, whether the school is located in an urban or a rural area, whether it consists predominantly of one racial or ethnic group or of a variety of cultural groups. Diversity includes differences in age, gender, sexual orientation, political beliefs, socioeconomic status, religion, physical and mental ability, language, and ethnicity. Although some schools

have a greater diversity than others, all the schools must acknowledge and act on the diversity found in their populations, the community itself, the state, the nation and in the schools. The principal should ensure that the staff and the learners are aware of diversity, have knowledge and understanding about diversity, and behave on the basis that knowledge takes action. Lunenburg and Ornstein (2008:23) maintain that the lack of the familiarity of the educators with their learners' culture, learning styles and communication patterns translates into the educators holding negative expectations for the learners, what some theorists refer as 'deficit thinking'. This is often caused by inappropriate curricula and instructional materials, and the assessment of the learners.

Included in the notion of diversity is socioeconomic status (SES). According to Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006:93), *socioeconomic status* (SES) refers to stratification that can be measured by factors such as economic status, family background, and job prestige. A broader term is *social class,* which involves large categories of people of similar SES who have in common such attributes as cultural identification, lifestyle and attitudes. SES is strongly correlated with academic success. Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006:93) indicated that researchers have found that children coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to do poorly at school than children coming from high socioeconomic backgrounds. Lunenburg and Ornstein (2008:24) support the above statement by highlighting that academic risk is highly correlated with race and social class: at-risk learners are more likely to come from disadvantaged home backgrounds, whereas high-achieving learners are likely to come from advantaged home backgrounds. Ideally, this does not mean that all children who are poor will do less well at school because they are poor. Families that are financially stable or affluent have greater access to resources; families struggling to survive are more concerned with paying the rent and with food than acquiring educational resources. Generally, the more the socioeconomic resources available to children, the better will the children's educational attainment be.

The above discussion is supported by what Spaull (2012:111) indicates, namely that socio-economic status has the largest impact on learner performance within the South African context. Principals in low SES schools face more challenges than principals at the head of schools serving a high SES population. The poverty level impacts negatively on the learners' achievement as a

stronger predictor of academic failure. School poverty extends beyond the effect of the individual learner's condition; it has a cumulative effect (Spaull 2012). In poverty-stricken areas the principal as instructional leader faces challenges such as the poor nutrition of the learners, the lack of health care, violence and unstable home environments. Furthermore, poverty-stricken schools are more likely to have less experienced educators, which negatively affect teaching and learning. The principal as instructional leader is faced with the additional challenge of devising strategies to raise funds in order to address the shortcomings and to increase the appropriate resources in his or her school (Vanderhaar et al. 2007:19).

2.4.6.2 Buildings

A sound and adequate infrastructure in the school is necessary to support teaching and learning. The physical environment of a school has an important influence on the behavior of both the educators and the learners. It can affect the educator's flexibility in teaching, his/her communication patterns, the amount of noise in the school, and the frequency of discipline problems.

According to Ngcobo and Tikly (2010:209), the provision of materials and buildings may differ from school to school. In South Africa many township and rural schools suffer because of dilapidated school buildings and grounds. Lam et al. (2011:122) mention that many black learners still attend schools with a poor educational infrastructure. A responsibility of the principal as instructional leader is to oversee the maintenance and operation of the school buildings and the school grounds. Neat and clean buildings help to establish and maintain a sound culture of learning and teaching. At its most obvious, buildings constrain decisions about the numbers and types of classes because of the numbers and the nature of the classrooms which are available. This often affects class sizes and the forms of curriculum and teaching organization.

The adequate maintenance of the school buildings is recognized as being important, and to reach this end, appropriate budget allocations are necessary. Pollard (2002:77) emphasizes that the quality of the environment is influenced by aesthetic considerations. Responsible principals are

likely to be concerned about the aesthetic quality of the learning environment in their schools, and will aim to maximize the potential of the buildings and the space which they have available. Buildings have an obvious fixed quality and may be a source of constraint. However, enterprising and innovative principals will be able to make use of the school buildings to their full potential.

2.4.6.3 Equipment and materials

Equipment and learning materials are very significant in schooling and particularly in primary school education because it is often through the use of equipment that young children are able to gain the appropriate learning experiences in the school. Ngcobo and Tikly (2010:209) maintain that many township and rural schools in South Africa lack recreational and sports facilities, furniture and equipment, for example, a school hall and a playground, facilities for music, a library and resources to meet the needs of the science, mathematics and technology curricula. According to Hoho (2010:51), schools with sufficient resources are effective. The converse, however, is also true. The careful and effective management of equipment is essential to establish and maintain a sound culture of learning and teaching. The acquisition, utilization and maintenance of equipment are key elements for the principal as instructional leader in resource management, and have an important influence on the culture of learning and teaching, which has an impact on learner achievement. Moreover, materials, such as paper, pencils, and materials for arts and crafts, are essential in a school. The quality of learning experiences will be directly affected by its provision. However, budgeting for these items is costly, and parental support is necessary. Parents from the lower SES populations find the provision of such materials difficult. According to Prinsloo (2009:67), the principal and his or her management team is responsible to put into place procedures to minimize vandalism and the loss of equipment and stock, the cleaning of the buildings and the school grounds, and procuring new stock and equipment. School stock includes expendable items (such as stationary), durable items (such as desks), as well as equipment, such as computers and furniture.

The provision and maintenance of equipment and materials are influenced by the amount of money allocated to a particular school.

2.4.6.4 Finances

The principal as instructional leader is expected to ensure quality teaching and learning by means of the budget allocated to the school. According to Van Deventer and Kruger (2003:234), schooling is mainly financed by private and/or individual funding. The latter includes the school fees contributed by the parents, and various costs being taken care of by the learners and the parents (e.g.,transport, textbooks and school uniforms). Public funding refers to the responsibility of the state to fund public schools from public revenue on an equitable basis.

a) The budget

The planning of the school's finances usually begins with the drafting of a budget. According to Odden and Picus (2008:235), a *budget* is a document which specifies the planned expenditure and anticipated revenues in a given fiscal year, along with other data and information relating the fiscal elements to the educational philosophy, programmes and needs of the Department of Education. It is advisable for a principal as instructional leader to develop a whole-school approach to the drafting of a budget, which means that everyone who is involved in implementing the budget should also be involved in drawing it up. According to Van Deventer and Kruger (2003:237), a *budget* can be regarded as a management tool or mechanism by which the school management team and the governing body of the school can estimate and plan as well as utilize, coordinate, monitor and evaluate the allocated resources of the school in financial terms. The total budget of a school consists of various sub-budgets as follows:

- Operational budget: This type of a budget covers the day-to-day expenses of the school.
- Activity budget: This covers the various activities (curricular as well as extra-curricular) or programmes that the school offers.
- Capital budget: This budget covers the purchase of certain asset for the school (e.g., sports equipment, cleaning and gardening equipment).
- Project budget: This covers larger projects that are planned by the school (e.g., the painting of the school buildings).

A budget consists of the following three major components (Odden & Picus 2008:235), namely the budgetary allocation to the school, the revenue available to support the school's functioning and the actual expenditure over the school year. According to Odden and Picus (2008:235-236), budgeting is not a static activity, in fact, it is a continuous process that involves developing, approving and implementing a spending plan for the school. Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006:345) argue that the most common form of budgeting is incremental budgeting, which involves adding or subtracting from the current year's budget. In drawing up a provisional budget (i.e., a temporary budget for discussion and further adjustment), the principal and the School Governing Body (SGB) must carefully look at all the probable means of income for the next year, namely the state's allocation, income from school fees (at fee-paying schools), income from interest on school investments and income from all other projects or sources. The principal and the SGB must consider the probable expenditures, namely all the things on which money will probably have to be spent for educational purposes during the next year. The school cannot spend more money than it has, and therefore the budget has to be balanced. In other words, the probable income and probable expenditure must correlate (Department of Education 2012:49). The final budget should be approved by the appropriate authorities and stakeholders, including the parents, the SGB, the educators and the Department of Education. Once approved, the budget becomes the basis on which financial decisions in the school are based. The budget must now be monitored, supervised and controlled (Van Deventer & Kruger 2003:238-239). In this process the principal plays a vital role.

2.4.7 The community and the parents

Despres (2008:164) indicates that schooling takes place in the context of complex social interactions within the school, and between the school and the parents and the community structures. The principal as instructional leader should ensure that the parents and the community members are involved in the activities of the school. Kearney et al. (2013:332) indicate that the principals as instructional leaders must build a relationship of trust with the parents and the community leaders by communicating with them constantly and listening to all the stakeholder groups and individuals.

The principals should ensure that the parents are familiarized with the curriculum, and ways to support learning at home and in the school (Lemmer & Van Wyk 2009). Furthermore, according to Van Deventer and Kruger (2003:257), the principal should encourage the participation of the learners in the social, economic and the cultural life of the community; make certain school facilities and resources available to the community for educational and social purposes; supply important information about the school to the public; maintain regular contact with certain outside institutions and educational bodies that may be of mutual benefit; receive and attend to all visitors as politely and helpfully as possible; and on occasion, invite local dignitaries from appropriate interest groups to share in the life of the school (e.g., during speech days, prize-giving, open days and sporting activities). The principal must not take sides in local politics, but rather be neutral,impartial and firm in following regulations and the law.

2.5 MODELS OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

A *model*is a simplified representation of a phenomenon, such as a thing or a process, and is closely related to the characteristics of the given phenomenon from an input and outcome perspective (Encarta 1999: 1215). A model of instructional leadership embodies an empirical paradigm that considers how the leader and group's interface results in organizational outcomes. A model assumes that leadership occurs in a social setting (Neider & Schriesheim 2002:221).

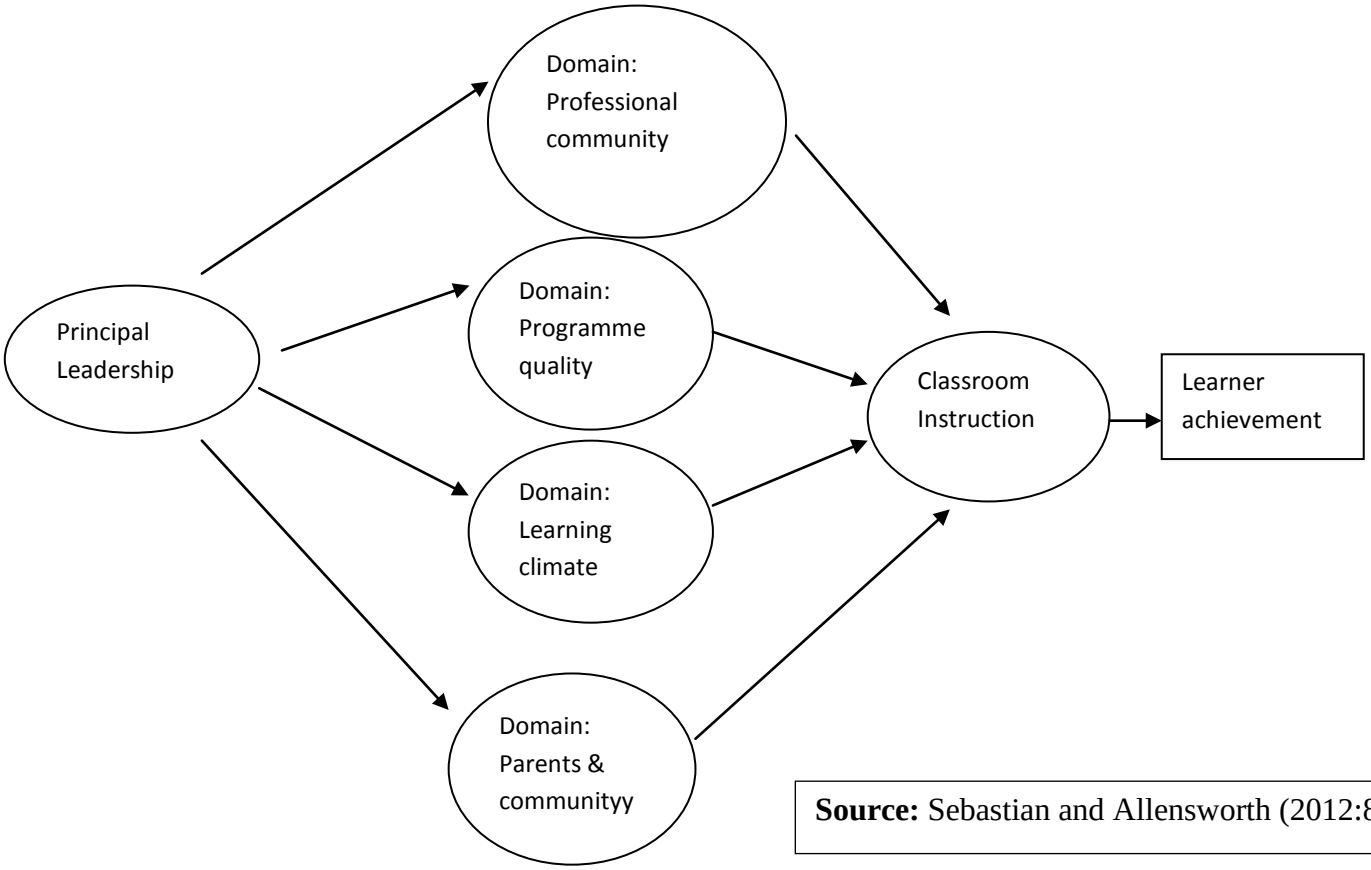
In this section seven models of the instructional leadership of the school principal are presented. They have been selected due to the contribution they may make to understanding instructional leadership and its direct and indirect influence on learner achievement. However, no single model has been used to frame this study; instead useful elements of all the models have been identified.

2.5.1 Sebastian and Allenworth's (2012) Model of Instructional Leadership

Sebastian and Allensworth's (2012) Model of Instructional Leadership shows a relatively comprehensive set of practices and conditions that can function as mediating variables in the

relationship between the principal as instructional leader in improving learning achievement. Figure 2.1 gives a diagrammatic representation of this model of the principal's effect on learner achievement.

Figure 2.1: The principal's effect on learner achievement



Source: Sebastian and Allensworth (2012:8)

Sebastian and Allensworth (2012:8) maintain that the framework of organizational supports for the learners' learning starts with instructional leadership as the driver for change. The principals as instructional leaders focus on four domains of work. Firstly, they reach out to the parents and the community to connect the schools to the children, families and communities that they serve. Secondly, they simultaneously work to enhance the professional capacity of the school by means of a deliberate focus on staff professional quality. Thirdly, by strengthening the educators' knowledge and their capacity they work to improve the quality and instruction of the programme. Fourthly, this acts to strengthen the overall learning climate, thus creating an environment where the learners feel safe, pressed and supported to engage in an intellectual

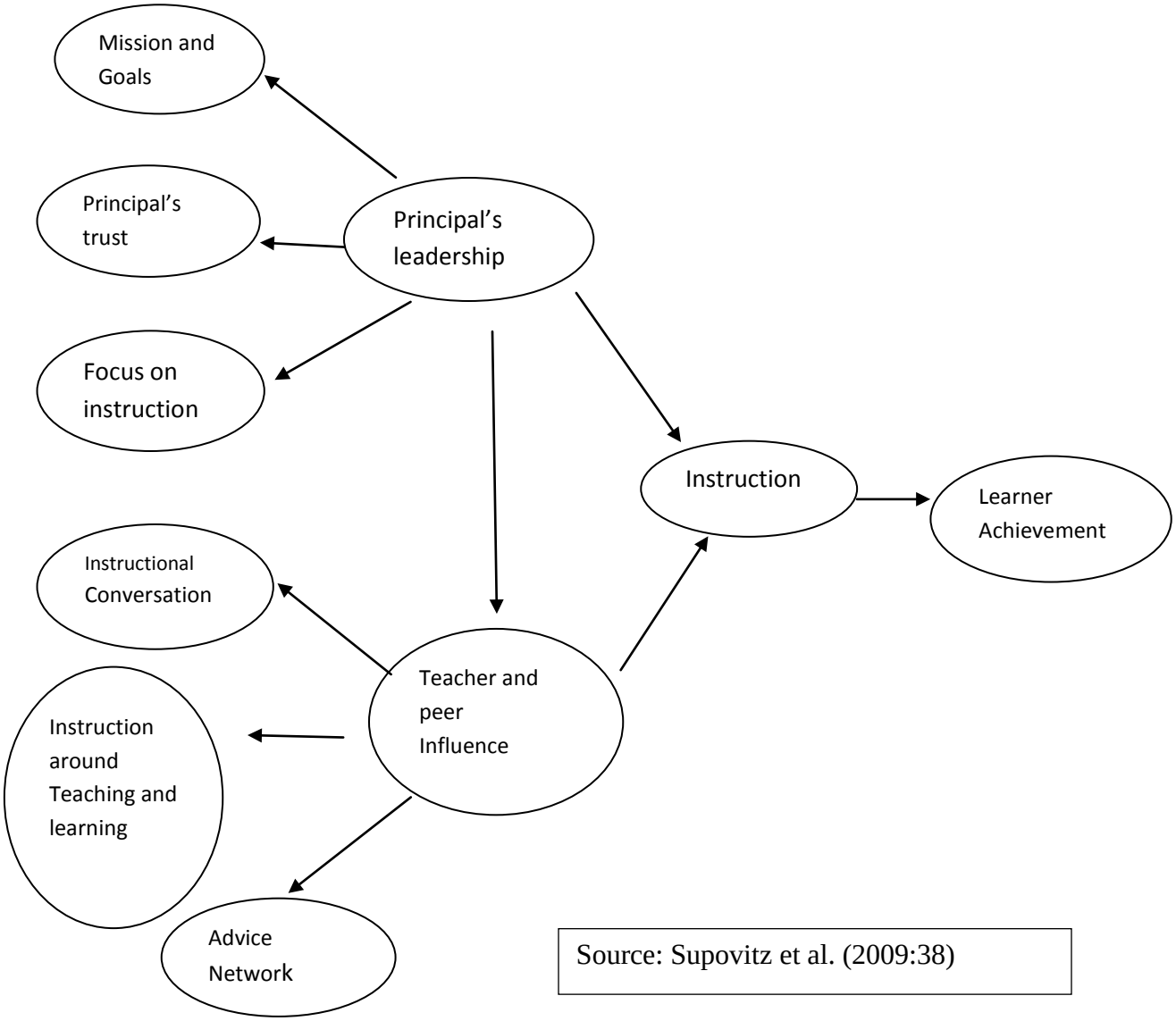
activity. These four domains influence classroom instruction, and thus work to produce high learner achievement.

2.5.2 Supovitz, Sirinides and May's (2009) Model of Principal Instructional Leadership and the educators' influence on achievement

Supovitz et al. (2009:38) conceptualize principal instructional leadership as a construct comprised of the principal's explanation of the school's mission and goals, with the emphasis on community and trust, focusing on instruction.

Figure 2.2 indicates the principal's instructional leadership and the educators' and the peers' influence on the schools.

Figure 2.2: Model of principal leadership and teacher influence



Supovitz et al.(2009) conceptualized the principal's instructional role in terms of three distinct but overlapping areas as follows: explaining and communicating the school's mission and goals, his or her primary focus on instruction and his or her responsibility to create an atmosphere of collegial trust in the school among the staff members. This, in turn, influences the educators (as represented by the arrow going from principal leadership to teacher/peer influence) who will then focus on instructional conversations among the peers, interact with colleagues on issues of teaching and learning, and establish an advice network whereby knowledge and skills can be freely shared. Supovitz et al. (2009) include in the notion of teacher influence the impact that the

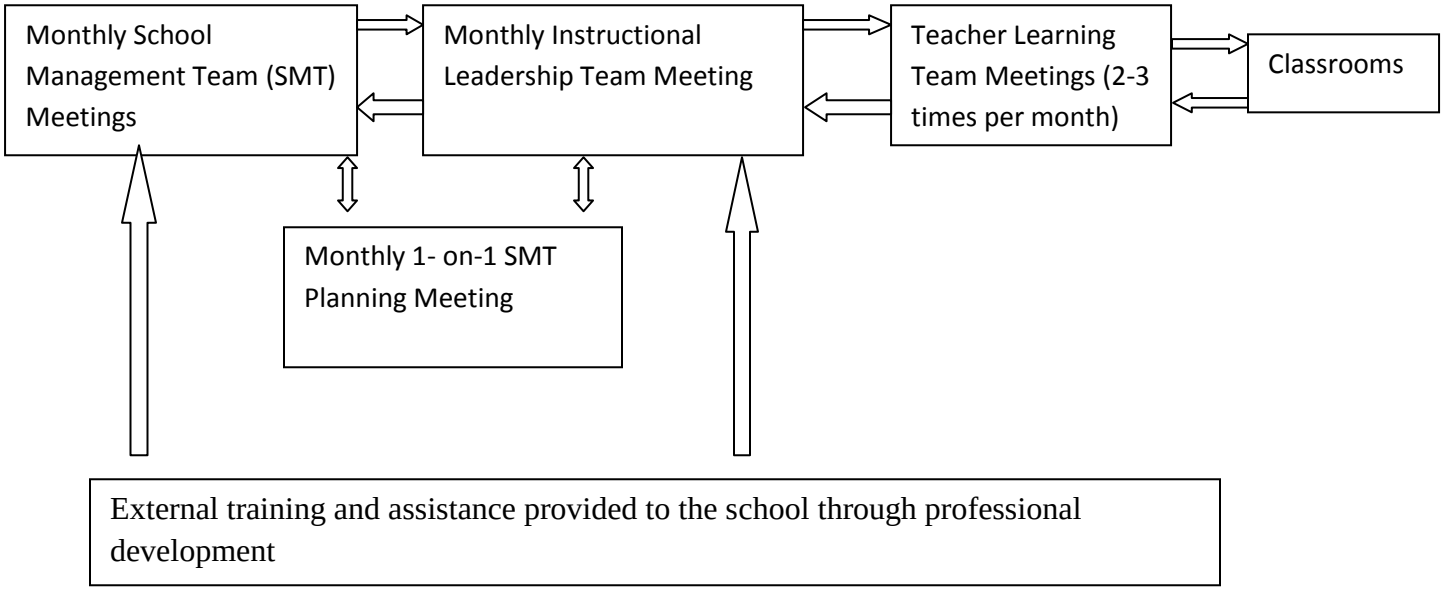
educators may exercise on colleagues outside of their own school through membership of professional networks. Thus, the authors also hypothesize principal leadership to have an effect even outside of the school and extending to other schools. Both principal leadership and teacher/peer influence are theorized to influence the teacher's instructional practice, which is conceived to be directly related to learner outcomes.

2.5.3 Tienken's (2010) Collaborative Model of Instructional Leadership and learner achievement

According to Tienken (2010:23), when the principal as instructional leader shifts from top-down management to a collaborative learning environment, a more distributed leadership is promoted. A distributed leadership perspective recognizes that expertise does not reside solely in one gifted principal, but exists throughout a school in gifted educators, support staff, heads of departments (HODs) and deputy principals.

This is illustrated in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: Collaborative Model of Instructional Leadership and learner achievement



Source: Tienken (2010:22)

A collaborative model like this encourages more extensive and distributed leadership through open dialogue around the targeted learner needs and effective instructional strategies in which all the educators participate. Leadership and professional knowledge is shared and distributed during monthly school management meetings, monthly instructional leadership team meetings (e.g., of the HOD and subject educators) and regular and frequent teacher team meetings, as indicated in the diagram. In this way the professional development provided by external providers such as the Department of Education can penetrate the school easily and flexibly. This collaboration leads to the following three key outcomes:

(a) More accurate identification of learner needs and instructional strategies: Tienken (2010:23) stresses that when the educators collaborate with one another they can target common gaps in a learner's learning better, and identify promising instructional strategies linked directly to learner needs. This process contrasts with pre-packaged standards or instructional strategies dictated to the educators, or expecting the educators to identify and address common learner needs in isolation. Given the ability to make instructional decisions in response to the learners' specific learning needs, the educators participating in the learning teams are more likely than their peers to attribute changes in the learner's learning to their own instruction, rather than external factors or learner traits, a cause-effect connection that has implications for long-term teacher learning and development.

(b) Greater communication across grade levels: When the educators view collaboration as integral to their instructional efficacy, they are more likely to share their needs and strategies across grade levels. This vertical articulation allows the educators to address potential learning problems before they even emerge in the classroom. Open communication around instruction empowers the educators, not only as individual educators, but as members of a team working together to improve instruction throughout the school (Tienken 2010:23).

c) Job satisfaction and teacher retention: Collaborative learning teams provide novice educators with an immediate support structure and protocol for continuous improvement, helping them to gain confidence in their instructional efficacy and reducing the likelihood of attrition. It provides veteran educators with more decision-

making authority. This improves job satisfaction, with similarly important implications for the profession.

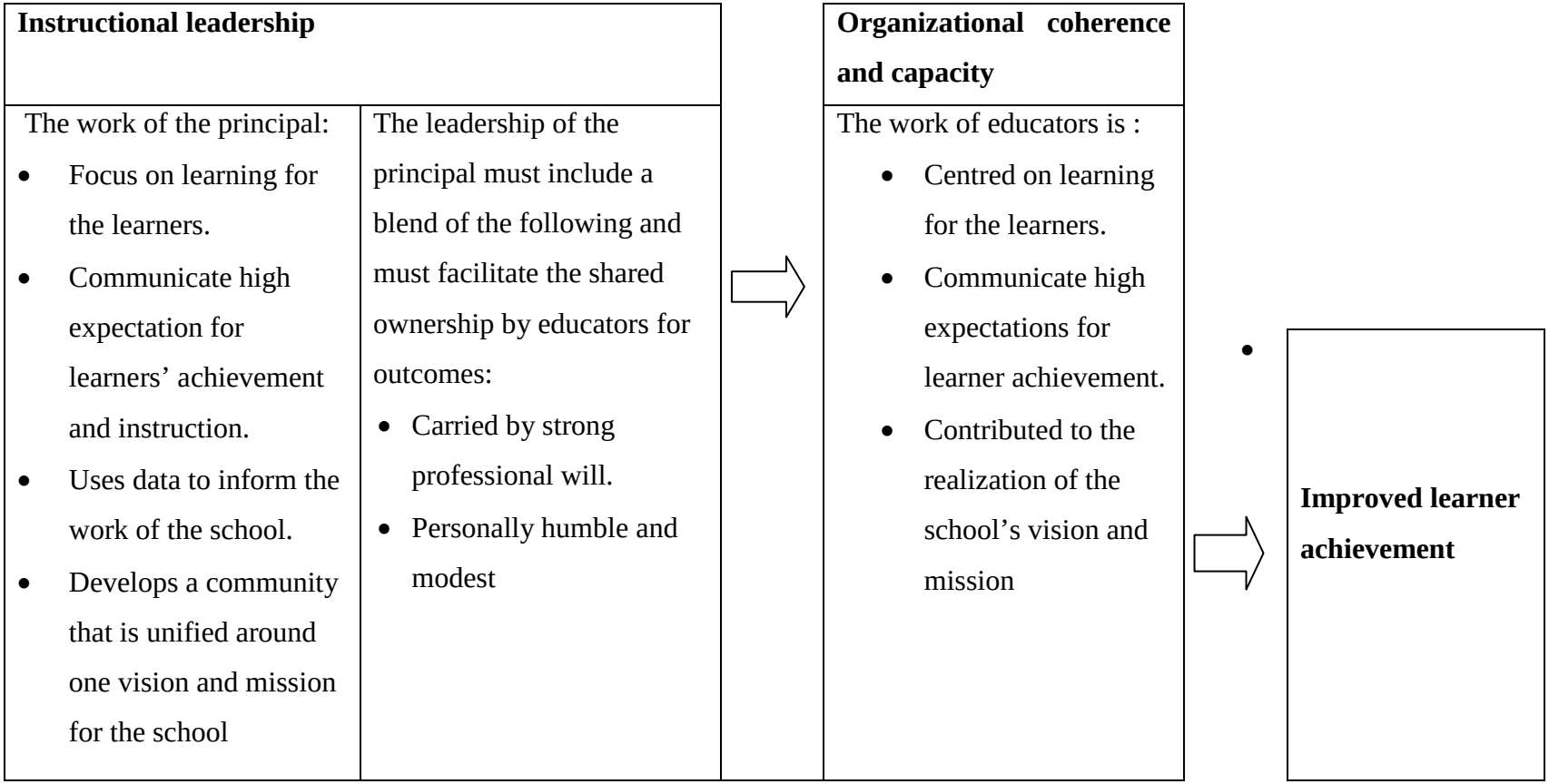
The key person to success, however, remains the principal as instructional leader, who by prioritizing instruction as the most important activity in the school, and by creating and sustaining dialogue through regular meetings, empowers all the educators to do the same. Strong instructional leadership combines pressure to perform and assistance and support so that the schools are enabled to corporately move toward accomplishing the learners' achievement goals, giving attention to important data, nurturing collaboration, and building productive school environments (Tienken 2010:24).

2.5.4 Carrier's instructional leadership model

The instructional leadership model of Carrier (2014:5) distinguishes between the work of the principal as instructional leader and that of the educators. The principal should focus on quality learning for all the learners, entertain high expectations for teaching and learning practice and develop a school community around a common vision. To reach this goal data should be used to drive instruction and improvement. The educators should replicate the principals' functions within the classrooms. Unlike the other models discussed above, Carrier (2014:5) stresses the personal characteristics of the principal. The principal as instructional leader is willing to do whatever it takes it to do; he or she is also humble and ready to take on any necessary responsibilities to improve learner achievement (Carrier2014:5-6). The principal must also exhibit a strong professional will to fulfill the role of instructional leader. Thus, instructional leadership is modelled by the principal and realized through the educators, with the ultimate outcome of improved learner achievement.

His model is illustrated in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4: Carrier's (2014) instructional leadership model



Source: Carrier (2014:5)

2.5.5 Harlinger and Murphy's model

Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model is embedded in effective school research. They conceptualise instructional leadership as a two-dimensional concept which is made up of leadership functions and leadership processes (Hallinger & Murphy 1985:2).

Under the rubric leadership functions eight different functions are included. These are framing and communicating school goals; supervising and evaluating instruction; coordinating the curriculum; developing high academic standards and expectations; monitoring student progress; promoting the professional development of teachers; protecting instructional time and developing incentives for students and teachers. School goals include the mission of the school which should focus on learner achievement. Supervision of instruction implies that principals should regularly observe instruction in the classrooms. Student progress should be frequently monitored. In terms of curriculum coordination, instructional aims, materials and assessment instruments should be aligned. Policies should be put in place to protect instructional time which limit late coming, absenteeism and truancy. Professional development of teachers should be promoted by various in-service strategies. Principals should entertain high expectations and provide a school reward system for students and teachers (Hallinger & Murphy 1985:3-6).

Under the rubric leadership processes six processes are mentioned: communication; decision making; conflict management; group process; change process; and environmental interaction (Hallinger & Murphy 1985:3). Communication is essential to manage the relationship between teachers and principal and other staff. Conflict management implies the positive and productive coping with conflict in the school. Group processes and decision making mean that various stakeholders are involved in decision making and greater consensus is found in this way. Conditions in schools should welcome positive change. Finally, the school, its curriculum and instruction should connect with the school's environment to increase relevance (Hallinger & Murphy 1985:7-10).

2.5.6 Murphy's model

Murphy's (1990) model of instructional leadership is also embedded in the effective schools research. He identified four dimensions of instructional leadership which are: developing a mission and goals; managing the function of education; promoting an academic learning climate; and developing a supportive environment. These four dimensions are further broken down in to sixteen principal behaviours.

Developing a mission and goals involves both the formulation and the communication of school goals to the school community including the parents and the broader community. Managing the function of education involves furthering quality instruction; supervising and assessing instruction; allocating and protecting instructional time and monitoring student progress and achievement. An academic learning climate is created by setting high expectations for students and teachers; maintaining visibility in the school; providing incentives for teachers and students; and promoting the professional development of teachers. Finally, a supportive environment is established by creating a secure and organized environment; providing opportunities for student involvement; inspiring staff cohesiveness; securing outside resources and promoting parent-school partnerships (Murphy 1990).

Murphy's comprehensive model illustrates similarities with the earlier Hallinger and Murphy model but includes a stronger emphasis on certain behaviours such as promoting parent involvement and communicating with parents.

2.5.7 Weber's model

Weber (1996) of instructional leadership identified five domains of instructional leadership: defining the school's mission; managing the curriculum and instruction; promoting a positive learning climate; observing and improving instruction and assessing the instructional programme. He stresses a common vision and mission for the school which is created by the involvement of and reflection by all stakeholders. Instructional practice must cohere with the mission and teachers must be made aware of recent research and supplied with resources to

realise this aim. A positive learning climate depends largely on teacher and student attitudes and is encouraged within an orderly and disciplined environment. Observing and improving instruction is dependent on a relationship of trust between the principal and teachers and through the provision of professional development activities. Finally, the design and implementation of instructional programmes must be regularly and frequently assessed to determine effectiveness.

2.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the role of the principal as instructional leader and the various features of the school which have to be managed by the principal as school leader have been outlined. The aim of the chapter was to gather theoretical data and to identify the features of instructional leadership which impact on learner achievement.

Chapter three deals with the contextual and school factors which impact on the principal's role as instructional leader and learner performance in South African schools, with special reference to primary schools.

CHAPTER 3
LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I provided a review of the literature dealing with the instructional role of the school principal, the features of school functioning with implications for instructional leadership and learner achievement, and models of instructional leadership.

This chapter focuses on learner achievement in primary schools in South Africa. Mafora and Schulze (2012:227) state that, due to the apartheid legacy the South African schooling system faces unique challenges. This is particularly evident in the primary schools. Spaull (2012:3) mentions that in an examination of the South African primary schools two sub-systems are indicated: one which is wealthy, functional and able to educate learners; the other is poor, dysfunctional and unable to equip the learners with the necessary basic numeracy and literacy skills. This chapter focuses mainly on the latter. First I discuss the contextual factors and school factors which shape the primary school learner's achievement, with special reference to the rural and township communities and then I present an overview of the current situation regarding the performance of primary schools, including international and national assessments of learner performance, and I outline the initiatives taken by the Department of Basic Education and other bodies to improve the schools.

3.2 FACTORS AFFECTING LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT IN RURAL AND TOWNSHIP COMMUNITIES

In this section the contextual factors affecting the learners in township and rural schools are described. According to Spaull (2012:40), South Africa's schooling system is a by-product or reflection of the country's inherent socioeconomic inequalities. Five types of inequalities are found throughout the country, namely racial, social, spatial, economic and linguistic. All these inequalities filter through to the education system and hinder optimal achievement. Lam et al.

(2010:122) maintain that an explanation for the poor performance of the schools is the enduring legacy of the extreme inequality in education that existed under apartheid. The former government ran separate school systems for different racial groups, with large differences in funding and curricula. Although the government funding levels were equalized across all the schools after democratic change in 1994, large racial differences in progress across the schools continue. On average, the most advantaged South African citizens are the middle income and affluent English- or Afrikaans-speaking individuals who live in big cities. By contrast, the most disadvantaged citizens are the poor Black individuals who are restricted by circumstances to the townships and the rural areas.

This section provides background information on the context of primary schools which affects the determinants of learner achievement, such as the location of the schools, resources, funding, the impact of curriculum change, grade repetition and language policy (Van der Berg 2008:148), with special reference to the rural and township communities.

3.2.1 The physical location of the school

The Department of Basic Education (2014) indicated a total of 24282of public schools in the country, of which 14 339 are primary schools. In the Gauteng Province, the province where this research took place, the number of schools recorded in 2014 is 2 721 in total, of which 1 611 are primary schools and 1 110 are secondary schools. The public sector recorded 2 070 public schools, 1 409 primary schools and 661 secondary schools (Gauteng Department of Education 2014:1; 4).

The geographical location of the schools that the learners attend has a significant impact on their achievement, with the learners in the urban areas having more advantages than the learners in the township and rural areas. White and Black middle-class children generally attend well-resourced ‘former Model C’ schools, while the Black working-class children generally attend impoverished township and rural schools (DoE 2005:2). Many learners in the township schools require both external protection and internal resilience as a result of the high levels of crime and violence experienced in the schools (Msibi 2012:519). Ngcobo and Tikly (2010:210) point out that even

within the township settings, the context varies widely. Some differences relate to the socio-economic and demographic profile of the local school communities. A number of schools which are well-run and relatively well-resourced have served long-established township locations, whereas others draw the majority of their learners from the informal settlements. They suffer major social and economic problems (DoE 2007).

Brodie et al.(2002:547) stress the urban-rural divide among South African schools and its impact on school quality. Urban schools generally have electricity, water, ablution facilities for the staff and the learners, telephones, staff rooms, enough furniture for the educators and the learners, sufficient textbooks, well-stocked libraries and laboratories, even though not always well-equipped. On the contrary, all the schools in the rural areas encounter difficulties, such as overcrowding due to the lack of classrooms, in excess of the recommended learner-teacher ratios, poor access to services, such as water and electricity, no landline telephones, and hence no Internet connections and very few public or school libraries. The community suffers from poor socioeconomic factors, such as poverty and unemployment, which reduces the home and the family capital available to the school. This has a direct impact on the quality of education that is available to the children and is a major factor in learner underachievement (HSRC2005). About 62%of the public schools (primary and secondary) are situated in the predominantly rural provinces of Limpopo, the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. In 2007 the Eastern Cape had 1 715 rural schools with357 710 learners; KwaZulu-Natal had 2 956 schools with 1097499learners; in Limpopo there were 2 348 rural schools with 929 188 learners (Gardiner 2007). Furthermore, Ngcobo and Tikly (2010:210) indicate that in the past the rural schools were sometimes affected by political agendas. Although these rural schools had been either farm or community schools originally, after 1996 they became government-owned schools. Nonetheless, they are often obliged to maintain a relationship with the owner of the land on which the school is situated.

3.2.2 School resources

School resources are important aspects to make the school environment conducive to learning. The presence or absence of these resources could explain some variation in learner performance.

Various measures of school resources have a direct bearing on learner performance, i.e., library books, a laboratory, computer rooms; others are indicative of the school environment more generally, such as electricity, water and sanitation. Jantjies and Joy (2012:1) argue that the legacy of the past education system in South Africa has led to problems that affect the current education system in a way where resources that are considered as basic in schools elsewhere are still absent in many township and rural schools. These include adequate classrooms, libraries, computer or science laboratories and adequately skilled educators. According to Chisholm (2006:122), the black and female educators operating in circumstances with limited resources have little capacity to implement curriculum reform. The significant differences between school resources in large cities and in rural or townships lie therein that the average learner in a rural school has access to only a few computers or none at all, a few library books and poor sanitation of a poor quality. Comparing the learners in the poorest schools (quintile 1) with the learners in the wealthiest schools (quintile 5), the inequality in school resources becomes conspicuous. All the South African public ordinary schools are categorized into five groups, called quintiles, largely for the purposes of the allocation of financial resources. Quintile 1 comprises the 'poorest' schools, while quintile five is the 'least poor'. The poverty rankings are determined nationally according to the economic status of the community surrounding the school, as well as certain infrastructural factors. Schools in quintile 1, 2 and 3 have been declared no-fee schools, while the schools in quintiles 4 and 5 are fee-paying schools (Western Cape Education Department 2013:1).

Potter and Naidoo (2012:521) argue that while much has been achieved in South Africa since 1994 in terms of the allocation of increased resources to education, and the improvement in the level of teacher qualifications and of educational buildings and infrastructure, a number of indicators suggest continuing areas of problems in the education system, for example as hortage in the supply of basic teaching aids, and up-to-date textbooks, readers, workbooks and library books to the schools, the lack of adequate and effective in-service training for the educators, and the lack of support for the educators at school level. According to Ngcobo and Tikly (2010:209), many township and rural schools suffer from a sometimes acute shortage of textbooks and other learning materials.

The School Register of Needs Survey (SRN) conducted in 1996 and again in 2000, resulted in the first comprehensive database on school infrastructure in the history of education in South Africa, providing information on the physical facilities, basic services, learning material and equipment. Specifics included electricity, water and sanitation, fences, libraries, laboratories and computer centres, sports facilities, and communication (HSRC 1996:2000). Ongoing and regular assessments of the school needs and improvement gains conducted since 2000 is the responsibility of the National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS). Table 3.1indicates the number of schools (both primary and secondary) that do not meet the reasonable standards in terms of electricity supply, water and sanitation, fences, libraries, laboratories and computer centres, sports facilities and communication. A total of 10721 schools from a total of 27000 countrywide do not meet the adequate standards (NEIMS2014).

Table 3.1: The number of primary and secondary schools that do not meet the adequate standards

PROVINCE	NUMBER OF SCHOOL
EASTERN CAPE	3566
LIMPOPO	2577
KWAZULU-NATAL	2153
GAUTENG	345
MPUMALANGA	646
NORTH WEST	685
WESTERN CAPE	147
FREE STATE	455
NORTHERN CAPE	147
Grand Total	**10721**

Source: Report on the National School Monitoring Survey (DBE 2012, conducted in 2011)

Table 3.1 indicates that the most poorly resourced schools are situated in the predominantly rural provinces of the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal. Interestingly, Gauteng, the area where this study was done and the most densely-populated province, has only 345 schools that do not meet the adequate standards.

3.2.3 Funding

Education spending in South Africa is the largest single item in the annual budget: 20% of the government expenditure for 2014/15 was earmarked for education, amounting to R254 billion, which represents roughly 6.5% of the GDP (Gordhan 2014).

The budget allocation to the provinces is made according to the population size (Lomohoza, Brockerhof & Fry 2013).

Subject to the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (ss. 34) (RSA 1996), it is the responsibility of the state to fund public schools from public revenue on an equitable basis in order to ensure the proper exercise of the rights of learners to education and to redress the inequalities of the past in education provision. Public schools are funded, based on the following two cost-allocation categories, namely capital cost allocations - these include allocations for new classrooms and other building constructions - and recurrent cost allocations (South Africa 1998b:24). A recurrent cost-allocation includes the following categories:

- Immovable capital improvement and repair costs, which relate to the maintenance of and repairs to buildings.
- Easily separable recurrent costs, which include supplies and services to the school.
- Other recurrent and small capital equipment costs, including learning materials to the learners (books and stationery).
- Hostel costs, where the recurrent cost-allocations (transfer payments) are targeted as far as possible on the basis of need. This is determined on the basis of the physical condition, facilities and crowding of the school, as well as the relative poverty of the community around the school (South Africa 1998b:25).

The South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996) also vested substantial powers in the School Governing Bodies (SGB) which were given the right to decide on the level of school fees to supplement government funding. School spending is equalized on the basis of pupil/teacher ratios, but the right has been given to the School Governing Bodies to raise fees to

appoint additional educators and maintain the infrastructure and its quality. Poor schools which cannot raise sufficient funds through fees remain vulnerable (Chisholm 2012:92). As a result, Chisholm (2012:93) indicated that the Department of Education introduced fee-exemptions for children from poor families from 2003; this is also substantiated in the South African Schools' Act, Act 84 of 1996 (ss. 43-47). Following the Human Rights Commission's Public Hearings on and the cumulative evidence of the burden of fees on poor communities despite the exemption policy, the government, in 2006, amended the National Norms and Standards for School funding, whereby lifting the legal obligation on the parents in low-income communities to pay school fees for their children (Chisholm 2012:92). The Departmental allocations for stationery and textbooks were increased at fee-free schools, and processes for obtaining exemptions for poor children in formerly white suburban schools charging fees were strengthened. Consequently, black schools in poor communities are now fully state-funded rather than state-aided. This has created a two-tiered system of state-aided fee-paying and state-funded no fee-paying public schools in South Africa (Chisholm 2012:92).The size of the government grant per child depends on the "quintile" of the school (cf. 3.2.2). The schools in quintile 1-3 may apply for classification as a "No Fee" school. 5% of all schools are quintile 5 schools, and 15% of all schools are quintile 4 schools (Consortium for Education Research on Access, Transitions and Equity 2009).

According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2013:1), the resource allocation for no-fee schools is based on national school funding norms (adequacy amount) for the particular year. For example, in 2013 the adequacy amount per learner was R 1 010) and the enrolment of the school in that particular year. For the SASA section 21 schools (Section 21 schools are those public schools that are allocated funds by the Department of Education to purchase resources by themselves; non-section 21 schools are those schools that are allocated funds by the Department of Education on paper, but the Department purchases resources on their behalf) the split of resource allocation is indicated in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: The SASA section 21: Resource allocation

SASA Section 21 function	Day-to-day allowance	LTSM (50%)	Services (38%)	Maintenance (12%)	Total allocation
Section 21 function allocated to the school		Yes	Yes	Yes	
Amount to be transferred	R 35 000 (for example)	R ……..	R …….	R …….	R ……..
Amount to be managed by District	-	-	-	-	-
Total allocated per split	R 35 000 (for example)	R ……..	R ……	R ……	R ……..

Source: Gauteng Department of Education (2013:2)

The total allocation of the SASA section 21 schools is found by multiplying the adequacy amount by the enrolment of the school. From the total allocation R35 000 (as an example) is used for day-to-day allowance and the remaining amount is split into Learner and Teacher Support Materials (LTSM)(50%), services (38%) and maintenance (12%). It is further indicated that any deviation in the utilization of these ring-fenced amounts can only be done with the written authorization of the District Director (Gauteng Department of Education 2013:1).Generally, this implies that the more the learner enrolment at a school, the more the school is funded; whereas the less the learner enrolment at the school, the less the school is funded by the state. The no-fee schools with less enrolments suffer in terms of government funding because such schools are not allowed to demand school fees from the learners or the parents of the learners; they have to devise ways of fund-raising to augment the state funds.

3.3 CURRICULUM REFORM

According to Chisholm (2012:94), three major curriculum reform initiatives have been launched since 1994 which have placed enormous pressure on the schooling system. The school curriculum was replaced in 1997 with the Outcomes-based Curriculum 2005, based on constructivist rather than prescriptive principles. Efforts to retrain the educators and to implement this reform unraveled as fast as it was set in place. It required well-qualified educators and well-resourced schools for effective realization; those schools without such educators and resources were the least able to appropriate it. Since its introduction in January 1998 into all Grade 1 classes, the curriculum has been heavily criticized for the following reasons, namely highly inaccessible and complex language; the under-preparation of the educators for this complex curriculum; large-scale discrepancies in resources and capacity between the few privileged schools and the large mass of disadvantaged schools with respect to its implementation (Chisholm 2012).

After 1994, a key strategic challenge for education was the rapid transformation of the school curriculum (Department of Education 2002). Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was launched in March 1997, with its implementation in Grade 1 scheduled for 1998 and for Grade 7 in 1999. C2005 was intended to be phased in progressively so that it would cover all sectors of schooling by 2005. In 1999 Kader Asmal, the then Minister of Education, instituted a review of Curriculum 2005, which led to the Revised National Curriculum Statement(RNCS) (Mouton, Louw & Strydom 2012:14). The C2005 review found that ex-model C schools were having less difficulty in implementing C2005, whereas the formerly disadvantaged schools found it very difficult to implement C2005. The educators perceived the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) approach to education as being so much more problematic that it had to be scrapped. It was tacitly acknowledged that it was practically impossible that there could be a notion such as “own pace”, as initially diagnostic assessment and benchmarking for the learners were essential as a point of departure. These perceptions led to the implementation of RNCS (Revised National Curriculum Statement) in 2008 after a review had been done of C2005 (Mouton et al. 2012:15). However, there were shortcomings associated with RNCS implementation that provided an important context for the current review process. There had been challenges in the RNCS to produce the

NCS, namely uncertainty and confusion in the system, and criticism of the curriculum delivery and implementation. An important finding of the review was no clear widely-communicated plan for the implementation and support of the NCS. Many of the educators and the parents complained that they had no vision of the bigger picture in terms of curricular aims, specifically with regard to the learner in South Africa, coupled with poor learner performance in local and international tests (Mouton et al. 2012:7;15).

The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 represents a policy statement for learning and teaching in South African schools and comprises the following (cf. Department of Basic Education 2011):

- A Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for each approved school subject as listed in the programme, and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Graded R-12.
- The policy document National Policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grade R-12, which describe the number of subjects offered by the learners in each grade and the promotion requirements to be obtained.
- The policy document to National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12 which standardises the recording and reporting processes for Grades R-12 within the framework.

The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 (NCS) stipulates policy on curriculum and assessment in the schooling sector. To improve its implementation, the National Curriculum Statement was amended, and a single comprehensive Curriculum and Assessment Policy document was developed (Department of Basic Education 2011:3)

In January 2012 the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was introduced into the primary schools. For Grades R-3 the curriculum consists of the following subjects: Home Language; First Additional Language; Mathematics; and Life Skills.In Grades 4-6 the curriculum consists of the following subjects: Home Language; First Additional Language; Mathematics;

Natural Science and Technology; Life Skills; and Social Sciences. In Grade 7 the curriculum consists of the following subjects: Home Language; First Additional Language; Mathematics; Natural Sciences; Social Sciences; Technology; Economic and Management Sciences; Life Orientation and Creative Arts.

The implementation of OBE and the series of curriculum changes (C2005, RNCS, NCS and CAPS) within a period of twenty years have put strain on the primary schools and the teaching staff, and increased the administration in schools. In this regard research has shown that on average more than half of a teacher's working week is taken up with administration-related activities. This series of curriculum changes also confused many educators in the formerly disadvantaged schools, particularly with regard to the terminology used. For this reason more educators, particularly the experienced ones, left the education system (Lemmer & Van Wyk 2009: 262).

3.3.1 Time-allocation and timetables

According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2012:1), quality teaching and learning is not an event that occurs on a particular day of the school year; it has to become part of the daily working life of all who serve the education system. It needs hard work, commitment and perseverance from the SMT, the principal as instructional leader and the Departmental Advisors to devise an appropriate timetable.

In this regard, when drawing up the timetables the following should be considered:

- They must adhere to the gazetted subject percentages.
- A timetable and time-allocation have to be chosen which allow for assembly, breaks and library/information skills/media, without stealing part of the teaching and learning time.
- Computer skills and library/information skills/media should be integrated with other subjects to improve the learners' information technology skills.

The instructional time in the Foundation Phase is as indicated in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: The Foundation Phase: Instructional time

SUBJECT	GRADE:R (HOURS)	GRADES:1-2 (HOURS)	GRADE:3 (HOURS)
Home Language	10	8/7	8/7
First Additional Language		2/3	¾
Mathematics	7	7	7
Life Skills - Beginning Knowledge - Creative Arts - Physical Education - Personal and Social Well-being	**6** (1) (2) (2) (1)	**6** (1) (2) (2) (1)	**6** (2) (2) (2) (1)
TOTAL	**23**	**23**	**25**

Source: Department of Basic Education (2011:6)

The instructional time for Grades R, 1 and 2 is 23 hours, and for Grade 3 it is 25 hours. Ten hours are allocated for Languages in Grades R-2 and 11 hours in Grade 3. A maximum of 8 hours and a minimum of 7 hours are allocated for Home Language and a minimum of 2 hours and a maximum of 3 hours for Additional Language in Grades 1-2. In Grade 3 a maximum of 8 hours and a minimum of 7 hours are allocated for Home Language and a minimum of 3 hours and a maximum of 4 hours for First Additional Language. In Life Skills Beginning Knowledge one hour is allocated in Grades R-2 and two hours, as indicated by the hours in brackets, for Grade 3 (DBE 2011:6).

The instructional time allocated in the Intermediate Phase: Grades 4-6 (Per 5 day cycle) is as follows:

Table 3.4: The Intermediate Phase: Instructional time

SUBJECT	Allocation	Time (Per 5 day cycle)	
		Hours	**Minutes**
Home Language/HL	22%	6	360
First Additional Language/FAL	18%	5	300
Mathematics	22%	6	360
Natural Sciences and Technology	13%	3,5	210
Social Sciences	11%	3	180
Life Skills - Creative Arts - Physical Education - Personal and Social Well-being	14%	**4** (1,5) (1) (1,5)	240
TOTAL	**100%**	**27,5**	**1650**

Source: Department of Basic Education (2011:6)

Table 3.4 indicates that Home Language and Mathematics are allocated the most tuition time in the cycle. Instructional time allocated in the Intermediate Phase is also available according to a six day cycle: Grades 4-6 (6 day cycle) (DBE2011:7).

The instructional time in the Senior Phase (Grade 7)per 5 day cycle is as follows:

Table 3.5: The Senior Phase: Instructional time

SUBJECTS	Allocation	Time (Per 5 day cycle)	
		Hours	Minutes
Home Language	18%	5	300
First Additional Language	14,5%	4	240
Mathematics	16,5%	4,5	270
Natural Sciences	11,5%	3	180
Social Sciences	11,5%	3	180
Technology	07%	2	120
Economic Management Sciences	07%	2	120
Life Orientation	07%	2	120
Creative Arts	07%	2	120
TOTAL	**100%**	**27,5**	**1650**

Source: Department of Basic Education (2011:7)

Table 3.5 indicates that the Home Language and Mathematics receive the largest time-allocation for tuition. However, the mathematics tuition time is decreased in order to accommodate the additional subjects. Instructional time allocated in the Senior Phase (Grade 7) is also available according to a six day cycle: Grades 4-6 (6 day cycle) (DBE2011:7).

3.3.2 Language policy

- Language policy and practice in primary schooling and its impact on learner achievement have been alluded to in several instances in this thesis. After 1994 the government launched several transformative endeavours to shape the language-in-education policy (cf.3.7.3). The South African Constitution (RSA 1996a) gave all eleven the South African languages equal status; the South African Schools Act (1996b) made the language policy in schools a function of the School Governing Body. The Language in Education Policy (LiEP) (DoE 1997) promoted additive bilingualism

> through HL education (primarily in the early years) with gradual access to the additional languages, including English. The Revised National Curriculum Statement (DoE 2002) clarified the LiEP by stipulating that all learners should study their HL and at least one additional language as language subjects from Grade 1, and should complete the study of an African language for a minimum of three years by the end of the 12th year of schooling. This has been reaffirmed in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) (DBE 2012). Thus, all the South African learners have the right to be educated in the official language(s) of their choice in public education institutions. However, this right is limited by the state's ability to provide for this right only in a context where "that education is reasonably practicable" (Section 29(2), RSA 1996a).

In practice, the effective implementation of this language in education policy has not been realized as intended. In the post-apartheid period most public schools attended by black learners continue to follow the practice entrenched during the apartheid era: primary school learners switch from HL to English as LoLT for all learning areas at the onset of Grade 5 (the fifth year of schooling) (DBE 2010) in the absence of a definitive solution to the question of the most beneficial timing and management of the transition from first language to English. In spite of rhetoric which supports the maintenance of African languages and pedagogical arguments to the same end, the overriding parental choice is for black children to be educated in English as early as possible due to the perceived socioeconomic advantages associated with English proficiency (DBE 2010). In a considerable number of individual cases black learners may be immersed in English medium preschools or in Grade 1 as a result of school choice. Many black parents view HL instruction and maintenance as unnecessary (Lemmer2010). The black elite and middle-class prefer to enroll their children in independent or in public schools which formerly catered for whites only (the so-called ex-model C schools) where English language learning is supported by rich material resources and a qualified English-proficient teaching corps. In contrast, black children from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who make up 80% of the entire school population, attend township, rural or inner-city schools which lack the infrastructure and resource materials and educators who are proficient in English. Thus, school type has become a determinant of a child's educational success and life outcomes (Lemmer&Manyike2012).

3.4 LEARNER CHARACTERISTICS

According to Noddings (2005:1), in today's typical classrooms of township and rural schools many learners have single parents, many have half-siblings or temporary siblings unrelated by blood, some have foster parents, and some really have no parents at all. Many families are often run by children, who at the same time are of school-going age.

3.4.1 The learner's socioeconomic status

A learner's socioeconomic status plays a major role in educational outcomes at primary schools in South Africa. Eighty-five percent (85%) of young South African children is black. Both the biological parents of the majority of the children (93%) are alive; however, only 36% live with both their parents. Of the 19% of children who live with neither parent, 85% live in households headed by their grandparents. Approximately 60% of young children receive the government child support grant; the implication is that most young children in the country live in poverty (Statistics South Africa 2013).The rural and township communities are associated with being poor communities in terms of their educational socioeconomic status (SES). According to Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006:93), *socioeconomic status* (SES) refers to stratification that can be measured by factors such as economic status, family background, and job prestige. A broader term is social class, which involves large categories of people of similar SES who have in common such attributes as cultural identification, lifestyle and attitudes. SES is strongly correlated with academic success.

Spaull(2012:3) argues that the legacy of apartheid and the consequent correlation between education and wealth have meant that, generally speaking, poorer learners perform badly academically. The links between affluence and educational quality in South Africa can partially explain this outcome since the poor receive an inferior quality of education when compared to their wealthier counterparts. Massive differentials in achievement tests and examinations reflect South Africa's divided past. International tests (cf.3.7) demonstrate that the quality of South Africa's education lags far behind even much poorer countries. The quality of education in historically black schools, constituting 80% of the enrolments, has not improved since the

political transition, despite large resource transfers to such schools (Van der Berg 2008:145).Lam et al. (2010:122) concur that most black learners attend the low socioeconomic status schools, showing to have poor internal assessments. Chisholm (2012:98-99) further emphasizes the link between household poverty and learning achievement. The statement is supported by Lamet al. (2010:135) where they state that baseline cognitive skills and household income are important determinants of progress through the schooling period. Deeply-rooted historical patterns are seemingly unaffected by the new policies, that is, the past still weighs heavily on the present. To understand why the education system reinforces the current patterns of poverty and privilege, the learners from the poor communities in South Africa face the burden of poverty and the burden of attending a school that still bears the scars of neglect and underfunding during the apartheid dispensation. New state-driven policies have enabled individuals and individual schools to escape this legacy, and particularly those within the new middle-class are now able to attend the formerly privileged schools, but not yet the majority.

Van der Berg (2008:153) alludes to the fact that the SACMEQ data have made it possible to indicate that the school system was not yet systematically able to overcome the inherited socioeconomic disadvantage at the primary level poor schools at least.

3.4.2 Compulsory school attendance

In 2012 the gross school enrolment (GER) in primary education in South Africa was measured at 101.71 (World Bank 2015). “The total is the total enrolment in primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of official primary education age. GER can exceed 100% due to the inclusion of over aged and under-aged students because of early or late school entrance and grade repetition” (World Bank 2015: no page). The South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996b) made education compulsory but not free (cf. 3.2.3); instead of being free, all schools became state-aided (Chisholm 2012:92). Subject to the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (section 3) (RSA 1996b), every parent must see to it that every learner for whom he or she is responsible attends school from the first school day of the year in which such a learner reaches the age of seven years until the last school day of the year in which the learner reaches the age of fifteen years or the ninth grade, whichever occurs first. If a learner who is subjected to

compulsory attendance in terms of the Act is not enrolled at or fails to attend school, the Head of the Department may:

a. investigate the circumstances of the learner's absence from school;
b. take appropriate measures to remedy the situation; and
c. failing such a remedy, issue a written notice to the parent of the learner requiring compliance with the Act.

Subject to the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (section 3) (RSA 1996b):

a. any parent who, without just cause and after a written notice from the Head of the Department, fails to comply with the Act, is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months; or
b. any other person who, without just cause, prevents a learner, who is subjected to compulsory attendance from attending a school, is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine or imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months.

3.4.3 Admission to primary school

According to the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (section 5) (RSA 1996b), a public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way. The governing body of a public school may not administer any test related to the admission of a learner to the public school or direct or authorize the principal of the school or any other person to administer such a test. No learner may be refused admission to a public school on the grounds that his or her parent:

a. Is unable to pay or has not paid the school fees determined by the governing body under section 39 of the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996.
b. Does not subscribe to the mission statement of the school; or
c. Has refused to enter into a contract in terms of which the parent waives any claim for damages arising out of the education of the learner.

Age requirements for admission to an ordinary public school as assigned in the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996b) and the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (No. 84 of 1996) (RFSA1996c) had been determined as:

- The admission age of learner to Grade 1(one) is 5(five) years turning 6(six) years by June in the year of admission.
- The admission age of a learner to Grade R is 4(four) years turning 5(five) years by June in the year of admission.
- Compulsory school attendance is between the ages of 7(seven) and 15(fifteen), even if the child has never attended school before.

Subject to the SASA, Act 84 OF 1996 (section 5, ss. 9) any learner or parent of a learner who has been refused admission to a public school may appeal against the decision to the Member of the Executive Council (MEC). It is acknowledged that the criteria for the admission of an underage learner are complex and take some considerable time to develop. The criteria must be reliable and effective, and their proper implementation will require the training of evaluators. The criteria must be based on an educationally sound basis in order to ensure that

- the learners are admitted on an equitable basis;
- there is no unfair discrimination against learners;
- the admission is fair to the individual learner as well as other learners in the classroom;
- recognition is given to the diversity of language, culture and economic background;
- notice is taken of the differences between urban and rural environments; and
- the physical, psychological and mental development of the child is taken into account.

3.4.4 Individual learner performance and competency level and grade repetition

The performance of primary school learners has been discussed in detail in (cf. 3.7) terms of international and national assessments. The Department of Basic Education (2011:5) uses the seven-point scale in all the school phases to determine the level of performance of individual learners, as indicated below:

Table 3.6a: The seven-point scale

ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL	ACHIEVEMENT DESCRIPTION	MARKS %
7	Outstanding Achievement	80 – 100
6	Meritorious Achievement	70 – 79
5	Substantial Achievement	60 -69
4	Adequate Achievement	50 – 59
3	Moderate Achievement	40 – 49
2	Elementary Achievement	30 – 39
1	Not Achieved	0 – 29

Source: Department of Basic Education (2011:13-14)

Lam et al. (2010:121) maintain that grade repetition is one of the most important problems in educational systems in many developing countries. Grade progression in township and rural schools is poorly linked to actual ability and learning, and it was found that lower test scores were associated with the increased probability of grade repetition. The performance at school in a given year depends on systematic components such as prior learning, learner effort, and inputs from home and school, as well as a learner component that reflects imperfect links between actual learning and measured performance. It shows that high variances in this learner component can generate an equilibrium characterized by high enrolment and high rates of grade repetition, features that are typical of predominantly township and rural schools in South Africa.

According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2013:1), retention in a particular grade is determined by the following policies:

a) National Policy pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grade R-12 (DBE 2011). The following promotion requirements are put in place (DBE 2011:5-6):

i) For Grades 1-3: Promotion from grade to grade through this phase within the appropriate age cohort should be the accepted norm, unless the learner displays a lack of competence to cope with the following grade's work. A learner who is not ready to perform at the next level, should be assessed to determine the level of support required. A learner who does not meet the requirements for promotion can progress to the next grade in order to prevent the learner being retained in the Foundation Phase for longer than four years, excluding Grade R.

ii) For Grades 4-6: Promotion from grade to grade through this phase within the appropriate age cohort should be the accepted norm, unless the learner displays a lack of competence to cope with the grade's work. A learner may only be retained once in the Intermediate Phase in order to prevent the learner from being in a phase for longer than four (4) years. A learner who is not ready to perform at the expected level and who has been retained in the first phase for four (4) years or more and who is likely to be retained again in the second phase for four years or more, should receive the necessary support.

b) National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12: According to the Department of Basic Education (2011:16), all the educators are expected to keep a file containing evidence of their teaching and assessment, namely, their annual teaching plan, assessment plan, formal assessment tasks and memoranda, an indication of the textbooks and any resources used, a record sheet containing the learners' marks for each formal assessment task, and informal notes or any intervention that is planned by the teacher to assist the learners who require additional support. It is the educators' responsibility to ensure that the information in their assessment files is kept up-to-date.

c) Regulation Gazette no 36041 (pages 7 & 8, paragraph 1a,b,c,d,e, and f) (Gauteng Department of Education 2013:1).

d) The South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996: age requirements for admission to an ordinary public school (paragraph 3, page B62).

e) The National Education Policy Act, Act 27 of 1996: Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools, which further stipulates that the criteria for retention are based on the

following requirements, according to the phase (Gauteng Department of Education 2013:1):

i. Foundation Phase: Home language – level 4 (adequate achievement); First Additional Language – level 3 (moderate achievement); Mathematics – level 3 (moderate achievement).
ii. Intermediate Phase: Home Language – level 4: 50% - 59% (adequate achievement); First Additional Language – level 3: 40%-49% (moderate achievement); Mathematics – level 3: 40%-49% (moderate achievement); in any other two of the remaining subjects – level 3: 40%-49% (moderate achievement).

If a learner is unable to meet the abovementioned promotion requirements, such a learner will repeat a grade, unless his/her age cohort does not permit a learner to repeat the grade. Hereafter follows an explanation of age cohort. Foundation Phase: Age cohort = Admission age (6/7) + Grade + 1; for example, a learner in grade 3 should not exceed the age of 11, (6/7 + 3 + 1 = 10/11). All the learners in Grades R-3 should progress within their age cohort. Intermediate Phase: Age cohort = Admission age + Grade + 2. All the learners in Grades 4-6 should progress within their age cohort; for example, a learner in Grade 6 should not exceed the age of 14, (6 + 6 + 2 = 14).A learner can only be retained once in a phase (Foundation Phase, excluding Grade R), unless the Provincial Head of Department has given approval, based on special circumstances and professional advice.

Van der Berg (2008:148) states that repeaters fare progressively worse the more they have repeated; a joint significance test confirmed the combined effect of repetition dummies. High repetition rates in the lower grades mean high repetition and drop-out rates in the higher grades. South Africa's repetition rate at 9% is much higher than the international norm at 5%, especially among boys in the lower grades (Chisholm 2012:98). Over-age learners are much less likely to persist at school, and are much more likely to repeat a grade, and then drop out. Lam et al. (2010:135) suggest that a school's ability to accurately assess performance and to determine which learners advance to higher grades is a critical dimension of school quality.

3.5 THE TEACHER CORPS

The 2011 Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) made a Bachelor of Education-degree or an Advanced Diploma in Teaching (both at NQF Level 7) the minimum teacher professional and academic qualification (De Clercq2013). Many township schools and rural schools have a large significant number of under-qualified staff members - about 40% (e-News Channel Africa 2015; SA-Breaking News 2014). As such there has been a considerable variation in the qualifications of the teaching staff, particularly in the historically advantaged and disadvantaged schools (Ngcobo & Tikly 2010:209). Taole and Mncube (2012:154) argue that an environment that is conducive to effective learning and is free of disruptive behaviour can only be achieved if the educator is adequately qualified and has a repertoire of classroom management skills. Potter and Naidoo (2012:521) highlight the fact that while many educators are motivated to improve in the absence of external quality control through the inspection of the schools and the evaluation of the schools and the educators, the in-service of educators, and school-focused development, overall the quality of education remains low.

3.5.1 The teacher's content knowledge

Spaull (2012:81) argues that a powerful factor which impacts learner performance is the teacher's knowledge of the content. Educators cannot teach what they do not know. While pedagogical skills, teacher motivation and classroom resources are all important in the learners' learning process, sufficient teacher content knowledge of the subject being taught is a necessary condition for learner learning. According to Lam et al. (2010:122), in addition to the problems disadvantaged schools face in providing quality classroom instruction, the educators struggle to effectively evaluate learner performance. Chisholm (2012: 94) indicates that despite the changes in the education system, as well as improvements in the educators' formal qualifications, ongoing evidence of extremely poor reading, writing and numeracy capabilities amongst the majority of the learners, has raised questions about teacher's subject and pedagogical content knowledge. Preliminary analyses of teacher content knowledge in the essential subjects of Language and Mathematics show alarming results for primary school educators in the country.

Spaull (2012:24) cites a study that found that Grade 6 mathematics educators do not possess the desirable levels of mathematics content knowledge.

Only 32% of South African Grade 6 mathematics educators have desirable levels of mathematics content knowledge, with the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) average of 14 African countries being 42%. This is in stark contrast to many other poorer African countries with much higher proportions of mathematics educators with desirable levels of mathematics content knowledge (Kenya, 90%; Zimbabwe, 76%; Swaziland, 55%). The situation for the educators of reading is slightly better with 60% of the South African Grade 6educators of reading having desirable levels of reading content knowledge, with the SACMEQ average being 5%. According to Van der Berg et al. (2011:9), in a survey of primary school classroom practices in South Africa it was found that low time on-task and content exposure, poor curriculum coverage, low teacher-expectations and the insufficient use of textbooks all erode the opportunity to learn.

3.5.2 The teacher's professionalism

Teacher professionalism is an area of great concern in South African education (South African Council of Educators 2005). According to De Clercq (2013:50), teacher professionalism needs strengthening as a matter of priority. This should be reached through the development of the educators' professional knowledge and competences and through subjective constitutive processes which will the improve educators' professional identity, mindset, behaviour and values. Lam et al. (2010:122)conclude that South African schools have large systemic problems and struggle to meet their educational mandates in the three core functions of teaching, learning and management. High teacher absenteeism is a grave concern, especially in more poorly-resourced schools. According to Spaull (2012:80), educators are essential to the learning process, as such it is logical to suspect that higher rates of teacher absenteeism are associated with lower learner performance. High rates of teacher absenteeism negatively affect learner absenteeism as mentioned earlier. According to Van der Berg et al. (2011:9), the National School Effectiveness Study (NSES) provides some indication of how instructional leadership operates and of its importance in affecting learning. Based on the NSES data, teacher absenteeism was

approximately twice as high in schools where the teacher attendance registers were not up-to-date. The state of the attendance registers is a reflection of how seriously teacher attendance is taken by the school management, including the principal as instructional leader, and this clearly impacts upon actual absenteeism. It is the responsibility of theeducators to develop stronger professional identities and commitment to the learners and quality school education as a whole.

3.6 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

According to Mestry and Khumalo (2012:106-107), the transformation of education in South Africa has defined the role of parents as key partners in education.The South African Schools Act (SASA), Act No 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996b) defines the concept of a *parent*, describes the Parent's basic duties, sets out the requirements for the schools in relation to the parents' right to information, and provides for parent and community representation in mandatory School Governing Bodies (SGB's). These reforms have created an environment more conducive to parental involvement in the schools, however, the actual involvement of the parents remains weak (Lemmer & Van Wyk 2004). Ngcobo and Tikly (2010:217) emphasize that many of the township and the rural schools, unlike the more historically advantaged schools, had difficulties in establishing SGBs. In many cases, however, informal ways of engaging the leadership of the parents and the wider community were critical, particularly in areas of finance, security and discipline. It was indicated that the disadvantaged settings, where the pupils are unlikely to be able to study effectively at home or where the parents or the care-takers are illiterate or unable to give study support, create difficult learning opportunities for the learners. Discipline is another important area where parental co-operation is typical. Significantly, parental involvement is considered important in order to support the learners outside of the school with norms and values which are very useful in the school environment. Many schools organize meetings with the parents at least once or twice a year. The attendance is not always high in the township and rural schools. This is problematic for the principals as instructional leaders who need the support of the parents in motivating the learners towards better achievements. Getting parents involved in their children's education, especially where this had not been practiced in the past, and in contexts of poverty, involve both transactional and relationship-based approaches where the community not only gives to the school but where the school is also perceived to give to the

community. The statement is supported by Lam et al. (2010:122) where they indicate that another important long-run impact of apartheid is that it left black parents without the resources to create a favourable home environment for their children. In this case it is, therefore, all the more important to incorporate household characteristics into studies of school outcomes. According to Van der Berg (2008:148), a mother with matric brings about measurable benefits towards a child's reading. A mother requires at least a degree before the scores in Mathematics reflected the benefits of maternal education. In contrast, the father's level of education does not show significant effects. The positive impact of having more than ten books at home is another manifestation of home background, literacy and attitude to knowledge. But not having an own textbook or sharing it with more than one other learner is associated with worse reading scores. This situation was found in most township and rural schools. Lam et al. (2010:129) maintain that, given the high variance in parental schooling and the extensive research that finds strong effects of parental schooling on their children's schooling, the effect of the father's schooling is significantly positive, if we exclude income and prior performance.

The Gauteng Department of Education (2012:107) emphasizes that the quality of the learning and teaching campaign is a national campaign aimed at improving the quality of education for all learners, especially the poor, through the mobilizing of communities to play an active role in the provision of support to the schools, the educators and the learners. Education should be seen as a societal matter, and thus the parents, including all stakeholders with an interest in education, should be involved in the education of the learners. In line with the Parent Support Programme, which is in line with the Department's mandate of capacitating parents and families as the main pillars of support for the schooling of their children, a parental guideline was designed to assist the parents in accessing the supporting services that the Department offers (Gauteng Department of Education 2012). The parents and families in the Gauteng Province have been introduced to this Parent/Family Support Programme through various workshops held throughout the Province (Gauteng Department of Education 2012).

3.7 THE PERFORMANCE OF THE LEARNERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA: INTERNATIONAL SURVEYS

According to Van der Berg(2008:146), the participation of South African primary school learners in international evaluation studies since the political transition indicates that their educational performance that was measured was extremely weak and that the systematic difference between schools serving different parts of the population remains exceedingly large.

3.7.1 The Progress in the International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)

The *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS) (Howie, Van Staden, Tshele, Dowse & Zimmerman 2011) is a project in which 20 000 South African learners participated. It was conducted by the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) at the University of Pretoria, under the auspices of the International Association for the Evaluation for Educational Achievement (IEA). The South African learners participated in the PIRLS in 2006 and 2011.

In the PIRLS (2006) the reading literacy of Grade 4 learners in 45 participating countries was tested. However, in South Africa Grade 5 was tested in addition to Grade 4. The South African PIRLS study tested the reading proficiency of 16 073 Grade 4 learners in 429 schools, and 14 657 Grade 5 learners in 397 schools. Of the 45 countries that participated, South Africa achieved the lowest score. The South African learners performed significantly below the learners from all the other countries. The mean reading score for Grade 4 learners was 253 and for Grade 5 learners it was 302, both far below the international average of 500, and well below international benchmark of 400. Furthermore, only 13% of the Grade 4 and 22% of the Grade 5 learners reached the low International Benchmark of 400. This is in stark contrast to the majority of the other participating countries. In half of the participating countries, 94% of the learners reached this low International Benchmark. Accordingly, learners who were not able to demonstrate even the basic reading skills of the low International Benchmark by the fourth grade were considered at a serious risk of not learning how to read. Using this framework, 87% of Grade 4 and 78% of Grade 5 learners in South Africa are deemed to be at a serious risk of not learning to read.

In 2011 the PIRLS tested learners in 49 countries. In South Africa the assessment focused on two purposes of reading, namely reading for literary experience and reading to acquire and use

information. It assessed the reading literacy at Grade 4 level in the eleven official languages and at Grade 5 level in Afrikaans or English. At both levels the South African children achieved well below the International Centre Point. The learners tested in Afrikaans and English performed relatively well and above the international means; those tested in all the African languages, despite the fact that most of the participants wrote the test in their HL, achieved very low outcomes; the outcomes of the learners tested in Sepedi and Tshivenda were especially low. Only a small number of South African learners (6%) were able to read at an advanced level; 71% were able to reach a rudimentary level of reading and attain the Low International Benchmark (Howie et al, 2011).

3.7.2 The Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ)

The Southern African Consortium on Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ), a consortium of education ministries, policy-makers and researchers who, in conjunction with UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), conducted three nationally representative school surveys in participating countries, specifically SACMEQ I (1996), SACMEQ II (2000), and SACMEQ III (2007). The surveys test the Mathematics and Language skills of Grade 6 learners in each of the participating countries (Spaull 2012:37; Van der Berg 2008:146). South Africa participated in SACMEQ II in 2000 and SACMEQ III in 2007. Of the 14 countries that participated in 2000, South Africa had 9th highest Mathematics score and 8th the highest score in below-income countries such as Botswana, Swaziland and Kenya. In 2007, of the 15 countries that participated, South Africa came 10th in reading and 8thin Mathematics. Of the Grade 6 learners that were tested, 27% were deemed to be functionally illiterate, while 40% were classified as functionally innumerate. It was further indicated that South Africa's educational performance is extremely weak, and that systemic differences between the schools serving different parts of the population remain exceedingly large. In support of the above statement, Chisholm (2012:97) further highlights that, in comparison with other Southern and Eastern African countries, South Africa did well on gender achievement and the gradual reduction of its high repetition rates over the period, but it performed below the UNESCO and Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) mean in the Grade 6 literacy and

numeracy assessments. Furthermore, Mbali and Douglas (2012:526) point out that the 2007 SAMEQ study, confined to countries in Southern and Eastern Africa, showed that the South African children's achievement levels have remained more or less the same in the past decade, in spite of increases in educational funding. South Africa also performed worse than other much poorer countries in the region, such as Swaziland and Tanzania.

3.7.3 Contributing factors to poor international performances

Both the PIRLS and SACMEQ studies identified that the factors contributing to poor performance which were identified included poor literacy resources at home and in the schools, and large classes. In schools catering for black learners an average primary class size is based on a 40:1 learner-teacher ratio. This ratio is only applicable to the public rural and township primary schools, as they are generally unable to raise funds and hire additional educators in order to reduce the ratio from 40:1 to 35:1 or less (Gauteng Department of Education 2012: 45). Lam et al. (2010:122) further highlight that due to large disparities in school fees, the equalization of government funding has not fully equalized the pupil-teacher ratio and other school inputs. Jantjies and Joy (2012:1) make mention of the lack of adequate learning material and resources available to primary school learners. Most of the learners from the poorer communities rely extensively on the learning materials received at those schools. Another obstacle to performance is language in education (cf. 3.7.3). Most primary school learners are not first language-speakers of the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). A learner's inability to adequately communicate in English consequently contributes to his or her poor performance at school. Mbali and Douglas (2012:525) indicate that some learners, by the time they have reached secondary schools, may have started to learn both their first additional and second additional languages, although current policy discourages three languages in primary school. However, currently the first additional language is added from Grade 2, and in the most recent curriculum (CAPS), from Grade 1, and becomes the medium of instruction from Grade 4. The policy situation has generated problems for the educators and the learners, and is played out in the results of the international tests over the past decade that indicates South Africa's primary school education to be worse even than that of many other African countries.

In the light of the international assessments, Spaull (2012:34) argues that the vast majority of the South African primary school learners are significantly below where they should be in reference to curriculum, and more generally, have not reached a host of normal literacy and numeracy milestones. He indicates that a minority of the learners (roughly 20%) who attend functional public schools (formally Model C schools) perform acceptably in the local and international tests, while the majority of the learners (roughly 80%) who attend township and rural public schools perform poorly. Thus, there is a bimodal distribution of primary school achievement in the country. Taylor et al (2008:43) concur that four out of five Grade 6 learners were at the appropriate reading level in former Model C schools, compared to four learners in a hundred in township and rural schools.

The national assessments used to determine the level of learner performance in the primary schools are discussed in the ensuing sections.

3.8 THE PERFORMANCE OF THE LEARNERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA: NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Large scale nation-wide standardised assessments have been carried out by the Department of Education [DBE] (2003; 2005) and the Department of Basic Education (2011; 2012; 2013; 2014) to test the performance of primary school learners. According to Department of Education (2005:6), systemic evaluation studies intend to measure the extent to which the education system achieves the set social, economic and transformational goals. They do this by measuring the learners' achievements at selected grades, taking into account the context of learning and teaching. The Department states that the main purpose of systemic evaluation is to benchmark performance and to track the progress made towards the achievement of the transformational goals of access, redress, equity and quality. This formidable task requires understanding the logic of the system, its various components, how they are linked, and their collective force and magnifying effects. The framework of the systemic evaluation stipulates that systemic evaluation seeks to answer the following key questions:

- What is the context in which learning and teaching are taking place?

- What is the level of achievement of learners at key points of the education system (Grade 3, 6 and 9)?
- What factors affect learner achievement?
- How can the level of achievement be improved?

3.8.1 The Intermediate Phase Systemic Evaluation Reports

The 2003 Systemic Evaluation of 54 000 Grade 3 learners indicated serious shortcomings in the quality of education. Against expected learning outcomes scores of 50% in each area, the average scores were 54% and 69% for Life Skills and Listening Comprehension, but only 38% for reading comprehension and 30% for Numeracy (Department of Education 2003: viii & iv).

According to the 2005 Intermediate Phase Systemic Evaluation Report, less than 50% of Grade 6 learners were achieving the expected learning outcomes in Natural Sciences, 40% in the Language of learning (mainly English) and 20% in Mathematics (Department of Education 2005:75). In all the subjects the average scores were significantly higher for learners attending urban schools than for those attending rural schools. The findings which follow present the achievement of Grade 6 learners in terms of the instrument that was used to access the three learning areas: Language of learning and teaching (LoLT), Mathematics and Natural Sciences. Table 3.1 presents the national scores for the three learning areas. All the scores are expressed as percentages. For each subject percentage, the scores are also converted to achievement levels.

Table 3.6b: The national scores for Grade 6 (2005)

SUBJECTS	AVERAGE	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
Language (LoLT)	38.03	0.65	23.79
Mathematics	27.08	0.47	17.14
Natural Sciences	40.77	0.46	18.09

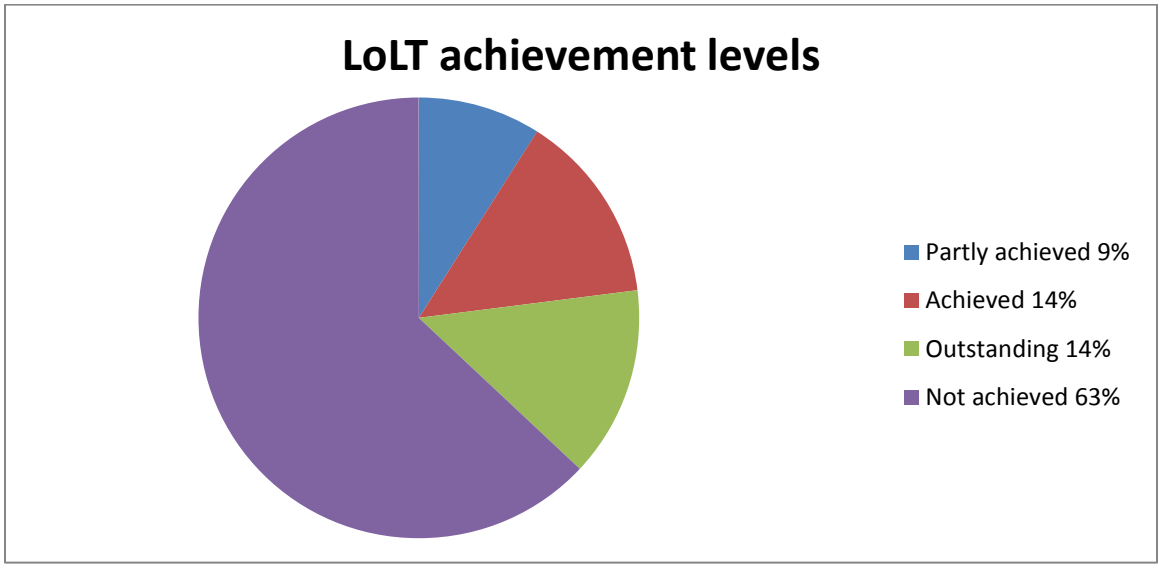
Source: Department of Education (2005:77)

This table indicates that the achievements of the learners, as depicted by the national average scores obtained in all three subjects, were generally poor, with the learners obtaining the highest score in Natural Sciences, followed by the LoLT and Mathematics.

The ensuing discussing provides a further analysis of the scores for only the LoLT and mathematics.

Figure 3.1presents the countrywide results for Language (LoLT)

Figure 3.1: The LoLT by achievement levels

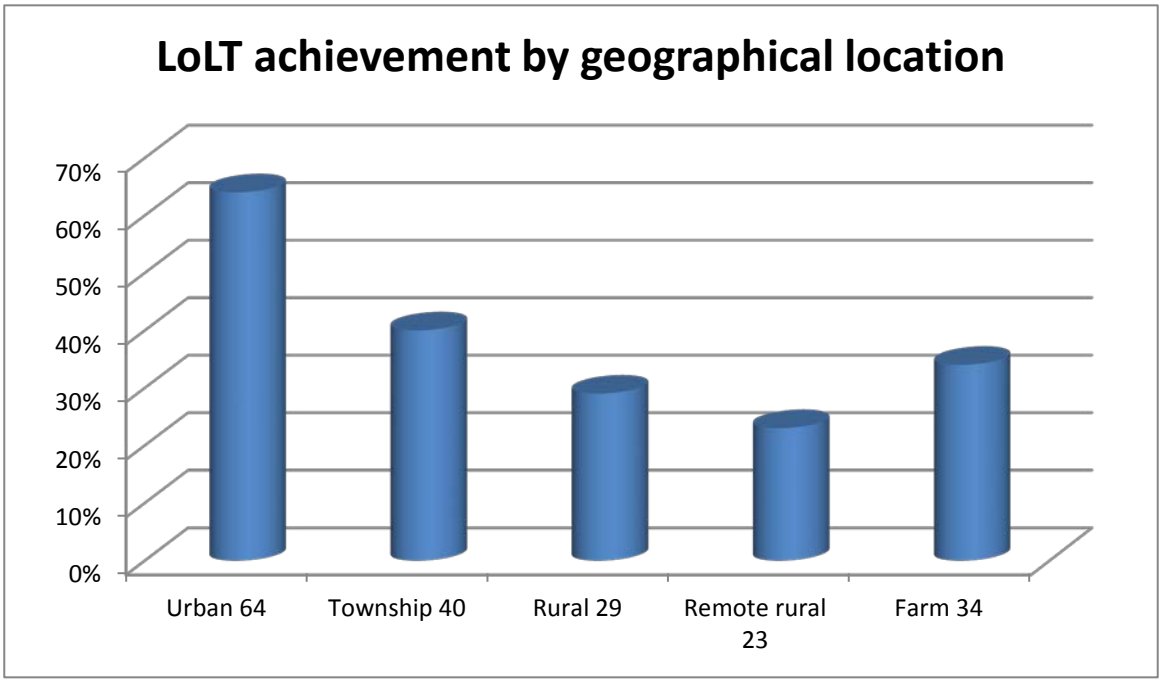


Source: Department of Education (2005:77).

Figure 3.1indicates that 28% of the learners performed at the “Achieved” and “Outstanding” levels combined, while 63% scored at the “Not Achieved” level.

The average achievement scores of learners for the LoLT, according to the geographical location of the schools, are depicted in Figure3.2.

Figure 3.2: The language (LoLT) achievements by geographical location

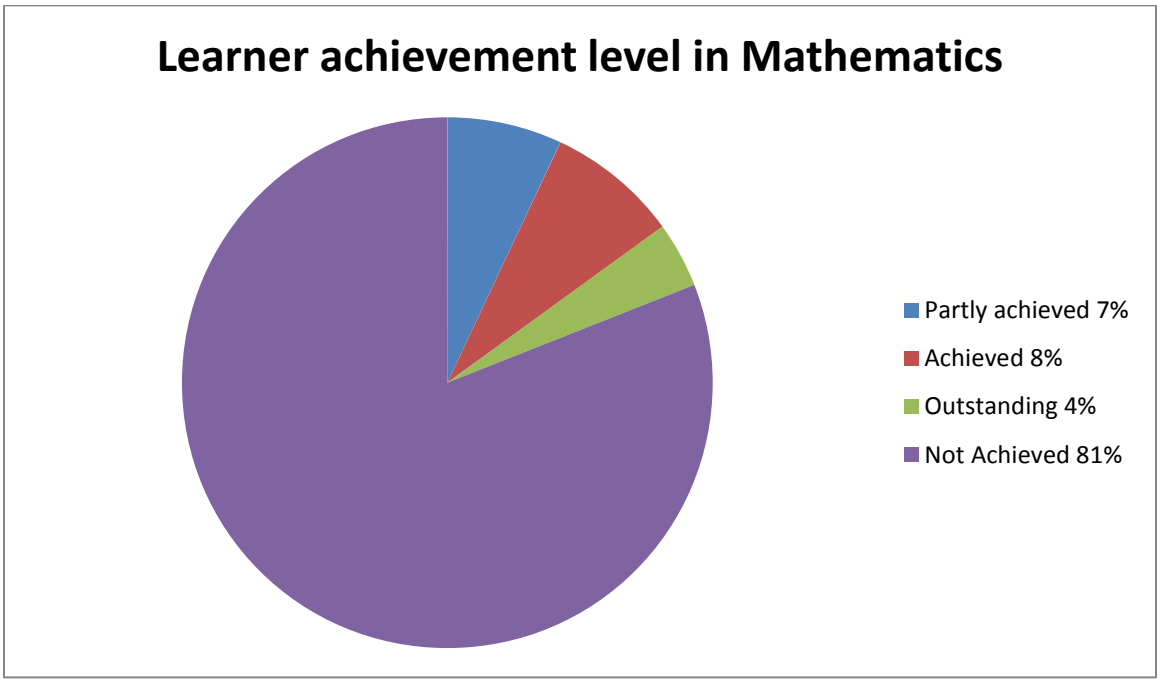


Source: Department of Education (2005:80).

The national average scores of LoLT were substantially higher for learners who attended schools in urban areas than for learners who attended school in the townships and rural areas. In general, the low national average scores in the LoLT (Table 3.1) have been influenced, to a large extent, by the very poor scores obtained by the learners in the rural areas.

The countrywide achievement in mathematics by achievement level is presented in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: The percentage of learners at each achievement level in mathematics

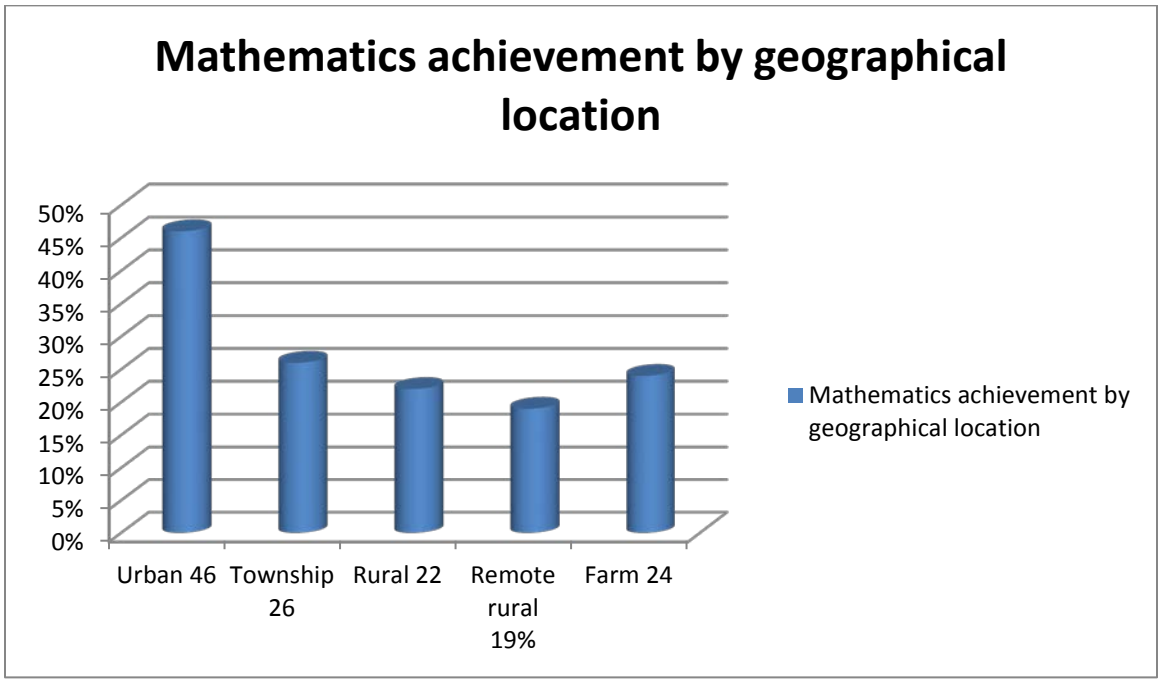


Source: Department of Education (2005:82)

The majority of the learners (81%) performed at the "Not achieved" level. The highest two categories combined, "Achieve" and "Outstanding", comprised 12% of the learners, indicating that very few learners had achieved the required mathematics knowledge and skills assessed.

The average scores of the learners attending schools in the different geographical locations are depicted in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4:Achievements in Mathematics by geographical location



Source: Department of Education (2005:84).

The learners attending urban schools obtained significantly higher scores than did the learners in other geographical areas. The geographic distribution of the mathematics results reveals a similar pattern to that found in the language scores, and demonstrates that the learners in the rural areas perform far more poorly than their counterparts in the urban areas. In general, the low national average scores in mathematics (Table: 3.1) have been influenced, to a large extent, by the very poor scores received by learners in the rural areas.

3.8.2 The National School Effectiveness Study (NSES)

The National School Effectiveness Study(NSES) was a research study aimed at identifying lessons for policy and practice for the government, principals, educators, and parents. It comprised a nationally representative sample of 268 schools; all provinces were included in the sample except Gauteng (Taylor 2011). The NSES followed a cohort of children for 3 years, commencing with Grade 3 in 2007 and ending with Grade 5 in 2009. Around 16 000 children participated in each year of data-gathering, within which a cohort of 8 383 was tracked over all

three years. Learner performance, the dependent variable, was assessed by means of literacy and mathematics tests which were administered in English to the learners at the end of each year. The mean score for Language in Grade 3 was 19.4%, and in Grade4 it was 27%, and in Mathematics it was 28. 4% for Grade 3 and 34. 6% for Grade 4. All these scores indicate the levels below that what the learners at these Grades should be achieving (Spaull 2012:37).

According to Van der Berg et al. (2011:9), an extensive review of learner workbooks conducted within the NSES confirm that curriculum implementation typically does not extend to the parts of the curriculum with high levels of cognitive demand. The evidence suggests that learners in many grade 5 mathematics classrooms never or hardly ever undertake complex exercises. It was indicated that in three grade 5 English classes there was no evidence of any paragraph-length writing in the learners' workbooks. The learners' performance in the NSES test items that required either multi-step mathematics calculations or a written answer of at least a sentence was extremely poor.

Important to this study, Taylor (2011:4) argued that a good principal who assumes responsibility for among others, instructional leadership, can make a significant difference to the quality of teaching and learning, when compared to an ineffective principal working under the same socio-economic and cultural conditions. An effective principal together with his/her staff can build a system which directs the work of teaching and learning. The parents are incorporated into an extended pedagogical partnership. A structured division of labour among all stakeholders distributes the functions and integrates curriculum delivery across the classroom, the school, and the home. Essential school-level systems to accomplish this are time management, curriculum planning, assessment, book procurement and retrieval, and the teacher's professional development. Conversely, weak instructional leadership is seen in insufficient curriculum coverage, the poor management of resources and in the loss of teaching time.

3.8.3 The Annual National Assessments (ANA)

Since 2011 Annual National Assessments (ANA) have been carried out by the Department of Basic Education [DBE] (2011; 2012; 2013; 2014) to test literacy and numeracy among primary

school learners. The ANA's endeavour is focused on the performance of learners from Grades 1-6, and Grade 9 is the latest in a series of initiatives by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) which is aimed at measuring the learners' performance and identifying areas for improvement. The ANA are used to test the learners' skills in both Mathematics and Language. The Grades 1-3 ANA are available in each of the eleven languages, while in Grades 4-6 the ANA are only available in English or Afrikaans. The ANA are administered to learners in public schools, including special schools and state-funded independent primary schools (DBE2012:1). The ANA are aimed at sustaining the government's mandate to upgrade education and to demonstrate that measurable delivery is taking place in the basic education sector. The ANA provide valuable evidence on how the various strategies and interventions which the Department has implemented over the last few years are impacting on learner performance. In the primary schools, underperformance is categorized as 50% or more of the Grade 3 and 6 learner population achieving below level 4 (according to the 7 point rating scale) for either the Grade 3 or 6 language section in the Annual National Assessments (ANA), and this is in accordance with Section 58(B) that is read in conjunction with Section 16(A) of the Education Law Amendments Act of 2007.

3.8.3.1 The Annual National Assessments (ANA): 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014

In order to test the reliability of the universal ANA, in 2011 1 667 schools were selected for verification, where stricter test administration procedures were applied for the Grades 3 and 6 ANA in those schools, and all the verification ANA scripts were also remarked by independent assessors. The ANA 2011 (DBE 2011) results gave the Department a measured picture of levels of performance at primary school level in Literacy and Numeracy at the key transitional stages of Grades 3 and 6 for the first time in the country.

The overall results for the ANA 2012 (DBE 2012) in Grades 1 to 6 point towards a general improvement in the performance of the learners in the tests. According to the DBE (2015), the overall performance in the ANA in 2014 shows an upward trend in performance in all the Grades. Overall, the results of the ANA 2014 show that the system is responding to the unrelenting focus on underperformance and inefficiency within the system. In the summary table

below, the average percentage that the learners achieved in Languages and Mathematics for four consecutive years is indicated.

Table 3.7: Summary of the average percentage marks for Languages and Mathematics in2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014, Grades 1-6

Grades	Home Language				First Additional Language				Mathematics			
	YEARS				YEARS				YEARS			
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2011	2012	2013	2014	2011	2012	2013	2014
1	59	58	60	63					63	68	60	68
2	52	55	57	61					55	57	59	62
3	35	52	51	56					28	34	53	56
4	34	43	49	57	34	34	39	41	28	37	37	37
5	30	40	46	57	28	30	37	46.7	28	30	33	37
6	36	43	59	63	28	36	46	45.4	30	27	39	43

Source: Department of Basic Education (2012:3; 2013; 2015)

The above tables indicate a noticeable increase in the performance of the learners in all Grades in both Language and Mathematics. For example, in the Grade 3 Mathematics, the number of learners achieving at least 50% in 2012. According to DBE (2012:3), Grade 6 Mathematics, the number of learners achieving at least 50% decreased from 12% in 2011 to 11% in 2012.The positive achievement of the 2014 learner cohort is also indicated in the number of learners achieving the required competencies in content knowledge for the respective grades. In 2014, a noticeable increase was obtained in both Grades 3 and 6.

Tables 3.8 and 3.9 show the ANA results in the 2011 and 2012 average percentage scores per province.

Table 3.8:The ANA results in the 2011 average percentage scores per province

	Grade 3		Grade 6	
Province	**Literacy**	**Numeracy**	**Languages**	**Mathematics**
Eastern Cape	39	35	29	29
Free State	37	26	23	28
Gauteng	35	30	35	37
Kwazulu Natal	39	31	29	32
Limpopo	30	20	21	25
Mpumalanga	27	19	20	25
Northern Cape	28	21	27	28
North West	30	21	22	26
Western Cape	43	36	40	41
National	**35**	**28**	**28**	**30**

Source: Department of Basic Education (2012:3)

Table 3.9: The ANA results in 2012 per province average percentage scores

	Grade 3		Grade 6		
Province	**Literacy**	**Numeracy**	**Languages**		**Mathematics**
			HL	**FAL**	
Eastern Cape	50,3	40,5	38,4	36,3	24,9
Free State	56,3	44,7	52,2	37,3	28,4
Gauteng	54,8	46,9	49,3	42,8	30,9
Kwazulu Natal	53,5	42,2	40,9	35,3	28,1
Limpopo	47,9	34,4	28,2	31,7	21,4
Mpumalanga	48,0	35,6	33,4	31,1	23,4
Northern Cape	49,4	37,9	39,0	36,4	23,8
North West	46,4	34,1	33,1	36,1	23,6
Western Cape	57,1	47,4	49,7	38,3	32,7
National	**52,0**	**41,2**	**42,8**	**35,6**	**26,7**

Source: Department of Basic Education (2012:29,30,35 & 36)

According to Department of Basic Education (2012:1), in spite of an improvement in the achievement of learning outcomes in most grades in 2012, the Department still has to realize the desired 60% threshold of learners mastering the minimum in Language and Mathematics competencies by the end of Grades 3, 6 and 9.

3.8.3.2 The Annual National Assessments (ANA):2014, compared to the 2012 and 2013 results

During September 2014, more than 7.3 million learners in Grades 1-6 and Grade 9 wrote the national assessment tests in numeracy and literacy. The 2014 ANA results are a significant milestone in basic education in more than one sense: firstly, this is the first ANA that involves the entire GET Band (Grades 1–9), although Grades 7 and 8 were a pilot project, based on the strengthened Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Provincial trends in the

ANA in 2011 and 2012 indicated significant strides in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases in Languages and Mathematics. In 2014 the overall results for the ANA in Grades 1 to 6 points towards an upward movement of the test scores, while in Grade 9 Mathematics, the performance of the learners has remained at a low level, as was the case in 2012 and 2013. Similarly, since2012 an analysis of the provincial trends in the ANA indicates improvements in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases in both Languages and Mathematics (DBE 2014).

In the tables below (Tables 3.10 and 3.11), the average national percentages that the learners achieved in Mathematics and Language are indicated.

Table: 3.10: Summary for Mathematics in 2012, 2013 and 2014

Grade	Mathematics		
	2012	2013	2014
1	68	60	68
2	57	59	62
3	41	53	56
4	37	37	37
5	30	33	37
6	27	39	43
9	13	14	11

Source: Department of Basic Education (2014:9)

Table: 3.11: Summaries for Home Language and First Additional Language in 2012, 2013 and 2014

Grade	Home Language			First Additional Language		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
1	58	61	63			
2	55	57	61			
3	52	51	56			
4	43	49	57	34	39	41
5	40	46	57	30	37	47
6	43	59	63	36	46	45
9	43	43	48	35	33	34

Source: Department of Basic Education (2014:9)

The 2014 Report also contains valuable information on the province's performance. The results suggest that in the Foundation Phase there are noteworthy increases across all the provinces in the overall scores in Languages and Mathematics, as seen in Table 3.8 and Table 3.9.

In Gauteng the average percentage mark was above 60% across Grades 1 to 3 in both subjects (DBE 2014:9). In the Intermediate Phase the learners in Grade 6 achieved well in the home languages, and across all the provinces the achievement level was above 50% (DBE 2014:10). At national level, in Home Language and Mathematics at Grade 6-level, there was a 4% increase in the performance of the learners. However, the learners' performance in First Additional Level in all the grades remained low. The Senior Phase did not show expected progress against the targets set by the DBE in 2010. In particular, their performance in Grade 9 Mathematics across all the provinces the performance of the learners dropped (DBE 2014:9). In Home Language at the Grade 9 level, there was an improvement in the learners' performance, but the national performance was below 50%. The trends in the learners' performance at the district level were similar to what was observed at the provincial level (cf. Table 4.24 in DBE 2014:61). In Grade 9 Mathematics there was a drop in performance in almost all districts (cf. DBE 2014:92).

An overall performance in the ANA 2014 showed an upward trend in performance in all the Grades. Table 3.7 suggests that there is a remarkable increase of average percentage in the Foundation Phase (Grade 1-3), ranging from 56 (2013) to 60 (2014) in Home Language and in Mathematics, ranging from 57(2013) to 62 (2014); in the Senior Phase, ranging from 43(2013) to 48(2014) in Home Language and in Mathematics 46(2013) to 45(2014). The overall results of the ANA 2014 showed that the educators, as well as the learners prepared well in advance by using the previous ANA questions and other effective methods to improve their performance (DBE 2014).

3.9 INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE THE SCHOOLS

This section documents the initiatives undertaken by the Department of Basic Education and the Gauteng Department of Education to improve the schools.

3.9.1 The Education Sector Plan, Action to 2014: Towards the Realization of Schooling,2025

The government's latest strategy for turning education around is known as the "Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realization of Schooling, 2025", which aims at improving learning and the work of the educators. According to the DBE (2011:27), clear goals and flexible strategies of the Action Plan to 2014 explain the 27 national goals. The 13 goals to be achieved relate to learning and enrolment in schools, and the 14 goals deal with the things that have to happen for the output goals to be realized to make schooling better.

This Action Plan is the DBE’s strategy to strengthen the weak areas in the education system that were identified as requiring support. By improving the performance in specific areas, the learners will benefit from a higher quality of education. In order to measure progress, Annual National Assessments (ANA) tests will be written by all the learners from Grades 1 to 6 and Grade 9 as national tests in languages (Home Language and first additional language) and Mathematics each year(DBE 2014:2).

The Action Plan sets out the goals that the national education system will be working towards and the actions planned to achieve these goals by 2025. These are the first steps towards realizing the bigger, longer-term vision of quality education in all schools by 2025. This vision is called 'Schooling 2025'. The Action Plan sets 13 goals to be achieved (goal 1 to goal 6 is to increase the number of learners who has to master the minimum competency in Language and Mathematics, and goal 7 to goal 9 is to improve the average performance of the learners in the Grades, while goal 10 to goal 13 focus on access and progression). In addition, the Action Plan sets out the 14 areas in education that have to be improved to reach these goals. Goal 14 to goal 18 focus on the educators' training and duties, goal 19 and goal 20 focus on learner resources, goal 22 and 23 deal with whole-school improvements, goal 23 focuses on school funding, and goal 24 to goal 27 focus on school infrastructure and support services (DBE2014:3-7).

3.9.2 The Gauteng Province Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS)

According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2012:113), the Gauteng Province Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) focuses on the Foundation Phase of primary schooling, and in particular on the schools that scored merely average in the provincial and national assessments. In addition to improving the language and numeracy abilities of the learners, the strategy aims to develop knowledgeable and skilled educators who are able to provide a high standard of teaching in multilingual classrooms. The strategy further aims at developing knowledgeable and skilled departmental officials who can mentor, assist and support the schools in developing the educators to deliver the required level of teaching in the classroom. It further stipulates that the GPLMS is to bring about real and lasting improvement in the learners' reading and writing across the system. The strategy focuses on the provision of graded readers to the learners, lesson plans to assist the educators with keeping pace with the curriculum content to be covered throughout the academic year, and providing theeducators with the necessary skills to deliver the curriculum to the learners (Gauteng Department of Education 2012). The Gauteng Department of Education (2012:97) further ensured that the educators would be supported in their efforts to deliver the curriculum effectively by providing additional support in the form of teacher coaches.

As indicated by the Gauteng Department of Education (2012:97), the strategy targeted a total of 306 252 learners in all the underperforming primary schools in Gauteng. In 2011 the Department of Education incorporated the numeracy component into the strategy. Learner resource packages based on the "Triple Cocktail" approach were provided to every school in the Gauteng Province. Lesson plans were completed for the educators in the Foundation Phase and the educators were trained to use them.

Each Foundation Phase grade in the 792 underperforming primary schools in the Gauteng Province was provided with two library trolleys containing a total of 120 books each. The School Management Team (SMT) members were trained in the utilization of the library trolleys. The quarterly Just-In-Time training for educators was conducted with all the Foundation Phase educators. GPLMS coaches were provided to assist the educators in this regard (Gauteng Department of Education 2012).

According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2011:9), the coaches are the literacy and mathematics experts who will spend time with individual educators. Their core role is to provide coaching and technical support to theeducators so that they can introduce new and more effective literacy and mathematics teaching and learning in their classroom. This will be achieved by:

- conducting quarterly training to the educators in clusters;
- thoroughly understanding the GPLMS materials provided to the schools;
- visiting each classroom twice a month for approximately one hour;
- during the visit, observing a literacy and mathematics lesson, inspecting the learners' workbooks and exercise books, and making helpful suggestions;
- assisting the educators with the management and use of GPLMS materials (by demonstrating, discussing, conducting a materials audit, etc.);
- answering the educators' specific questions about literacy, mathematics, classroom management, the integration of additional materials, and the implementation of the GPLMS;

- holding short school-based meetings in the afternoons to discuss literacy and mathematics issues raised during the school visit, and arranging longer workshops if necessary;
- holding cluster-based workshops/meetings monthly to discuss broad literacy and mathematics issues; and
- reporting monthly on all their activities, challenges and achievements in the schools to the GPLMS.

3.9.3 The Extra School Support Programme (ESSP)

The Department of Education (2005:49) stipulates that many learners experience difficulties in completing their homework exercises at home because of a lack of assistance, and of monitoring by the parents, and not understanding the work. The Extra School Support Programme (ESSP) is one of the programmes introduced by the Gauteng Department of Education in the endeavor to improve the quality of learning and teaching in the primary schools, particularly in the area of homework. According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2013:1-3), the ESSP has the following main goals and objectives:

a) Main goals

- To safeguard the schools' assets, to prevent dangerous weapons and drugs from entering the learning environment.
- To improve learner performance.
- To promote mass participation in sport, and to encourage a healthy lifestyle.

b) Main objectives.

- To reinforce work done by the educators in the classroom.
- To strengthen and improve the learners' performance in Mathematics/Numeracy and Languages/Literacy in the primary schools.
- To provide the learners with the opportunity to practise and consolidate what has been taught in the classroom.
- To provide the learners with a space to do homework.

- To make sure that learners have caring and supporting individuals in a safe environment beyond the normal contact time.
- To build the resilience of the learners and the school communities and to enforce the dictum “It takes a village to raise a child”.

c) Management structures and protocols in the ESSP comprised of:

- The Provincial Steering Committee.

  This committee is led by the Director General (DG) in Education Support Programmes who gives direction on strategies and strategy implementation matters. He also makes decisions on matters that are crucial for the Department.
- The District Transversal Team.

  The District Transversal Team is led by the District Director. Its main role is to ensure the appropriate implementation of the ESSP.
- The School Management Team.

  The School Management Team is led by the school principal as instructional leader who remains the officer accountable for the implementation of the ESSP. The team consists of:

  - The school principal.
  - An ESSP Coordinator (Deputy Principal or HOD).
  - The ESSP General Supervisor.
  - A Chief Patroller.
  - A School Governing Body (SGB) member.

According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2012:21), the Extra School Support Programme (ESSP) sought to increase after-school support for learning and to increase safety in the schools. The programme ensures that the learners have caring and supporting individuals available beyond the normal contact time. The homework supervisors assist the grade 1-7 learners in the Quintiles 1 to 3 schools with their homework.

3.9.4 The National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP)

According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2012:119), in order to achieve effective schools and effective teaching and learning, the Department implemented a number of poverty-combating measures, of which one is the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) (DoE 2005). The National School Nutrition Programme aims at promoting punctuality amongst the learners and alleviates short-term hunger, with the view to improving their concentration, and contributing to the general health and development of needy learners. According to the Department of Education (2005:39), the National School Nutrition Programme is implemented in poor communities so that hunger may not be an impediment to learning. A large number of learners is being fed through NSNP in no-fee primary schools or in primary schools in Quintiles 1 to 3. Chisholm (2012:93) further elaborates that the school nutrition policies that were introduced after 1994 have reached some 8 million out of 12 million learners. Yet, inequalities still persist, particularly in respect of infrastructure backlogs, learning outcomes and learning and teaching resources.

3.9.5 The Grade R (ECD) strategy

According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2012:21), the primary purpose of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) strategy is to ensure that diverse services are experienced on the ground as an integrated package of comprehensive, efficiently-delivered support. This strategy includes services related to education, social development, health and nutrition, sports, the arts, recreation and culture, and community safety. The Department envisages universalizing Grade R education in 2014. This includes that every age-appropriate learner in a recognized site receives quality education, and ensuring appropriate resources to all the classrooms. All registered Grade R sites should receive their resource allocations through Section 21 schools. The SGB employed practitioners who have signed contracts with the Department to facilitate their respective stipend payment through PERSAL (Personnel Salary System).

Van der Berg et al.(2011:22) highlight the timeline for improving the quality of education in South Africa by improving the quality of ECD facilities as follows: In 2012 the following should have been attained, namely research in empirical analysis using the existing data; research in stocktaking of the critical resources and support needs in the ECD sector; and an inquiry into the

possibility of appointing ECD specialists to monitor and support clusters of ECD centres. By 2013 the following should have been attained, namely the appointment of the first batch of ECD specialists as a form of pilot enterprise. By 2014/2015 the following has to be attained, namely the full roll-out of ECD specialist intervention.

3.9.6 The Gauteng Department of Education: Teacher in-service training

The Gauteng Department of Education (2008) has at District level continued its planned programme for developing the educators. The programme is offered by subject specialists in trained in particular subjects. At the beginning of each year the District offers "road shows" to introduce the educators to the planning of schemes of work, lesson plans, learner assessments, record sheets and some techniques of lesson presentations. During the "road shows" educators get the opportunity to interact with subject specialists and to ask questions and to get direct answers from them. During the course of the year the District continues offering developmental workshops to guide the educators in order to improve their teaching so that the learners' achievements could also improve. It is necessary that the educators and the administrators work in teams, conduct action research, participate in seminars, coach one another and plan lessons together. According to the Department of Education (2008:110), staff development is closely linked with the appraisal system.

The Gauteng Department of Education (2012:20) has indicated that there exists a teacher development strategy that intends to address the professional growth and qualifications of the educators in order to ensure quality teaching and learning in the classroom, which will result in every learner doing well at school and leaving the educational institutions with values, norms, knowledge, skills, and qualifications that would give them the best chance of success in life. The teacher development strategy focuses on the development of educators in the priority subject areas through accredited programmes, non-formal programmes at District and teacher development centres, and on-site support, coaching and mentoring. The on-time training model was developed to assist the educators in the schools where weaknesses were identified in the delivery of some aspects of the curriculum. The problematic areas in the curriculum are

identified via teacher performance appraisals, whole-school evaluation reports, the ANA reports, as well as by means of other reports.

3.9.7 The Performance Management and Development System

According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2012:110),the monitoring of the implementation of performance management processes at school as well as their management and support is mainly in respect of quality assurance. The Gauteng Department of Education conducts refresher training on the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) for staff members. The focus of the training is to improve the quality of and infuse standard settings into workplace. The PMDS processes for administrators are used to identify areas of skills deficit and the much needed personal development.

3.9.8 The Information Systems (SA-SAMS, LURITS)

Public schools were trained in the South African Schools Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS). This system aims to provide the required learner data in the schools and is used in providing data to the national learner tracking system (Gauteng Department of Education 2012:112).The number of schools that use the SA-SAMS to provide data to the national learner tracking system was recently 1276. As regards the national learner tracking system (LURITS), the Department trained 101 schools on LURITS, in order to reform the administration systems in the schools. The training focused on ensuring that the schools provide the required learner data through the SA-SAMS (Gauteng Department of Education 2012:112).

3.9.9 The Gauteng Department of Education: Peer mediation

According to information received from the Gauteng Department of Education (2011:2) the learners and educators were trained on the causes of and the management of conflict in their classrooms and schools. The purpose of the program is to have the learners and educators become peer mediators, thus to assist in resolving any conflict within their schools. The learners learn how to solve serious problems and to discourage other learners to involve themselves in

violent activities. The learners also assist in maintaining progressive discipline in their schools. A school usually identifies a total of 30 learners to be trained and to become active peer mediators to assist the educators during times of conflict.

3.9.10 The Gauteng Department of Education: Victim empowerment

The Gauteng Department of Education (2011:2) indicated that most schools have at least one educator who has been trained on victim empowerment. Its main objective is to enable the schools to assist vulnerable learners who have been victims of abuse, especially orphans and learners from broken families or child-headed families. These educators were trained to offer counselling and to refer learners to the Social Welfare centres and the local clinics for professional help.

3.9.11 Learner and Teacher Support Materials (LTSM)

The Department of Basic Education has developed and approved a catalogue of language and teaching support materials for the implementation of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The catalogue had been distributed through the Provinces to all the schools, and the schools are expected to use the CAPS catalogues to select LTSM for the implementation of CAPS as from 2012. The process would continue until the implementation of CAPS has been fully phased in.

3.9.12 Computers for education

The importance that the Department of Basic Education places on ICT and e-Education is reflected through the Action Plan to 2014: Towards the realization of schooling 2025 (cf. par. 3.9.1). The role of ICT in education cannot be overemphasized in the quest for quality teaching and learning for all the educators and the learners. The Action Plan highlights the need for the educators to be computer literate and to ensure that the learners have access to a wide range of media, including computers that will enrich their education.

According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2004:10), education has been transformed by developments such as computer-based training programs, power-point presentations, and word processing. These applications have made training and learning easier for the trainer and the learner. In this regard, the Department of Basic Education (2012:04) indicates that the White Paper on e-Education calls for the development of Guidelines for Schools Information and Communication Technology (ICT) hardware and software specifications and for the update of such guidelines whenever necessary, in order to keep pace with the evolving technology. Schools need ICT equipment but this is often hampered by the shortage of funds. The Department of Basic Education (2012:04-05) stated that it was working to address these problems through several initiatives, including enabling cost-effective procurement, researching appropriate technologies and providing guidelines to the Provincial Education Department regarding the effective use of affordable ICT. The White Paper on e-Education (DoE 2004) states that the introduction of ICT in schools creates new ways for the learners and the educators to gather and analyze information. The use of ICT will enhance the management and administration in the schools. The National Department of Education also wishes to empower its educators by enhancing their knowledge of information and communication technology (ICT). According to the White Paper on e-Education (DoE2004), the educators' ICT knowledge and skills should be developed to enhance the educational experiences of the learners during the implementation of the curriculum. According to the White Paper on e-Education (Department of Education 2004), all learners should be computer literate by 2013. However, this goal has failed to materialize as many educators remain computer illiterate, and there exists a shortage of sufficient computers for use by the learners.

3.9.13 The Gauteng Online Programme

The Gauteng Online Programme is a Provincial Government programme which is strongly developmental nature (Gauteng Department of Education2004:11). Its aim is to provide a Province-wide schools network, to revolutionize the delivery of education, and to bridge the digital divide. The project allows the learners free access to interactive technology and invaluable educational resources. No longer will the learners be confined to the available library resources at their schools. The abovementioned project is used to create a network public

schooling system, able to harness the full power of information and communication technology, by massively improving the flow of information and resources through the education system to benefit the educators, learners and the communities.

The Gauteng Online School project is currently (2014) under strategic review. It aims to incorporate comprehensive e-learning aspects which were not part of the existing scope, and to merge the programme on the Gauteng Broadband Network once it has been built. In this context, the tender for the provision of e-learning under the auspices of the Gauteng Online Programme has been cancelled. The Department involved the thorough engagement of all the stakeholders concerned, the Gauteng Department of Education, the schools and the Governing Bodies on how best to roll out the initiative. The project was redesigned to provide a 'fit-for-purpose' ICT capability, which supports teaching and e-learning, and to afford the learners the opportunity to use ICTs in their everyday learning activities. There had been a gradual migration from the Gauteng Online (GoL) network solution to the Gauteng Broadband Network (GBN). After migration, the GoL programme will become an integral component of the GBN and will provide internet and allied services to the Gauteng residents living within the vicinity of the schools. The future classroom will see all the learners having their own devices (e.g., tablets, smart phones, net-books) that would have all their e-books as well as their curriculum content readily available, being both grade and language specific (Gauteng Department of Finance 2013).

3.9.14 The School Safety and Security Strategy

According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2010:5) there is significant national and international data to show that schools with a democratic ethos and a sense of community ownership and belonging have lower crime-rates, and where community ownership is weak, the schools often have higher crime levels. The effective management of the school sites is key to school safety. The organization and structure of the classroom, discipline and its consequences, participation and involvement, are all attributes of school safety. The learners, the educators and the support staff have to feel physically and psychologically secure from physical, emotional and verbal attacks. All should work together to ensure that the safety strategies are in place to build a sense of community within the school environment.

According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2010:3), school safety and security is essential. A number of well-publicized cases have focused their concern on the lack of safety in Gauteng schools. Informed research conducted by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention notes that school violence is widespread. While it may take different forms in urban and rural schools and amongst provinces, however, it cannot be correlated with socioeconomic status. It affects the schools in both the affluent and impoverished areas. A policy for safety should have the following objectives:

a) To promote and provide a supportive learning environment where all the learners can expect to feel safe. The learners have a fundamental right to learn in a safe, supportive environment and to be treated with respect. The school community rightly expects from the authorities charged with managing the schools, both in the governmental and non-governmental sectors, to take all the available measures to ensure the safety of the learners, to support the learners and to set out clearly, transparently and explicitly the policies and programmes they have in place to fulfil this important responsibility.

b) To ensure that the schools are among the safest places in the community for the children and the young people. Some good work has already been undertaken and continues to be undertaken by most schools to provide a safe and supportive environment. Strategies have been identified that can inform practice which may enhance school safety and the learners' physical, social and emotional wellbeing.

c) The Department of Education has a responsibility to provide a school environment where the learners, educators and school principals may feel and are safe. The learners and the educators have a fundamental right to learn and teach in a safe environment, and are treated with respect.

d) To ensure that the tax payers' right of knowing that the school's infrastructure and movable assets, financed from state revenue, are safe, well maintained and are treated with respect is accomplished.

e) The communities rightly expect that the authorities charged with managing the schools both in the governmental and non-governmental sectors take all the available measures

to ensure the safety of the learners, the educators and the school property, and to act when transgressions occur (Gauteng Department of Education 2010:4).

The Gauteng Department of Education (2010:5) categorizes the safety issues facing the schooling system as follows:

- Environmental risks-related health and safety issues also in respect of the location of the school, the flow of traffic and the surrounding facilities and amenities as well as the condition of and management of the transport of learners.
- Criminal acts against the school's infrastructure and movable assets, including acts of theft, vandalism and arson.
- Criminal acts against the learners, the educators and the school managers, including homicide, assault, corporal punishment, rape, gangsterism and robbery on the school premises, in the immediate environment of the school and in aftercare institutions and hostels linked to the school.
- Substance-abuse and drug and alcohol trafficking, both on the school premises and outside of the schools.
- Undesirable behavior, including bullying, racism, sexual harassment, intimidation, and xenophobia, and also including the use of electronic media to promote these attitudes.
- Truancy and absenteeism.

To have safe schools the belief has to exist that safety is possible for all the learners and the educators, regardless of the demographic and social conditions affecting the schools. The planning of safe schools must take into account the socioeconomic status, ethnic, racial, cultural and religious backgrounds of the learners. The life experiences of the learners, the educators and support staff need to be enhanced through curriculum planning. Ongoing crime prevention training is needed to create safe schools.

In the light of the above the Gauteng Department of Education (2011:3) has initiated a programme to help the schools to respond quickly and efficiently to school safety incidents by linking the schools with the local police stations. This program seeks to have each school linked

to a police station assigned to it. The purpose of this programme is to eliminate delay in terms police or emergency response on matters concerning school safety. Approximately 1000 schools have been selected to participate in the programme, with a total of at least 68 schools per district. The schools are then issued with the number of a patrol van that is stationed in the vicinity of the school, and is also given the name of the police official who will become a member of the School Safety Committee. The Gauteng Department of Education (2011:5) has collaborated with the Department of Community Safety to identify and deploy community patrollers to priority schools with a view of ensuring the control of access by searching any person or vehicle that is entering the premises of such schools. The patrollers are utilized by the schools to gather security intelligence information and to avail it to the members of the School Safety Committee. They should also be provided with metal detectors to search everyone, including the learners and the educators whom they reasonably suspect that are involved in criminal activities.

3.9.15 The Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG)

The Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGLSG) is a semi-autonomous initiative of the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). It is a non-profitable, section 21 Company which reports to a Board of Directors. The School's aims are:

- To provide a central hub for the continuous professional growth of education leaders and governors.
- To design and present cutting-edge school leadership, governance and management training programmes.
- To focus on improving practice through research.

(The Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance - Overview 2014)

Its main objective is to develop high-order leadership and governance skills and qualities underpinned by critical reflection based on a body of relevant leadership and governance theories and concepts. The MGLSG has as its target clients principals, deputy principals, heads of departments, district officials and the school governing bodies (Gauteng Department of

Education 2004:3). In previous years the principals, deputy principals and heads of departments benefited from leadership courses offered by MGLSG. At the time of writing (2015) the principals, deputy principals and heads of departments are no longer offered courses on leadership. The focus is now on the district officials and the school governing bodies.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on learner achievement in primary schools in South Africa: Problems and prospects. Attention was given to contextual and school factors which impact on learner achievement, national and international assessment endeavors, and improvement plans initiated by the national Department of Basic Education and the Gauteng Department of Education. This chapter thus provides a background to the particular challenges faced by principals as the instructional leaders of primary schools in the South African context with special reference to Gauteng.

The following chapter (Chapter 4) focuses on the design and the research methodology implemented in the empirical study.

CHAPTER 4
THE RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapters 2 and 3 provided a literature review of the concept of instructional leadership and its application to the role of the school principal as well as a description of primary school learner achievement in South Africa. This review framed and informed the empirical investigation.

In this chapter I will present the methodology selected for the inquiry and a detailed research design. A sequential mixed method design was chosen comprising of Phase one (a survey) and Phase 2 (interviews). The sampling procedures, data-collection and data-analysis are explained according to the two phases. Thereafter, measures taken to assure reliability, validity and the trustworthiness of the data as well as the steps taken to meet the ethical requirements are described.

4.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The nature of the problem investigated dictates the choice of research design to be employed. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:166), a *research design* refers to a plan for selecting the subjects, the research sites, data collecting and analysis procedures to address the research question. The *design* shows which individuals will be studied, and when, where, and under which circumstance they will be studied. In this study I made use of a sequential mixed method approach (Cresswell 2003) to obtain the descriptive and exploratory data. The study consisted of two phases: Phase 1 was a quantitative study, using questionnaires to gather the data; Phase 2 was a qualitative study and involved interviews. Both Phases 1 and 2 were carried out in the Tshwane South District, Gauteng Province, South Africa.

In the following sub-section my rationale for mixed method research design is explained.

4.2.1 Rationale for choosing a mixed method research design

White (2005:104) differentiates the qualitative research approach from the quantitative research approach. Quantitative research presents statistical results represented by numbers. The ideal quantitative researcher is detached from the study to avoid bias. In quantitative studies, there is an established set of procedures and steps that guide the researcher. The qualitative researcher follows an emerging research design rather than a step-by-step plan or fixed recipe. The researcher aims to isolate and define the phenomena and/or categories during the research in order to comprehend and learn, whereas the quantitative researcher aims to determine the relationship between the phenomena and/or categories already identified and isolated prior to the research. A key difference between the quantitative research and the qualitative research methods is in terms of flexibility; quantitative research being less flexible than qualitative research (White 2003:10). White (2005:89) emphasizes that the use of a mixed method approach provides a means whereby the researcher can combine the strengths of both approaches and increase the validity and reliability in his research findings. Kelle and Erzberger (2004:174) indicate that even though the use of both qualitative and quantitative designs differs procedurally, they are both significant in a mixed method study.

In this study my rationale for the choice of the research design was based on the need to be able to combine the quantitative (Phase 1) and qualitative (Phase 2) approaches. Both approaches have their own limitations and advantages. By using both methods, the following disadvantages were overcome, namely weaknesses inherent in one method were neutralized and even cancelled by the strengths inherent in the other method, and the results from the one method informed and helped develop the other. Multiple approaches and techniques provided different insights that allowed a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were regarded as complementary, with the quantitative findings informing and supporting the richness of the qualitative findings by adding statistical evidence. This made it possible for a more comprehensive investigation of the problem (cf. Maitland 2010:91).

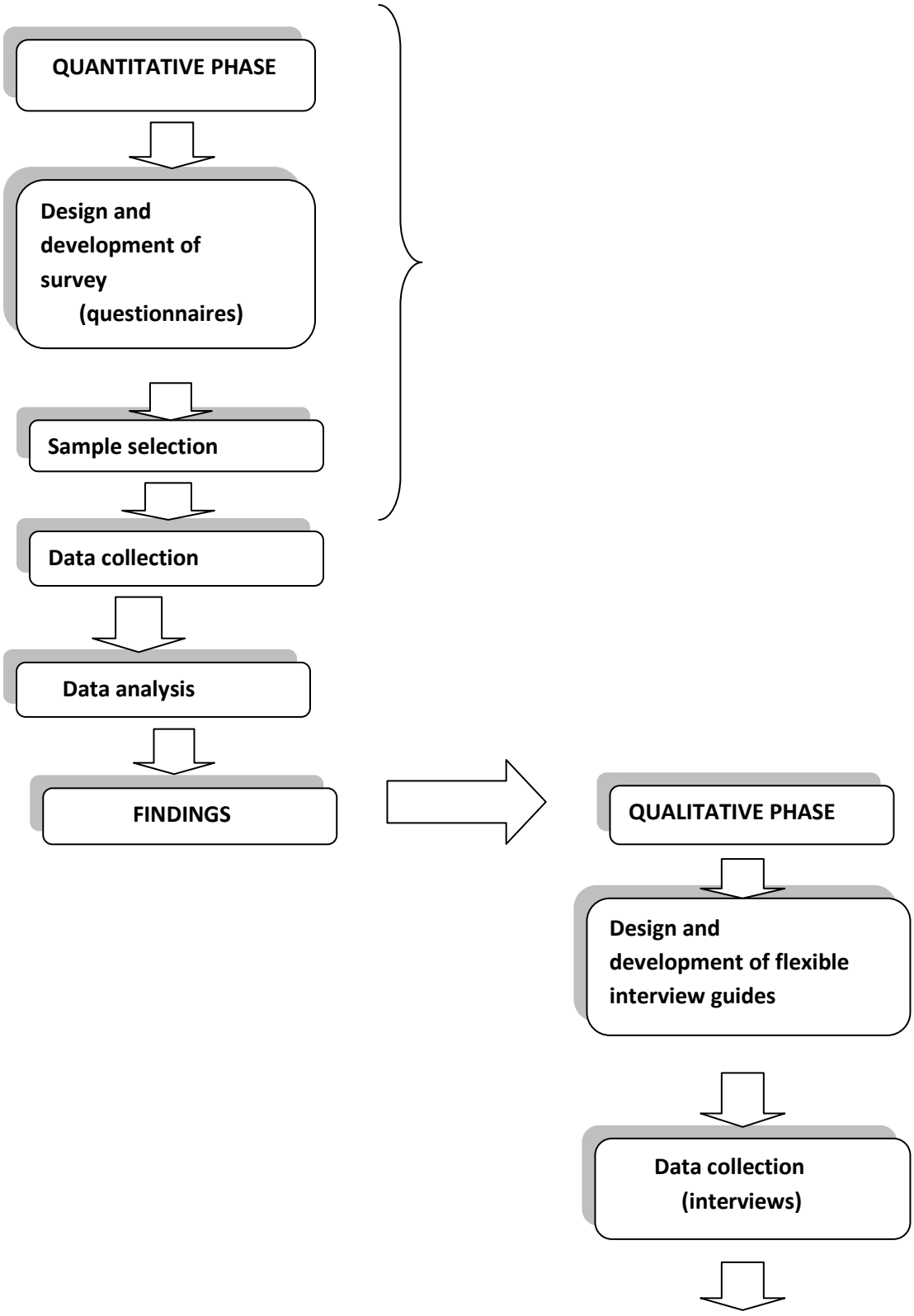
The quantitative component of this research, Phase 1, aimed to interrogate the research statement by using an instrument, namely two questionnaires with closed items based on a Likert scale that

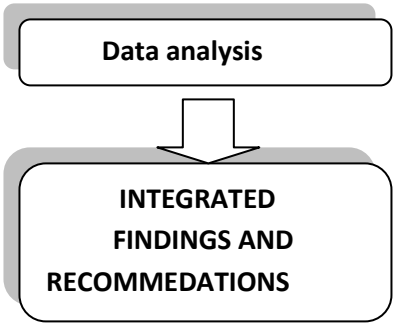
allowed me to ask identical questions to a wide range of respondents, in the same order and in a closed-ended and fixed manner. The survey aimed to quantify the perceptions of a specific population or group through the collection of numerical data. The survey therefore provided a quantitative or numerical description of a sample of the population through a data-collection process of asking the persons questions. The main advantage of the quantitative design was that it allowed for a meaningful comparison of the responses across the participants and the study sites (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:195, 235).

The qualitative component of the research, Phase 2, aimed to obtain rich, in-depth data using face-to-face techniques with suitable participants in their natural settings. I selected this approach and went into the field and interacted with the people who could supply me with rich and relevant information (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:35). According to Welman and Kruger (2001:178), qualitative field studies can be used successfully in the description of groups, small communities and organizations. My aim with the qualitative phase was to obtain a more in-depth understanding of the role of the principal as instructional leader in learner achievement in selected South African primary schools by obtaining information from the key participants according to their own point of view (Bless, Smith & Sithole 2013:16).

A sequential mixed method design is marked by the collection and analysis of the quantitative data followed by collection and analysis of the qualitative data. The purpose of this sequence is to allow the researcher to further explore the quantitative data thereby adding richness and a wider range of participant perspectives (McMillan & Schumacher 2010: 395). This is a well-known and popular procedure for mixed method inquiry whereby qualitative data involving "detailed exploration with a few cases or individuals" is gathered after the quantitative data gathering (Cresswell 2003:16). Figure 4.1 provides a graphic model of the sequential mixed method design used in the study.

Figure 4.1: A graphic representation of the sequential triangulation mixed method research design





Source: Adapted from Botha (2011:154)

4.2.2 The role of the researcher

In addition to the literature study which framed the empirical inquiry, my understanding of the research topic was informed by my experience in the teaching profession and in educational management in a primary school. My responsibilities have provided me with broad and in-depth exposure to a variety of policies of the Department of Basic Education, policies of the Gauteng Department of Education, and administration of the ANA assessments (par.3.8.3). I have been engaged as an educator in primary schools at post level 1 for seven years, Head of Department at post level 2 for five years, Deputy Principal at post level 3 for three years and as a principal for the past five years. My entire experience has been in the formerly disadvantaged primary schools in both rural and in township communities.

4.3 PHASE 1: THE SURVEY

The aim of Phase 1 was to determine, by means of a survey, the views and perceptions of the primary school principals and the Institute Development Support Officials (IDSOs) (cf.1.5.2) in the Tshwane South District of the role of the principal as instructional leader with regard to learner achievement by means of two separately researcher-designed questionnaires.

4.3.1 Population

A *population* can be defined as the entire group of people or institutions, events or any other objects of study that one wants to describe and understand. Thus, it is the large group from which the researcher wants to generalize (Lior 2012:53).

In the case of this study the population of principals was defined as the total number of school principals in the Tshwane South District: N= 128. The population of the ISDOs was defined as the total number of officials employed in the Tshwane South District: N= 15.

4.3.2 Sampling

Simple random sampling was used to select a sample of 60 school principals from the population. In simple random sampling every member or unit of analysis of a population has an equal chance of being selected or drawn for the sample, or at least, that the probability of this happening can be specified. In this way I could estimate the accuracy of the generalization from the sample to the population (Bless et al. 2013:166; McMillan & Schumacher 2001:170; Maree 2003:36; Bouma & Ling 2010:119). Strydom and Venter (2002: 201) suggest a percentage of 45% for a population of one hundred (100). Following this guideline, a sample of 60 respondents was deemed adequate.

Comprehensive sampling was used to select all 15 IDSOs in the population due to the small population size.

4.3.2.1 Steps in drawing a simple random sample

I followed the following procedure in drawing the simple random sample of primary school principals:

Step one: I identified and listed the research population (i.e., all the primary schools in the Tshwane South District). The information was supplied by the Tshwane South District Office, and included the names of the principals, their addresses and their contact details.

Step two: I used a table of random numbers (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:132) to select 60 principals.

Step three: Each school principal was assigned a number from 001 to 128.

Step four: I randomly selected a starting point in the table of random numbers.

Step five: I read all three-digit numbers moving down the columns.

Step six: I followed the columns while selecting 60 numbers of three digits between 000 and 129, the names of the principals corresponding to the numbers in the simple random sample.

4.3.3 Data-gathering

The data were gathered from the two groups of respondents (principals and IDSOs) by means of two questionnaires which I designed for each group respectively. Examples of the questionnaire formats (Khumalo 2009:293-305; Maitland 2010: 263-264) were consulted for the technical aspects during the design process and were adapted. However, the content and layout of the questionnaires were predominantly self-designed.

A pilot study of the questionnaires was conducted as part of the survey data-collection methodology to ensure the best possible question formulation in relation to the survey sample, and concomitantly the reliability and validity of the survey sample (Strydom 2002). The respondents for the pilot tests were asked to consider the following questions (Khumalo 2009:133):

- How long did it take you to complete the questionnaire?

- Were the instructions clear?
- Were any questions unclear or ambiguous? If so, which ones and why?
- Did you have objections to answering any of the questions?
- Was the layout of the questionnaire clear and attractive?
- Are there any further comments or suggestions you would like to make?

Each questionnaire was also scrutinized by the supervisor of the study and by an external expert consultant. Recommendations as suggested during this endeavour were followed up in the final questionnaires.

4.3.3.1 Format of the covering letter and questionnaires

Each questionnaire (to the principals and the IDSOs) was accompanied by a covering letter (Appendix B; Appendix C) which included an explanation of the purpose of the research, a request for participation, an advisory of the right of refusal or withdrawal, an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity, and an explanation of the survey instrument and how to complete it. The respondents were not compelled to respond to questions in respect of age and gender, although an explanation and rationale were provided for their inclusion in the questionnaire. The rationale was linked to the aggregation of data into meaningful categories so as to conduct deeper-level analysis. The respondents could not proceed from one section of the questionnaire to the next unless they had acknowledged (by selecting an option) that they had read and understood the information and the requests and were willing and able to move on to the next section. The questionnaire concluded with a note of thanks (Gray 2009:194-195).

The questionnaire for primary school principals (Appendix B) comprised six sections:

- Section A: Biographical data (4 closed items)
- Section B: Institutional factors (14 closed items)
- Section C: Planning (19 closed items)
- Section D: Instructional procedures (16 closed items)
- Section E: Discipline (10 closed items)

- Section F: Further comments

With regard to the structure of the questionnaire, of particular importance in the questionnaire for the principals was Section B, item 8. The responses to this item were used to distinguish performing schools from non-performing schools and were used as criteria for the maximum purposeful sampling of the principal participants for the interviews (cf. 4.4.1).

The questionnaire for IDSOs (Appendix C) comprised six sections:

- Section A: Biographical data (4 closed items)
- Section B: Institutional factors (6 closed items)
- Section C: Planning (6 closed items)
- Section D: Instructional procedures (6 closed items)
- Section E: Discipline (5 closed items)
- Section F: Further Comments

Closed-ended questions are questions that do not allow the respondents to express their independent opinions, but they are provided with predetermined responses (Delport 2002:179).In both questionnaires section A required the biographical data of the respondents, that is, factual information in respect of their age, gender, experience and designation. Sections B required data regarding the institutions for which the respondents were responsible. Sections C to E comprised closed-ended items. The response options ranged from “strongly agree”, which had a value of 1, through to “strongly disagree”, which had a value of 5 on a Likert type scale. Section F was for open comment. The latter was to allow any additional comments by respondents which they judged were complementary to responses to the closed items. However, none of the respondents made use of this item and thus no discussion is provided in the Findings. A possible reason for this is that respondents were constrained for time and felt that their perceptions were adequately captured by the closed items.

4.3.3.2 Distribution of the questionnaires

I made preliminary phone calls to the simple random sample of principals and all the IDSOs in the Tshwane South District to inform them of the study and to invite them to take part in the survey. The respective questionnaires (the school principal questionnaire and the ISDO questionnaire) were emailed in electronic format to the respondents together with the covering letter. They were requested to complete the questionnaires and to return them within two weeks, via email.

I allocated two weeks for the process of delivery and return of the questionnaires. To curb a low response rate, I sent reminders to the respondents via the short messaging system (SMS) to their cell phones at the start of the second week and resent a questionnaire to each email address, by way of a reminder.

Fifty-seven (57) primary school principals returned the completed questionnaires and eight (8) IDSOs. Thus, the return-rate for the principals' questionnaires was 95% and for the ISDOs it was 53%. White (2005:126) emphasizes that the goal in a questionnaire survey is typically a return rate of 70-80%.

4.3.4 Data-analysis

The completed questionnaires were edited before coding to eliminate errors made by the respondents. To do this, I followed Cohen, Manion & Morrison's (2005:286) three tasks of editing of questionnaires:

- Editing for completeness: Check to verify that there is an answer to every question.
- Editing for accuracy: Make sure that all the questions are answered accurately. Inaccuracies result from the respondents not following the questionnaire instructions correctly.
- Editing for uniformity: Check to ensure that the respondents interpreted the instructions uniformly.

Data from questionnaires were captured on the EXCEL programme and were thereafter analyzed by an expert statistician using the SPSS (Version 22) software programme. The following broad strategy was used, namely the demographic variables and facilities at the schools were analyzed, using frequency analysis in order to get a description of the sample and the institutions for which the participants were responsible. Thereafter the frequencies, the means and the standard deviations per item were calculated and reported for Sections C, D and E of the respective questionnaires. These were interpreted in terms of the original scale used in the questionnaire.

4.3.4.1 Validity and reliability

Validity ensures that the research instrument measures what it sets out to measure (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:173; 114). Validity is ensured through the careful sampling and appropriate statistical treatment of data. Every attempt should therefore be made to minimize biases in the survey design and administration. In designing the research the following aspects were taken into consideration in order to ensure internal validity (Botha 2011:165; McMillan & Schumacher 2010:115):

- Effects of pilot study accounted for: The pilot of questionnaires has been fully described and any recommendations for questionnaire design issuing from the pilot were accounted for (cf. 4.3.3);
- Appropriate time-scale and no differences in external events: The respondents were given two weeks to complete the electronic questionnaire. Follow-up SMS notices and a second emailed delivery of questionnaires took place during the second week. This provided adequate time for completion and return by email. All the respondents completed the survey during the same time period.
- Sufficient resources and effective delivery: The delivery of the questionnaires to the respondents' work email addresses was effective and reliable. The Mail Sent facility allowed me to check on the delivery and the reading of the questionnaire by each respondent. A follow up allowed for a second opportunity to complete the questionnaire.
- Appropriate sampling: The sampling procedures have been fully described (cf. 4.3.2).

- Properly designed questionnaire and clear foci for the research questions: The questionnaire and foci of the questionnaire, Sections A to E, (cf. 4.4.3.1), were developed and informed by the extensive literature review presented in Chapters 1 to 3.

External validity refers to the extent to which the results of a study can be generalized to other subjects, conditions, and situations (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:116). To enhance generalisibility, a simple random sample of primary school principals ensured a sample that was representative of the population. In addition, the effective questionnaire distribution produced a high response rate of 95%. The results of the questionnaire to the principals can be generalised to the population of primary school principals in the Tshwane South District. Furthermore, since there is a high degree of similarity among the context of primary schools in townships countrywide (Spaull 2012), it is a possibility that the results may be applicable to primary school principals of township schools in other geographical regions in the country.

Reliability is the degree to which the instrument produces equivalent results for repeated trials (Bless et al. 2013:222). For research to be reliable it must be able to demonstrate that if it was carried out with a similar group of respondents in a similar context, then similar results would be found. Internal reliability of scaled items in a questionnaire can be demonstrated statistically by a correlation coefficient. A correlation coefficient closer to 1 indicates that a scale is more internally reliable. A reliability coefficient of 0.7 or above is generally regarded as acceptable (McMillan & Schumacher 2010: 182). In this study, the reliability of the scaled items in the questionnaire for principals (Sections C to E) was done statistically by means of the Cronbach alpha correlation coefficient. Acceptable scores were obtained as follows: Section C (Planning): Cronbach's alpha value 0.95; Section D (Instructional procedures): Cronbach's alpha value 0.88; Section C (Discipline) with reverse items: Cronbach's alpha value 0.81 (cf. Appendix L).

4.4 PHASE 2: INTERVIEWS

The aim of Phase 2 was to explore, by means of interviews, the views and perceptions of selected primary school principals and IDSOs in the Tshwane South District, the role of the principal as instructional leader with regard to learner achievement. This phase was informed by

the findings of Phase 1 and allowed for clarification and more detailed information to be gathered.

4.4.1 Selection of the participants

The overall sampling strategy for this phase was purposive sampling to identify the participants who were most advantageously placed or in the best position to provide the information required (Henning 2004:71). Furthermore, a particular variant of purposeful sampling, namely maximum variation sampling, was employed. The aim in maximum variation sampling is to obtain the maximum differences of perceptions about a topic from information-rich informants (Mc Millan &Schumacher 2010: 327).

In this case, ten primary school principals in the Tshwane South District were selected purposefully. The original sample of 60 primary school principals (cf. Phase 1) was listed, this time according to the status of their schools as performing or non-performing schools. The Gauteng Department of Education (circular 15/2009) classified schools into two categories, namely performing schools and under-performing schools, in accordance with Section 58(B) that is read in conjunction with Section 16(A) of the Education Laws Amendment Act of 2007. In primary schools the criteria used to identify under-performing schools are the results of the Annual National Assessments conducted in 2013 as benchmarking surveys, based on the assessment of Grades 3 and 6 learners in the learning areas, Numeracy and Literacy (DBE 2014). In the questionnaire for principals (Section B: item 8), the respondents were asked to indicate the status of their schools. From the identified group of performing schools, five school principals were purposively selected. From the identified group of underperforming schools, five school principals were purposively selected.

Systematic sampling was used to identify five IDSOs of the Tshwane South District. All the IDSOs were regarded as expert informants. In their official capacity as school support and consultative staff, the ISDOs possess extensive experience of instructional leadership and of the conditions in the schools under their jurisdiction. Their names were arranged in alphabetical order, and thereafter every 3rd name was selected, that is, numbers 3,6,9,14 and 15.

4.4.2 Data-collection

The data were obtained by the following data-gathering techniques, namely interviews and observations.

In the pilot study I conducted two interviews to ensure my familiarity with the interview process, protocols and the possible pitfalls highlighted above.

A *research interview* is a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focusing on the content specified by the research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation. Interviews may be used as the principle means of gathering information that has a direct bearing on the research objectives, to test hypotheses or suggest new ones, or in conjunction with other methods in a research undertaking (McMillan & Schumacher 2010: 356). The latter was the case in this study. Barbour (2009:115) mentions that in qualitative research we are not seeking to measure attitudes or specify the exact nature of relationships between variables, but are instead concerned with eliciting in-depth accounts from people with room for them to select which aspects they wish to emphasize. Interviewing is a data-collection tool typically involving the researcher asking questions and the participants giving answers to the questions posed. In this process the participants are given full liberty to frame their answers and to add any information they deem important. Even in the case of an interview guide, the interviewer allows for probes and pauses (McMillan & Schumacher 2010: 356).

In this study I asked the participants questions that were relevantly constructed to answer the research questions and to address the objectives according to an interview guide designed for principals (cf. appendix D) and IDSOs (cf. appendix E) respectively. Thus, the interviews were semi-structured. The interview guide was based on insight drawn from the literature study (chapters 2 and 3) and informed by the findings of Phase 1. The rationale for the selection of semi-structured interviews was to make it easy for me to focus on specific areas while allowing for the opportunity to probe and prompt in instances where I felt that the responses were

inadequate (Khumalo 2009:135). According to Henning (2004:53), the standard for such a qualitative interview is, “Guidance without interference or conversation from the interviewer”. This should enable the interviewee to give a “true” or “real” subjective version of the facts, opinions and feelings as he or she experiences them. In such interviews the context is believed to be the real thing as presented by the subjective participant (Botha 2011:166).

I suspected that the data gathered from the interviews would reveal the commonalities and discrepancies in the participants’, as instructional leaders, attitudes and practices towards policy, their implementation and the management of primary schools in South Africa, and that this evidence, together with evidence generated from the literature review as well as the survey, would form a broad frame of reference that would elucidate the research problem of this study and also would provide sufficient and reliable data which could be drawn on in the formulation of possible recommendations in regard to identified problems.

4.4.2.1 The interviewing process

Fifteen participants (ten principals and five IDSOs) were invited to participate in the interviews. They were made aware of their right of refusal or withdrawal. The fifteen participants were contacted telephonically and then sent e-mails requesting formal permission to interview them in their schools or offices in the mornings before the commencement of the school day, during breaks or after contact hours. These times were suggested to avoid infringing on the school day. Before each interview commenced I explained the aim of the interview to the participants and the fact that the data gathered from the interviews would reveal insights which could lead to recommendations for practice. I also indicated that English would be used as the language of communication during the interviews. The participants were given letters of consent to read and to sign before the interview started (cf. Appendix F & G).

As mentioned in paragraph 4.4.2, I developed an interview guide to focus and structure the interview process. For each participant a standard guide was used where the questions had the same wording and were asked in the same order. The advantage of using the interview guide is to have control over the interview. However, I made use of probing and prompting during the

interview where the participants were asked to clarify what they said, in order to obtain more detailed responses (Wilson & Sapsford 2006:9; Gray, 2009:214). Robson (2002:276) describes *probing* as a manner to get the interviewee to expand on a response whenever the researcher felt that the respondents had more to give. Robson defines *prompting* as suggesting to the participant the range or set of possible answers that the interviewer expects. In supporting the participants, I made positive comments such as, "That is interesting" or "That is a good strategy to assist learners". Furthermore, by means of expressive and positive body language, facial expressions and tone of voice, I attempted to show my interest in what they were saying. In all the cases the participants appeared to be relaxed and comfortable during the interview sessions. The abovementioned strategies were important aspects of the interviews because by showing that I was really interested in their opinions, additional descriptions, points of view and the further sharing of information were encouraged (Maitland 2010:129). Furthermore, the participants were given the freedom to respond according to how they perceived their own situations. In order to focus during the interviews, I set boundaries, and ensured that the process was credible, appropriate, consistent, confirmable and neutral. I endeavoured to desist from any behaviour that influenced the participants' responses (Khumalo 2009:137).

During all the interviews I made use of an audio recorder to record the interviews without any interruption. One of the difficulties of audio-recorded interviews is the absence of the participants' facial expressions and body language. However, this limitation was partly overcome by detailed notes made during the interviews that indicated actions such as gestures, frowns, smiles, the nodding of heads, and so on. This made it easier to understand their tone of voice, with perhaps a better understanding of what the speaker was trying to express. Probing for further information and asking for the clarification of statements added to the quality and richness of the data gleaned from the interviews.

After the interviews, I personally transcribed the data verbatim as it was collected during the interview sessions. Participants were contacted where necessary for clarification and verification. Transcriptions were scrutinized by the supervisor but not returned to participants. The rationale for the transcription of the data was to assist me during the process of data-analysis. Transcribed data are more easily and accurately coded. The use of an audiotape allowed me to refer back to

the recording where necessary. Transcriptions allowed me the opportunity to provide many excerpts from the actual data during the presentation of the findings (cf. Chapter 5).

4.4.2.2 Observation

Observation lies at the centre of all qualitative research because it allows the researcher to capture information *in situ*, and enables the case to be seen through the eyes of the participants, providing 'unique examples of real people in real situations' (Cohen et al. 2005:181-183). Cohen et al. (2005:305) further elaborate that all research is some form of observation, since we cannot study the world without being part of it. White (2003:80) mentions that participant observation is generally regarded as the principal data-gathering strategy of qualitative research. Thus, I regarded observation as a critical part of my study.

I collected direct information about the participants in their natural settings, using an observation schedule, during my visits to the participants' offices and schools (cf. Appendix J). In some instances I made the appointment for the interviews early in the morning before the commencement of the school day. In such cases I was able to observe the principal's management of late arrivals or the punctuality of the learners and the educators. I made notes in terms of the controlling of persons coming late. I also requested permission to move around the school premises, and took notes regarding the infrastructure and the day-to-day functioning of the school. This helped me by adding to the information given by the participants. Observation is significant in adding richness to the qualitative data, confirming the evidence collected through the other means of data-gathering.

4.4.3 Data-analysis

The analysis of qualitative data is primarily an inductive process of organizing the data into categories and themes, and of identifying patterns among the categories and themes. It involves arranging the interview transcripts, the field-notes and the observation schedules (Khumalo 2009:142). Data-analysis in qualitative work begins as soon as the data-collection begins. Thus, I

repeatedly listened to the recorded interviews from the audiotape as soon as the first interview was done.

I followed the tips as suggested by Cohen et al. (2005:283) as stated below:

- Transcription: I transcribed the data from the audiotapes.
- Bracketing and phenomenological reduction: I set out to understand what the participants said rather than what I expected them person to say.
- Listening to the interviews for a sense of the whole: I listened to the entire recording of an interview several times and read the transcription a number of times.
- Delineating units of meaning relevant to the research question: Once I had noted the general meaning of the units, they were reduced to the meaning of the unit relevant to the research question.
- Clustering units of relevant meaning: I determined if any of the units of relevant meaning naturally clustered together. I highlighted clusters on the transcripts and made annotations in the margins.
- Writing a summary of each individual interview: I returned to the interview transcription and wrote a summary of the interview which incorporated the themes that emerged from the data.
- Identifying general and unique themes for all the interviews: I looked for the themes common to most or all of the interviews as well as the individual variations, interesting omissions or deviant cases, where a single participant provided strikingly conflicting evidence.
- Composite summary: I wrote a composite summary of all the interviews that would capture the essence of the phenomenon.

Thematic analysis was used to develop the categories or themes with reference to the research questions and the central phenomenon of the study. The constant comparative method of developing categories was followed, as this seemed the best method of extracting information in order to delimit and saturate the categories. This implied constantly comparing each coded incident, such as an event, issue, process or relationship, with similar coded incidents in order to

develop categories, sub-categories and links from the raw data (Charmaz2010:188). The inductive process focused on the data, examined it for overlaps and redundancy, and collapsed the data into codes. Similar codes were then combined to form a single idea or theme. The coding was done to define units of meaningful information, and was grouped according to the commonality of the information (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:466-468).

My first task, therefore, was to group the data into common segments that formed meaningful or potential meaningful units of information. The segment needed to stand on its own without needing any further information to be understood, so that hidden meanings could be extracted. These units served as the basis for defining the categories, and hereby themes or categories became evident and were grouped according to their relation to the research questions. The analysis of the data was organized by a process of segmenting, labelling, and encoding the information to form descriptions and broad themes, and to form a link between the qualitative and quantitative data. Throughout the process, as I moved back and forth between the data and the literature, I was careful to search for any 'disconfirming evidence' that would negate any of the interpretations. The data were organized into units by reading and re-reading the transcriptions and the notes made during the interviews and observations. The units thus served as the basis for defining the categories (Maitland 2010:127). Verbatim quotations were attached to particular themes to substantiate data.

4.4.3.1 The trustworthiness of qualitative data

The quality of qualitative research depends on how much trust can be attached to the research process and the findings. Trustworthiness in qualitative research is challenging in respect of the fact that both the interviewer and the interviewees operate within a framework of subjectivity. The most significant threat is bias on the part of the interviewer and the interviewee, and also the content of the questions. These biases relate to the personal attitudes, opinions and expectations of the interviewer and interviewee; the interviewer seeking answers to support his/her preconceived ideas; the misinterpretation and misconceptions about what the interview participant is saying; and the misunderstanding of the questions. Aspects such as race, religion,

gender, sexual orientation, status and social class and age all may contribute to bias (Botha 2011:170; Bless et al. 2013:236).

Bless et al. (2013:236-238) propose four criteria that are considered appropriate in qualitative studies that should establish the trustworthiness of the research, namely credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability.

- *Credibility* refers to the fact that the study was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described, and that the findings depicted the truth of the reality under study or, in other words, that they make sense. This study was located within the management and leadership framework of the primary school environment and aimed to identify the challenges and to make recommendations in relation to role of the principal as instructional leader particularly in former disadvantaged schools in relation to learner achievement. In establishing credibility, the parameters were defined in the research questions of this study and in the purposeful selection of the participants from both performing and non-performing primary schools in the Tshwane South District.

- *Dependability* refers to the fact that the researcher thoroughly described and precisely followed a clear and thoughtful research strategy. In this study I described each step of the qualitative component (Phase 2), namely sampling, how the data were collected, coded and analyzed, thoroughly and carefully (cf. 4.4.2).

- *Transferability* refers to the extent to which the results may apply to other similar situations. No claims are made regarding the generalisability of the results of this study. In this case the aim of the interviews, conducted in Phase 2 with the purposefully selected participants, was to obtain in-depth information, and not generalisibility. However, the findings of the interviews could be useful in similar school contexts in the Tshwane South District and in primary schools with similar conditions throughout the country.

- *Confirmability* requires that other researchers may be able to obtain similar findings by following a similar research process in the same context. In this case my detailed description of the research design supplied other researchers with a clear audit trail, should they wish to conduct a similar study in a different context.

Furthermore, Botha (2011:171-172) suggests that the collection of authentic data in qualitative research requires an effective interviewer who should be knowledgeable of the subject matter, one who is clear, gentle and empathic, and who listens actively, and who makes use of reliable means of recording the data. In this study I ensured that the interviews were properly structured. Interview guides were prepared for the interviews (cf. 4.4.2; Appendix D & E); questions were asked to confirm that I understood the meaning of a response; questions were repeated to ensure that every facet had been answered; and probing questions allowed additional insight. My experience as school principal in similar contexts to those of the participants enhanced my empathy and rapport with participants during the interviews.

4.5 ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PHASES 1 AND 2

Any research that involves the gathering of data or contact with human populations involves ethical considerations. These are core to sound, professional research. There exists general agreement in respect of the proper or improper ethical considerations when conducting research (Gray 2009:69; Bless et al. 2013:28).

Gray (2009:73) identifies four core ethical principles.

In the following discussion, I indicate these principles and explain how they were adhered to in this study:

a) Avoid any harm to the participants: I ensured that no physical or emotional harm was inflicted upon the respondents. All the data-gathering took place in the natural setting of the participants' offices. Also, interruptions were avoided, and privacy respected.

b) Ensure informed consent: The research participants were provided with sufficient and accessible information about the project so that they could make an informed decision as to whether to become involved or not. In the case of the questionnaire this was done by providing a complete covering letter, and in the case of interviews, written consent letters were provided. I also telephonically provided the respondents of the questionnaires with an explanation and gave a face-to-face explanation to the participants in the interviews. This met Bouma and Ling's (2010:196-197) suggestions that consent should include an explanation of the aims and research procedures, a description of the any discomforts and risks that may reasonably be expected, a description of any benefits reasonably to be expected, an offer to answer any enquiries concerning the procedures, and an instruction that the person is free to withdraw his or her consent and to discontinue participation in the project at any time without prejudice.

c) Respect of privacy: As the researcher and a law-abiding South African citizen, I adhered to the participants' right to privacy, as enshrined in the Constitution (RSA 1996). I avoided any intrusion into participants' personal affairs. The identities of the participants and the schools were kept confidential and any identifying information was omitted from the findings.

d) Avoid deception: Gray (2009:79) defines *deception* as the fact that researchers represent their research as something which it is not. In this study the participants were given complete information about the purpose and procedures of the study.

Furthermore, formal ethical clearance was obtained as follows:

a) I obtained ethical clearance for the study from the, Ethics Committee, College of Education (Appendix I).

b) Likewise, I obtained ethical clearance for the study from the Gauteng Department of Education (Appendix H) under whose jurisdiction the Tshwane South District falls.

c) The respondents in the questionnaires gave their permission by voluntarily accepting the invitation to answer the questions; the covering letter informed them of all the conditions of the research (Appendix B and C).

d) The interview respondents gave their signed consent in a letter which indicated all the

conditions of the research (Appendix F and G).

Moreover, I undertook to supply the Gauteng Department of Education and the participating principals and IDSOs with an electronic summary of the findings on request after the entire examination process has been successfully completed.

4.6 PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

The data from the survey (Phase 1) and the interviews (Phase 2) will be presented separately in chapter 5. The findings of Phase 1 will be presented statistically, supported by tabular representations. The findings of Phase 2 will be presented thematically in narrative form, supported by verbatim quotations from the interviews. The relevant aspects of the literature review were drawn into the findings to support, compare or highlight pertinent points or relevant issues and to ground or locate the study within a theoretical framework.

4.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the researcher described the research design for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the empirical investigation. It included a description of the sampling, data-collection and data analysis procedures of both Phase 1 and Phase 2.

Chapter 5 focuses on the findings of the empirical inquiry.

CHAPTER 5
PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS: PHASE 1 AND PHASE 2

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 presents the data obtained from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the sequential mixed method inquiry.

During Phase 1 data were gathered by means of two questionnaires completed by a sample of school principals of primary schools and IDSOs respectively in the Tshwane South District. The quantitative data were interpreted by using descriptive statistics that transform a set of numbers into indices that describe or characterize the data. The data were presented in tables and were numbered numerically in the order they appear in the text. During Phase 2 the researcher made use of interviews as data-collection technique. The qualitative data obtained from the interviews were interpreted by a systematic process of selecting, categorizing, comparing, synthesizing and interpreting to provide an explanation of the phenomenon being studied (De Vos et al. 2005:339; McMillan & Schumacher 2001:461).

5.2 PHASE 1: THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE: THE PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Section 5.2 presents the findings of the questionnaire distributed tothe primary school principals.

5.2.1 Section A: Biographical data

Section A, items 1-4, of the questionnaire dealt with biographical data in terms of the respondents' gender, age, years' experience and professional qualifications.

The results are indicated in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Biographical characteristics

Gender	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid percent**	**Cumulative percent**
Male	30	52.6	52.6	52.6
Female	27	47.4	47.4	47.4
Total	57	100.0	100.0	
Age range	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid percent**	**Cumulative percent**
31-40 years	7	12.3	12.3	12.3
41-50 years	26	45.6	45.6	57.9
51- 60 years	23	40.4	40.4	98.2
60+	1	1.8	1.8	100.00
Total	57	100.0	100.0	
Years' experience	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid percent**	**Cumulative percent**
1-10	3	5.3	5.3	5.3
11-20	19	33.3	33.3	38.6
21-30	31	54.4	54.4	93.0
30+	4	7.0	7.0	100.0
Total	57	100.0	100.0	
Qualifications	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid percent**	**Cumulative percent**
Educators' diploma	4	7.0	7.0	7.0
First degree	22	38.6	38.6	45.6
Honours degree	27	47.4	47.4	93.0
Masters' degree	4	7.0	7.0	100.0
Total	57	100.0	100.0	

Table 5.1 indicates that just over half of the respondents (52.6%) were males while the remainder (47.4%) was females. Table 5.1also indicates that the ages of most of the principals were between 41 and 50 years (45.6%) or between 51 and 60 years (40.4%). Only 12.3% of the principals were in the age range 31-40 years. A small percentage (1.8%) fell in the pre-retirement phase (mandatory retirement is 65 years). The position of the school principal is pegged at Post Levels 1 to 5, depending on the grading of the school. Taking normal career progression into consideration, it would take the average principal at least 6 years to move from entry level education (Post Level 1) to principal (Post Level 1-5).

Furthermore, Table 5.1indicates the respondents' years experience in the teaching profession. Just over half (54.4%) of the respondents had between 21 and 30 years' experience in the teaching profession; 7.02% had more than 30 years' experience in the teaching profession. Thus, mostrespondents (61.42%, combined score) had more than 20 years' experience in the teaching profession. A substantial percentage (33.3%) had more than ten years' experience in the teaching profession. Only 5.3% of respondents had less than 10 years' experience in the teaching profession.

Table 5.1also displays the academic qualifications of the principals. Most of the principals (86%) held a first degree (38.6%) or a postgraduate honours degree (47.4%). A small percentage (7.0%)held a Master's degree; an equal percentage (7.0%) was in possession of the minimum qualification stipulated for educators (teacher's diploma). Thus, it can be deduced that most of the respondents held adequate qualifications, and a substantial percentage (54.4%, combined score) held a postgraduate qualification.

5.2.2 Section B: Institutional factors

Section B, items 5 to 15, of the questionnaire for principals dealt with institutional factors.

In Table 5.2the results of this section is summarized. In the discussion to follow reference is also made to the results of items E5 – 14.

Table 5.2: Institutional factors

Classification of the school	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid percent**	**Cumulative percent**
Section 21	39	68.4	68.4	68.4
Non-section 21	18	31.6	31.6	100.0
Total	57	100.0	100.0	
Location of the school	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid percent**	**Cumulative percent**
Urban	6	10.5	10.7	10.7
Rural area	1	1.8	1.8	12.5
Township	49	86.0	87.5	100.0
Total	56	98.2	100.0	
Missing system	1	1.8		
Total	57	100.0		
Fee-paying status	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid percent**	**Cumulative percent**
School fee-paying	11	19.3	19.3	19.3
Non-paying	46	80.7	80.7	100.0
Total	57	100.0	100.0	
School performance	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid percent**	**Cumulative percent**
Performing	16	28.1	28.1	28.1
Under-performing	41	71.9	71.9	100.0
Total	57	100.0	100.0	

Security fencing	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid percent**	**Cumulative percent**
Yes	50	87.7	87.7	87.7
No	7	12.3	12.3	100.0
Total	57	100.0	100.0	
E Learning facilities	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid percent**	**Cumulative percent**
Yes	55	96.5	100.0	100.0
Missing system	2	3.5		
Total	57	100.0		
Science laboratory	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid percent**	**Cumulative percent**
Yes	18	31..6	31.6	31.6
No	39	68.4	68.4	100.0
Total	57	100.0	100.0	
Library	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid percent**	**Cumulative percent**
Yes	43	75.4	78.2	78.2
No	12	21.1	21.8	100.0
Total	55	96.5	100.0	
System	2	3.5		
Total	57	100.0		
School hall	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid percent**	**Cumulative percent**
Yes	26	45.6	45.6	45.6
No	31	54.4	54.4	100.0
Total	57	100.0	100.0	

Table 5.2 indicates the classification of the schools as indicated by the respondents. More than two thirds (68.4%) of the primary schools were Section 21 schools (schools being allocated finances by the Gauteng Department of Education to purchase resources) (see section 3.2.5).

Almost a third (31.6%) were non-section 21 schools (schools that receive a paper allocation of funds by the Gauteng Department of Education - procurement is done by the Department on their behalf) (see section 3.3.1.5).This indicates that the majority of the schools manage their own departmental allocations and procure their own resources.

Furthermore, Table 5.2 indicates that most of the primary schools (86%) were located in the townships. Ten percent (10.5 %) were in an urban area, and a very small percentage (1.8%) fell in a rural area. Taking the combined score for township and rural schools into consideration, it can be deduced that most primary schools led by the principals in the sample were formerly disadvantaged schools with a developmental backlog, due to the apartheid legacy.

Table 5.2also displays the status of the schools according to fee-paying schools (schools partially subsidized by the Department of Basic Education and permitted by the SASA [RSA 1996b] to charge school fees) and non-school fee-paying schools (schools fully subsidized by the Department of Basic Education and exempted from charging school fees)(cf. 3.2.5).Most of the primary schools (80.7%) were non-fee-paying schools. Only a fifth (19.3%) was fee-paying. The data regarding the location of the school correlate with their fee-paying status: 87.8%of the schools were township and rural schools, and it could be expected that these schools serve a school population with a low socioeconomic status. Table 5.2 indicates that most of the respondents (71.9%) classified their schools as underperforming schools. According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2013), underperformance is categorized as 50% or more of the Grade 3 and 6 learner population achieving below level 4 (according to the 7 point rating scale) for either the Grade 3 or 6 Language section in the ANA; this is in accordance with Section 58(B) that is read in conjunction with Section 16(A) of the Education Law Amendments Act of 2007 (GDE 2013)(See section 3.8.3). Only 28.1% of the respondents classified their schools as performing schools. This finding correlates with the location of the school and its fee-paying status. Formerly disadvantaged schools serving a learner body from a low socioeconomic group are more likely to underperform than well-resourced schools situated in middle-income suburban areas.

Table 5.2 indicates that most of the schools (87.7%) had a security fence; only 12.3% of the schools had no security fence. The lack of security fencing makes schools more vulnerable to burglaries. In spite of security fencing, the respondents reported a high incidence of burglaries at their schools (78,9% combined score; (cf. Table 1, Appendix K). This places scarce and expensive school resources, such as computers and audio visual aids needed for quality schooling at risk.

With regard to resources, Table 5.2 indicates that most schools (96.5%) had e-learning facilities. According to Section 3.9.13.1, the Gauteng Department of Education (2004:11) initiated the Gauteng Online Programme to provide a province-wide schools network to improve the delivery of education and to bridge the digital divide. However, Table 5.2 indicates that only one third of the schools (31.6%) have science laboratories. This is a serious lack in the delivery of effective science education. Of those who had a science laboratory, most of the respondents (91.7%) indicated that it is used for carrying out experiments and not for other purposes (cf. Table2, Appendix K). Table 5.2 indicates that nearlyall the schools (78.2%) had a library which provides learners with access to books and reference works. Virtually all the respondents (95.5%) indicated that the library is used appropriately for study and research purposes by the educators and the learners(cf. Table 3, Appendix K). Table 5.2 indicates that just less than half of the schools had a school hall (45.6%), the remainder (54.4%) did not. Thus, the latter do not have a facility to hold assemblies, parents' meetings and cultural events. The school halls are used for all types of school gatherings (cf. Table 4, Appendix K).

Finally, class size is a key determinant of learner performance (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.4.2.1) and is an important aspect which should be managed by the principal as instructional leader. For this reason, class size is detailed separately in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Class size (Section B, item 15)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	30 learners	1	1.8	1.8	1.8
	35 learners	19	33.3	33.9	35.7
	40 learners	18	31.6	32.1	67.9
	40+ learners	18	31.6	32.1	100.0
	Total	56	98.2	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.8		
Total		57	100.0		

Table 5.3 indicates a fairly even spread of class size across all the schools. A third of the schools indicated 35:1 (33.9%); 40:1 (32.1%) and 40+:1(32.1%) learners per educator for each classroom respectively. The national norm for state paid educators to learner recommended for South African primary schools is 40:1 (Maringe & Prew 2014:123). A third of the schools with a ratio of 40+:1 represent overcrowding with the implication of poor performance by the learners. An overcrowded class cannot easily be controlled, and educators are unable to give each learner proper attention (See section 2.4.2.1).

5.2.3 Section C: School planning

Section C, items C1 to 16, of the questionnaire for principals dealt with school planning.

Table 5.4: Planning

Item		Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
C1	As a principal I do my planning in advance.	30	52.6	23	40.4	2	3.5	1	1.8	1	1.8	1.60	.799
C2	My school goals are clear.	25	43.9	28	49.1	2	3.5	1	1.8	1	1.8	1.68	.783
C3	The school goals are achievable.	18	31.6	26	45.6	11	19.3	1	1.8	1	1.8	1.96	.865
C4	The methods to attain school goals are achievable.	10	17.5	33	57.9	13	22.8	1	1.8			2.11	.748
C5	The school has an effective academic programme.	18	31.6	29	50.9	8	14.0	1	1.8	1	1.8	1.91	.830
C6	What has been planned is successfully implemented.	4	7.0	35	61.4	16	28.1	1	1.8	1	1.8	2.30	.706
C7	The educators know what is expected from them.	28	49.1	23	40.4	4	7.0	1	1.8	1	1.8	1.67	.831
C8	The development of policy documents includes all the role-players (SMT, SGB, staff-members and parents).	21	36.8	11	19.3	22	38.6	2	3.5	1	1.8	2.14	1.025
C9	The educators support the vision of the school.	19	33.3	23	40.4	14	24.6			1	1.8	1.96	.865
C10	A shared vision takes the school forward.	16	28.1	29	50.9	10	17.5	1	1.8	1	1.8	1.98	.834
C11	A vision ensures that the resources are effectively utilized.	17	29.8	26	45.6	12	21.1	1	1.8	1	1.8	2.00	.866
C12	The workload is distributed equally among the educators.	27	47.4	23	40.4	5	8.8	1	1.8	1	1.8	1.70	.844

C13	I ensure that the educators are busy the entire day.	24	42.9	26	46.4	5	8.9	1	1.8			1.70	.711
C14	I ensure that the correct disciplinary procedure is implemented regarding educators who are not committed to their professional task.	19	33.3	27	47.4	10	17.5	1	1.8			1.88	.758
C15	I ensure that the educators work together harmoniously in teams.	40	70.2	13	22.8	2	3.5	2	3.5			1.40	.728
C16	The following policies have been updated and are implemented:												
C16.1	Safety and security	33	57.9	18	31.6	5	8.8			1	1.8	1.56	.802
C16.2	Discipline	33	57.9	19	33.3	4	7.0			1	1.8	1.54	.781
C16.3	The learners' Code of Conduct	32	56.1	18	31.6	6	10.5			1	1.8	1.60	.821
C16.4	The educators' Code of Conduct	34	59.6	18	31.6	3	5.3	1.0	1.8	1	1.8	1.54	.825

Items C1-4 dealt with goal-setting for the school. Table 5.4 shows that 93% of the principals (52.6% + 40.4%) agreed that they did advance planning and 93% of the principals (43.9% + 49.1%) agreed that the school goals are clear. Of the principals, 77.2% (31.6% + 45.6%) agreed that the goals are achievable (mean value of 1.96) and 75.4% (17.5% + 57.9%) agreed that the methods to attain the goals are achievable (mean value of 2.11). This suggests that the principals were less confident about achieving their goals than about setting them. According to item C6, the principals were also less confident about the successful implementation of planning. Only seven percent (7%) of the principals strongly agreed in respect of the successful implementation and 61.4% agreed. Almost a third (31.7%) were undecided or disagreed (mean value of 2.3).Items C5 and C6 dealt with the provision of and implementation of the academic programmes. Table 5.4 shows that 82.1% of the principals (31.6% + 50.9%) agreed that their schools have effective academic programmes; however, only 68.4% of the principals (7.0% + 61.4%) agreed that what is planned is successfully implemented (mean value of 2.3). Thus, as in the case of the implementation of their planning, there was less certainty about the success of the implementation.

Items C9-11 dealt with the vision of the school. Table 5.4 shows that 73.7% (33.3 + 40.4%) of the principals agreed that the educators support the vision of the school; 24.6% of the principals were undecided. Similarly, 79.0% principals (28.1% + 50.1%) agreed that shared vision takes the school forward (Item C10). Only 17.5% of the principals were undecided about the statement. Most of the principals agreed that the school resources are effectively utilized (C11): 75.4% of the principals (29.8% + 45.6%) agreed with the statement whereas 21.1% of the principals were undecided on this issue, and 3.6% disagreed (mean value of 2.00).

Items C12 – C14 dealt with the educators' workload. Table 5.4 shows that 87.8% of the principals (47.4 + 40.4%) agreed that the educators' workload is distributed equally among the educators and 89.3% of the principals (42.9% + 46.4%) ensure that the educators are busy the entire day. Only 8.8% of the principals were undecided and 1.9 % principals disagreed on this issue. Most of the respondents agreed that the workload (item C12) and the performance of educators (item C13) are satisfactory (87.8% and 89.3%, respective combined scores). This suggests that the principals are confident that the educators are on-task and are occupied all day.

Table 5.4 indicates that the principals agreed that the school policies were up-to-date (items 16.1-16.4), with little variation in the response patterns. The majority of the principals agreed that their safety and security (item 16.1) and discipline policies (item 16.2) were up-to-date and implemented (89.5% and 91.2%, respective combined scores). Similarly, the majority agreed that they had a learner and an educator Code of Conduct (87.7% and 91.2%, respective combined scores). However, item C8, which deals with the participation of all the role-players in policy development, is an area of concern. Table 5.4 shows that 56.1% of the principals (36.8% + 19.3%) agreed that all the role-players take part in developing the school policies, whereas 38.6% of the principals were undecided and 5.3% of the principals disagreed with the statement (mean value of 2.14).

The overall results presented by Table 5.4 suggest that the planning and policy environment in the schools is adequate. It should be noted that the planning procedures and policy requirements are set by the Department of Education, and are responsible for by the IDSOs. However, the results suggest that the participation of all the stakeholders in the policy design and the implementation of the goals are somewhat less successful. Similarly, there was less certainty about the implementation of the academic programme.

5.2.4 Section D: Instructional procedures

Section D, items D1 to 16,of the questionnaire for the principals dealt with procedures dealing with instruction.

Table 5.5 Instructional procedures

Item		Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
D1	The learner-educator ratio in the class is satisfactory	16	28.1	19	33.3	14	24.6	6	10.5	2	3.5	2.28	1.098
D2	The traditional teaching methods are very useful when teaching in the primary school	10	17.5	32	56.1	12	21.1	2	3.5	1	1.8	2.16	.819
D3	A combination of traditional and CAPS-oriented methods is useful when teaching certain skills in the primary schools	6	10.5	29	50.9	20	35.1	2	3.5			2.32	.711
D4	CAPS-oriented methods are very useful when teaching in the primary school	8	14.0	38	66.7	10	18.0	1	2.0			2.07	.623
D5	As a principal, learner achievement is my focus	50	87.7	2	3.5	2	3.5	1	1.8	2	3.5	1.30	.906
D6	I encourage the educators to use English only as the medium of instruction when teaching	29	50.9	14	24.6	8	14.0	2	3.5	4	7.0	1.91	1.199
D7	I believe that the development of skills such as understanding, speaking, reading and writing is the goal of our school	38	66.7	16	28.1	1	1.8			2	3.5	1.46	.847
D8	I encourage the educators to explain in their Home Language when learners do not understand	4	7.1	20	35.7	4	7.0	16	28.6	12	21.1	3.21	1.331

D9	The Department of Basic Education workbooks are the basis of our teaching	22	38.6	18	31.6	11	19.3	5	8.8	1	1.8	2.04	1.052
D10	Textbooks are the basis of our teaching	21	36.8	25	43.9	9	15.8	1	1.8	1	1.8	1.88	.867
D11	We do not teach everything out of textbook	7	12.3	21	36.8	12	21.1	4	7.0	1	1.8	2.36	.933
D12	We often make use of multimedia (e.g., DVD's, CD's etc.) in our classes	8	14.0	12	21.1	13	22.8	18	31.6	6	10.5	3.04	1.239
D13	The learners are assessed regularly	46	80.7	7	12.3	2	3.5			2	3.5	1.33	.852
D14	All the assessment activities are moderated by the relevant HODs before learners write them	42	73.7	9	15.8	4	7.0	1	1.8	1	1.8	1.42	.844
D15	Assessment time-tables are sent to the parents in order for them to support their children when preparing for assessment activities	30	52.6	15	26.3	9	15.8	1	1.8	1	1.8	1.77	1.018
D16	The parents receive quarterly progress reports in respect of their children	54	94.7	1	1.8					2	3.5	1.18	.782

Table 5.5 indicates that less than two-thirds of the principals (combined score,61.4 %) agreed that the learner-educator ratio in the class is satisfactory. In contrast, 24.6% of the principals were undecided and 14.0% of the principals disagreed (mean value of 2.28). This correlates with the results in Table 5.5 which indicate that roughly a third of the principals indicated a learner: teacher ratio of +40:1 in their classrooms, which exceeds the recommended maximum of 40:1 as proposed by the Department of Education (cf.2.4.2.1).

Item D2-4 dealt with teaching methods. Table 5.5 indicates that 73.6% of the principals (17.5% + 56.1%) agreed that the traditional teaching methods remain useful when teaching, while 5.3% of the principals (3.5% + 1.8%) disagreed and 21.1% were undecided. Furthermore, 61.4% of the principals (10.5% + 50.9%) agreed that a combination of traditional and CAPS-oriented methods is useful when teaching certain skills; 35.1% of the principals were undecided and 3.5% disagreed. Most of the principals (combined score, 80.7%) agreed that CAPS-oriented methods are useful when teaching in the primary schools (mean value of 2.07). This suggests that the principals endorse the CAPS teaching methods as part of the official curriculum reform while there is still considerable support for a combination of the CAPS-orientated and the traditional methods.

Item D5 focused on learner achievement. Table 5.5 shows that 91.2% of the principals (87.7% + 3.5%) agreed that learner achievement is their focus; only 3.5% of the principals disagreed (mean value of 1.30). This suggests that the respondents understood their primary task as instructional leaders. The literature (chapter 2) clearly identified learner achievement as the primary focus of the principal as instructional leader. Items D6 and D8 dealt with language in education. Table 5.5 indicates that 75.5% of the principals (50.19% + 24.6) agreed that they encourage the educators to use only English when teaching; 10.5% of the principals disagreed. This reflects the popular and widespread choice of English as LoLT in schooling (cf. 3.3.2). On the use of the Home Language on occasion to facilitate the learners' understanding of the subject matter, the principals were divided: 42.8% of the principals (7.1% + 35.7%) agreed on this issue and 49.7% of the principals (28.6% + 21.1%) disagreed (mean value of 3.21). Regarding Item D7 which dealt with literacy skills as the goal of schooling, most of the principals (94.8%) were in agreement.

Items D9 - 12 dealt with teaching and learning resources. Table 5.5 shows that 70.2% of the principals (38.6% + 31.6%) agreed that the DBE-designed workbooks are the bases of teaching in their schools. However, 19.3% of the principals were undecided and 10.6% (8.8% + 1.8%) disagreed. Most of the principals (combined score, 80.7%) still considered textbooks as fundamental to teaching and learning. Item D12 focused on the incorporation of multimedia in teaching and learning. Table 5.5 shows that 42.1% of the principals disagreed on this issue and 22.8% were undecided (mean value of 3.04). This result reflects the conditions in poorly-resourced township schools (cf. 3.4.1) which lack additional funding to purchase multimedia items to upgrade teaching and learning.

Items D13-16 dealt with assessment practices. Table 5.5 shows that 93.0% of the principals (80.7% + 12.3%) agreed that the learners are assessed regularly (mean value of .852). Consistent assessment is an integral component of quality teaching and learning. In this regard the principals as instructional leaders reflect good practice in their schools. Similarly, most of the principals (combined score, 89.5%) agreed that their assessment activities are moderated by the HODs(item D14); only 3.65%of the principals disagreed (mean value of 8.44).In the same vein, 96.5%of the principals (94.7% + 1.8%) agreed that the parents receive quarterly progress reports for their children (Item D 16) (mean value of 782). The majority of the principals (78.9%) agreed that timetables of assessment activities were sent to the parents to ensure adequate preparation. However, 19.4% of the principals were undecided or disagreed (15.8% + 3.6%) (mean value of 1.018). This suggests that this practice is less common in the schools represented by the principals. However, the overall result on assessment indicates that the learners' work is regular and adequately moderated and regularly reported to the parents. This suggests that the principals fulfill their role as instructional leaders in that assessment activities are conducted consistently and fairly and that there exists clear communication between the school and the home regarding the learners' academic progress.

The overall results presented in Table 5.5 suggest that the principals as instructional leaders have targeted learner performance as their primary focus. Due attention is being paid to the introduction of CAPS in terms of teaching methods and the DBE-designed workbooks. The implementation of English as LoLT and the hesitancy around the use of Home Language as complementary language

medium in classroom instruction reflect common linguistic practice in South African schooling. Many black parents view HL instruction and maintenance as unnecessary. The black elite and middle-class prefer to enroll their children in independent or in public schools (the so-called ex-model C schools) where the learning of the English language is supported by rich material resources and a qualified, English-proficient teaching corps (Lemmer 2010; cf. 3.3.2). Assessment practices in the schools are strong. However, the results also indicate classroom overcrowding in at least a third of the schools and a lack of multimedia teaching resources. The latter are indicative of the low SES **(**cf.3.4.1**).** External school conditions caused by their socioeconomic disadvantage are the most difficult for the principal as instructional leader to manage.

5.2.5 Section E: Discipline

Section E, items E1-10,of the questionnaire for the principals dealt with school discipline, including learner and educator conduct.

Table 5.6: Discipline

Item		Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
E1	There exists an atmosphere of order, discipline and purpose at the school.	34	59.6	19	33.3	3	5.3	1	1.8			1.49	.685
E2	There are clear classroom instructions in each classroom.	27	47.4	23	40.4	6	10.5	1	1.8			1.67	.740
E3	The educators exhibit high morals and a commitment to teaching.	27	47.4	21	36.8	8	14.0	1	1.8			1.70	.778
E4	There is an educator's Code of Conduct which ensures a disciplined and orderly environment.	43	75.4	7	12.3	5	8.8	1	1.8	1	1.8	1.42	.865
E5	The educators perceive the principal as hindering them in their professional duties.	3	5.3	11	19.3	8	14.0	13	22.8	10	17.5	3.36	1.264
E6	There is a learner Code of Conduct which ensures a disciplined and orderly environment.	41	71.9	10	17.5	6	10.5					1.39	.675
E7	The educators are late quite frequently.	1	1.8	24	42.1	4	7.0	20	35.1	8	14.0	3.18	1.182
E8	The learners are late quite frequently.	1	1.8	24	42.1	10	17.5	20	35.1	2	3.5	2.96	.999
E9	The educators are often absent.			26	45.6	5	8.8	18	31.6	8	14.0	3.14	1.156
E10	The learners are often absent.			28	49.1	7	12.3	18	31.6	4	7.0	2.96	1.052

Table 5.6 shows that 92.9% of the principals (59.6% + 33.3%) agreed that there is an atmosphere of order, discipline and purpose at their schools (Item E1); a few principals (5.3%) were undecided and 1.8% disagreed (mean value of .685). Similarly, in terms of clear classroom instructions, 87.8% of the principals agreed, while 10.5% of the principals were undecided and only 1.8 disagreed. This suggests that most of the principals agreed that a general atmosphere of order prevailed in their schools. This is supported by agreement on the high morals and commitment of the educators: 84.2% of the principals agreed on this issue (47.4 + 36.8) (mean value of 1.7). A disciplined school is most likely to produce good results and this suggests that most of the principals fulfill their role as instructional leaders in this regard. Items E4 and 6 dealt with the existence of a Code of Conduct for the educators as well as for the learners. Table 5.6 shows that 87.7% of the principals (75.4% + 12.3%) and 89.4% of the principals (71.9% + 17.5%) agreed that a Code of Conduct for the educators and the learners exists. A Code of Conduct gives the legal and contractual basis on which a school's discipline can be exercised. This suggests that most of the principals fulfilled their responsibility as instructional leaders in creating a disciplined school environment based on the relevant Codes of Conduct.

Items E7-10 dealt with the late-coming of the educators and the learners respectively. Table 5.6 shows that equally on both items E 7 and E8, 43.9% of the principals (1.8% + 42.1%) agreed that frequent late-coming is a problem among both the educators and learners (mean value for educators is 3.18 and mean value for learners is 2.96). This lack of punctuality is a matter of concern as it negatively affects teaching and learning. A probable cause of late-coming is problems with transport: most of the inhabitants of the townships have to rely on taxis or an unsafe and unreliable system of public transport to reach the workplace or the school (Luke & Heyns 2013).

Items E9 and 10 dealt with the absenteeism of the educators and the learners respectively. Table 5.6 shows that 45.6% of the principals agreed that the educators are frequently absent from school. Similarly, 49.1% of the principals agreed that the learners are frequently absent from school. An almost equal proportion disagreed on this issue: 45.6% of the principals disagreed that the educators are frequently absent (mean value of 3.14) and 38.6% of the principals disagreed that the learners are frequently absent (mean value of 2.96). This suggests an unacceptably high rate of absenteeism

in the schools which affects the learners' performance negatively. The high teacher absenteeism in South African schools has been discussed in par. 3.5.2 **(**Spaull 2012:80; Van der Berg et al. 2011:9) and is supported by Lam et al. (2011:122). High learner absenteeism is also supported by the literature. It is ascribed to problems related to low SESs, illness, food insecurity, the lack of parental supervision, as well as the inability to pay school fees (Community Agency and Joint Education Trust, 2007).

The overall results presented in Table 5.6 suggest that the principals as instructional leaders have succeeded in creating and maintaining orderly and disciplined school environments based on the appropriate Codes of Conduct for the learners and the educators. However, significant problems exist in nearly half the schools regarding late-coming and teacher and learner absenteeism. These results indicate areas of obvious concern which must be dealt with by the principals as instructional leaders if they are to fulfil their mandate.

5.3 PHASE 1: THE FINDINGS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES: THE IDSOs

Section 5.3 presents the findings of the questionnaires administered to the IDSOs.

5.3.1 Section A: Biographical data

Section A (items 1-4) of the questionnaire for the IDSOs dealt with their biographical data in terms of gender, age, years' experience and professional qualifications. Table 5.6 indicates the biographical characteristics of the IDSOs.

Table 5.7: Biographical characteristics of the IDSOs

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	5	62.5	62.5	62.5
Female	3	37.5	37.5	100.0
Total	8	100.0	100.0	
Age range	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
41-50 years	7	87.5	87.5	87.5
51-60 years	1	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	8	100.0	100.0	
Years of experience	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
11-20	7	87.5	87.5	87.5
21-30	1	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	8	100.0	100.0	
Qualifications	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Honours degree	4	50.0	50.0	50.0
Masters degree	3	37.5	37.5	87.5
Doctoral degree	1	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	8	100.0	100.0	

According to Table 5.7, most of the IDSO respondents (5) were male; three (3) were female. Most of the respondents (7) fell in the age range of 41-50 years; one (1) respondent fell in the age range of 51-60 years. Furthermore, most of the respondents (7) had 11-20 years of experience and one (1) had teaching experience ranging between 21-30 years. Thus, all the IDSO respondents were mature individuals with considerable professional experience. Table 5.7 also indicates that all the respondents had post-graduate qualifications, namely four (4) held an Honours degree; three (3) held a Masters degree, and one (1) held a doctorate. This result, together with their length of

professional experience, confirms the adequacy of the ISDOs' competence to act as officials in an advisory capacity to the principals in primary schools in the Tshwane 3 District.

5.3.2 Section B: Institutional factors

Section B, items B5-1, of the questionnaire for the IDSOs dealt with the institutional factors of the primary schools under the guidance of the ISDOs. Table 5.8 displays these institutional factors.

Table 5.8 Institutional factors

CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOOLS				
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative percent**
Section 21	2	25.0	25.0	25.0
Both Section 21 and non-section 21	6	75.0	75.0	100.0
Total	8	100.0	100.0	
Location of the schools				
Urban areas	1	12.5	12.5	12.5
Township	5	62.5	62.5	75.0
Urban, rural and township	2	25.0	25.0	100.0
Total	8	100.0	100.0	
Status of the schools				
Fee-paying	1	12.5	12.5	2.5
Non fee-paying	4	50.0	50/0	62.5
Fee-paying and no fee-paying	3	37.5	37.5	100.00

Total	8	100.0	100.0	
School performance				
At least half of my schools are under-performing	1	12.5	12.5	12.5
At least half of my schools are performing	2	25.0	25.0	37.5
Most of my schools are performing	5	62.5	62.5	100.0
Total	8	100.0	100.0	

Table 5.8 indicates that most of the IDSO respondents (6) were responsible for both section 21 and non-section 21 schools; only two (2) of the respondents were responsible for section 21 schools only **(**cf. 3.2.2 & 3.2.3). Similarly, most of the IDSO respondents (5) were responsible for schools located in the townships; two (2) were responsible for urban, rural and township schools and only one (1) was responsible for an urban school. In terms of school status, Table 5.8 indicates that one (1) respondent was responsible for fee-paying schools exclusively. The rest (7) were responsible for no fee-paying schools, or both. Most of the respondents (2 +5) were primarily responsible for performing schools; one (1) was responsible for under-performing schools. Half or more of the schools (4+) for which the IDSOs were responsible had security fencing (cf. Table 5, Appendix K) and this correlated with incidence of burglaries at the schools: five (5) of respondents indicated infrequent reports of burglaries at schools.

5.3.3 Section C: Planning

Section C, Items C1 - 6,of the questionnaire for the IDSOs dealt with the management and academic planning at the schools for which they were responsible. Table 5.9 displays the results for management and academic planning.

Table 5.9: Management and academic planning

Item	None		Only few		Most		All		Mean	SD
	F	%	F	%	F	%	f	%		
C1 My schools have appropriate policies and procedures in place to enable them to run smoothly.					6	75.0	2	25.0	3.250	0.463
C2 My schools have a educators' Code of Conduct which is implemented.			2	25.0	4	50.0	2	25.0	3.000	0.756
C3 My schools have a learners' Code of Conduct which is applied for disciplinary measures.			1	12.5	7	87.5			2.875	0.354
C4 My schools have school development plans in place that have been drawn up by all the stakeholders.			2	25.0	6	75.0			3.125	0.835
C5 My schools have strategies to prepare for ANA assessments.			2	25.0	3	37.5	3	37.5	2.750	0.463
C6 My schools have plans for curriculum management.					3	37.5	5	62.5	3.625	0.518

Table 5.9 indicates that the majority of the IDSO respondents (6+2) agreed that most of the schools have appropriate policies and procedures in place (Item C1). Similarly, the majority of the IDSO respondents (6) agreed that most of the schools have school development plans; two (2) felt that only a few schools complied in this regard. The majority (3+3) felt that the most schools have strategies in place to prepare for ANA assessments; two (2) IDSOs felt that only a few schools complied in this regard. The majority (3+5) confirmed that most of the schools had plans for curriculum management. Furthermore, Table 5.9 indicates that six (4+2) of the IDSO respondents agreed that most of the schools have a educators' Code of Conduct (Item C2) and similarly, most (7) of the IDSOs agreed that most schools have a learners' Code of Conduct.

5.3.4 Section D: Instructional procedures

Section D, items D1 to 6, of the questionnaire for the IDSOs dealt with the instructional procedures at the schools for which they are responsible. Table 5.10 displays the results of the instructional procedures.

Table 5.10 Instructional procedures

Item	Strong agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	SD
	f	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	f	%		
D1 In my schools the learner-educator ratio in the classes is satisfactory.					7	87.5	1	12.5			3.125	0.35
D2 Traditional teaching methods are useful in teaching the learners.			4	50.0	4	50.0					2.5	0.53
D 3 A combination of traditional and CAPS-oriented methods is preferred for teaching certain skills in primary schools.	3	37.5	2	25.0	1	12.5	2	25.0			2.25	1.28
D 4 CAPS-oriented methods are useful when teaching in primary schools.	2	25.0			4	50.0	2	25.0			2.75	1.16
D5 The principals as instructional leaders focus on learner achievement.	5	62.5			2	25.0	1	12.5			1.875	1.25
D6 The development of skills such as speaking, writing, listening and reading is the goal of our schools.	6	75.0			2	25.0					1.5	0.93

Table 5.10 shows that most (7) of the IDSO respondents were undecided whether the schools' learner-educator ratio was satisfactory. Regarding teaching methods, the IDSO were divided on the issue of traditional teaching methods (mean value of 2.5). Most (5) preferred a combination of the traditional and the CAPS methods. Interestingly, the ISDOs (2, strongly agree and 2, disagree) were split on the usefulness of the CAPS methods, and four (4) were undecided. The range of opinion regarding teaching methods may possibly be due to the introduction of several curriculum reform efforts in primary schools during the past 20 years which have required the officials to constantly change their own approaches. Most of the (5) ISDOs agreed that the principals set learner achievement as their primary goal, and six (6) agreed that basic literacy skills were a priority in the schools.

5.3.5 Section E: Discipline

Section E, items E1 to 6, of the questionnaire for the IDSOs dealt with discipline at the schools for which they were responsible. Table 5.11 displays the results for discipline issues.

Table 5.11: Discipline

Item	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	SD
	f	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	f	%		
E1There is an atmosphere of order, discipline and purpose in all my primary schools.	2	25.0	1	12.5	5	62.5					3.625	0.92
E2 The principals have high morals and are committed to managing as instructional leaders.	1	12.5			6	75.0	1	12.5			3.125	0.83
E3 The principals are frequently absent.									2	25.0	2.25	1.16
E4 The principals are frequently late.			2	25.0			4	50.0	2	25.0	2.25	1.16
E5 The principals absent themselves from cluster meetings with apologies.			6	75.0			1	12.5	1	12.5	3.375	1.19

Table 5.11 indicates that only three (3) of the IDSO respondents agreed that there is an atmosphere of order, discipline and purpose in all the schools; five (5) were undecided (Item E1). Similarly, the IDSO respondents were undecided about the principals' professional commitment (Item E2). Items E3-5 dealt with the principals' late-coming and absenteeism. Only two (2) of the IDSO respondents answered the item dealing with absenteeism, and both strongly disagreed that the principals were frequently absent. Six (6) agreed that the principals excused themselves from cluster meetings albeit with apologies. Most of the IDSO respondents (4+2) disagreed that the principals were frequently late.

Overall, the IDSO's participation in Phase 1 was very limited due to their workload, time available and a reluctance to respond to certain items of the questionnaire. This led to a low response-rate. Several of the items were left unanswered or 'undecided' (see table 5.10, item DI and table 5.11, item E1 and E2) possibly due to the difficulty of a conclusive response because of the large variety of schools that they serve. The small number of the respondents thus limits the results to a mere indication of opinion.

5.4 FINDINGS OF PHASE TWO: INTERVIEWS

This section presents the findings of the interviews with selected principals of the primary schools and selected IDSOs responsible for providing guidance to the principals in the Tshwane South District.

5.4.1 Characteristics of the participants

Table 5.12 indicates the characteristics of the principal participants and their schools.

Table 5.12 Characteristics of the principal participants and their schools

Circuit	Designation of principal	Gender	Age	Years as principal	Highest qualifications	Under-performing	Performing school	Fee paying school	Non fee paying school
1	A	M	52	8	B.Ed. Hons.	X			X
2	B	F	59	10	B.A.		X		X
3	C	F	45	2	B.Ed. Hons	X			X
	D	M	53	5	Diploma	X			X
	E	M	58	2	B.Ed. Hons.		X		X
4	F	M	48	6	B.Ed. Hons.		X		X
	G	M	46	5	B.Ed.Hons.		X		X
5	H	F	54	6	B.A.	X			X
	I	M	58	13	B.A.	X			X
	J	M	56	14	B.Ed.Hons.		X		X
TOTAL:	**10**								

Table 5. 12 indicates that each of the five circuits in the Tshwane South District was represented by at least one principal during the interviews, namely Circuits 1 and 2 were represented by one principal each; Circuit 3 was represented by three principals; Circuit 4 was represented by two principals and Circuit 5 was represented by three principals. The participants reflected a range of experience in the principalship from two (2) years to 14 years. Only one principal had the minimum professional qualification (Educators' Diploma); six principals held a B.Ed. Hons. degree and three principals held B.A. degrees. Of the ten primary schools led by the principals, five were ranked as under-performing and five were ranked as performing for the academic year 2013, according to the ANA for 2013 (cf.3.8.3.1). All the participants headed non fee-paying public primary schools(cf.3.2.3).In 2006 The Department of Education amended the National Norms and Standards for school funding, thereby lifting the legal obligation for parents in low-income communities to pay school fees for their children (Chisholm 2012:92).

Table 5.13 indicates the characteristics of the IDSO participants and their schools.

Table 5.13 Characteristics of the IDSO participants

Circuit	Designation of DSOs	Gender	Age	Years of experience as ISDO	Highest qualifications
1	A	M	63	17	D.Ed.
2	B	M	52	5	B.A.
3	C	M	50	5	B.Ed. Hons.
4	D	M	53	7	M.Ed.
5	E	M	54	8	B.Ed. Hons.
TOTAL:	**5**				

According to Table 5.13, each circuit in the Tshwane South District was represented by its IDSO during the interviews. The participants' experience in the position of IDSO ranged from five (5) to 17 years. Two of the participants held the B.Ed. Hons. degree, one participant held a B.A., one a M.Ed., and one participant held a D.Ed.

5.4.2 Findings from the interviews with the principals

The data gathered during the interviews with the principals is presented according to the following six themes, namely managerial experience, school infrastructure, participative planning, tuition and learning strategies; teacher conduct and learner discipline; and curriculum implementation.

5.4.2.1 Theme 1: Managerial experience

This theme explored the managerial experiences of the principal participants as a component of instructional leadership. Gumus and Akcaoglu (2013:291) maintain that principals have to be competent in management skills in order to advise, monitor, evaluate and direct the educators and to be

able to cope with the many tasks involved in the day-to-day running of the school (cf. also 2.3). From the ten participants, only two were newly appointed in the position of principal, with only two years' experience, two had five years' experience as principals, two had six years' experience as principals and the remaining participants had 8 years, 10 years, 13 years and 14 years' experience respectively. However, the participants explained that their present experience as principal had, in all cases, been preceded by valuable managerial experience obtained during career progression.

Principal A indicated that prior to his appointment as principal of his school, he had served as HOD for almost four years. Thereafter, he was promoted to the position of Deputy Principal where he managed numerous activities related to the functioning of the school, and he supported the school principal as a member of the SMT. During this time an important responsibility of him was the acquisition and supervision of Learner and Teacher Support Materials. In addition he acted in several other capacities as deputy principal. He indicated,

> *"I was the chairperson of Sport, Art and Culture. I was in charge of the environment, and I started the project of improving the school environment. I then entered City of Tshwane School Environmental Competition under the category of saving water and energy. We managed to change the electrical system at the school, and used fluorescent bulbs and repaired all the leaking water pipes at the school. We then painted the roof of the school with reflective paint to make the classrooms warm during summer and winter. This saved lot of electricity during winter. For this project the school won a prize of R50 000. With that prize we built an assembly shelter, you see it there!" [*with a gesture at the structure].

Principal A felt that he contributed positively to the development of the school and that his prior experience in management positions during his career added to his present set of skills. Notably was the experience he gained in improving the infrastructure of the school (cf. 2.4.6.2 and 2.4.6.3), and his role in generating additional funds for this purpose, particularly as his school is a no fee-paying school and is reliant on a government subsidy only. At present Principal A felt satisfied with his managerial endeavours and mentioned,

> "*Presently as the administrator and manager of the school, I'm doing well for the school."*

In addition to their practical experience in the day-to-day running of their schools, several of the participants had studied education management as their specialization for the B.Ed. Hons. degree at accredited higher education institutions.

Principal I explained that his B.Ed. Hons. studies had prepared him for his current position. He was familiar with the management tasks and managerial principles and was able to translate his theoretical knowledge into practice even before he was promoted to the position of principal. He said:

> "[Management] *is not so difficult because I have been studying Educational Management at the University of Pretoria. Most of the things I encounter every day, I have learnt about them, even before I was the Deputy Principal for four years and then, I became acting Principal for two years."*

Likewise, Principal E considered himself fortunate to have been awarded a bursary to pursue a short-term course in Management, a course offered by the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (cf. 3.9.15) to further his studies in education management. He commented,

> *"I was lucky to be awarded a bursary and form part of those principals who attended the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance to further my studies in leadership and management field."*

The participants remarked on the difficulties encountered in the schools where the principal had to assume a heavy teaching load as well as managerial duties. No fee-paying schools had no extra funds to appoint additional educators to reduce the principal's teaching time. In such cases time management skills and appropriate delegation of tasks were important. One participant indicated that the dilemma being faced with duties were split between administration and teaching. He said,

> *"The principal is supposed to teach in the class like any other teacher and at the same time is supposed to manage the school. When the principal is busy in class with learners, the administrative part suffers, and when the principal is busy with administrative duties, the academic part of learners in the class suffers. This is the main problem in small township schools, as we are unable to hire more additional staff members."*

In this context, additional training in management provided more than a qualification; it provided important peer support. Principal E identified this peer support as a beneficial outflow of his training at the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance. His participation in the course meant that he could network with management experts as well as other principals to find solutions to the many challenges of heading a township school which operated under financial constraints. He said,

> "*It is important that there are people who are knowledgeable around you as the principal for support, because the system that is currently used in South Africa makes the job of principals to be very difficult."*

This finding indicated the importance of the participants' continually upgrading their leadership and managerial skills as well as obtaining further academic qualifications.

5.4.2.2 Theme 2: School infrastructure

This theme explored the principals' role in creating and maintaining the school environment as a place which is conducive to learning and teaching in terms of the buildings, the surroundings and the resources (cf. 2.4.6.2. and 2.4.6.3) Adequate resources are essential in education (Pollard 2002:76). The nature of the physical environment and the availability of facilities and equipment are essential building blocks in establishing a sound culture of learning and teaching in a school (Van Deventer & Kruger 2003:7). Effective instructional leadership is significantly influenced by external conditions, and the principals in disadvantaged environments face great challenges in this aspect of their task as leaders.

As principals of no fee-paying schools all ten the participants lamented that their school buildings were old. Older buildings present particular problems in terms of maintenance. Three principals mentioned that their buildings had been erected in the 1950s, and that their school buildings were old and dilapidated. The walls and floors were cracked. In some classes teaching resources like charts cannot be pasted against the walls as they fall off, bringing the plaster down with them. Most of the learners' toilets were unbearable and this posed a health threat to the safety of both the learners and the staff. Principal B described the conditions as follows,

> *"The building is very old. The resources are not conducive for learning and teaching. The toilets are dilapidated. Electricity and water pipes are not functioning well."*

It should be noted, however, that in spite of these unacceptable circumstances, Principal B's school has been classified as a performing school in terms of the ANA of learner achievement.

Notwithstanding, the Gauteng Department of Education recently renovated three schools and the school buildings were now in a better state. The principals felt that the physical infrastructure could be considered adequate for effective learning and teaching to take place. The renovation of old buildings had a positive effect on the educators' and the learners' morale. Principal D confirmed,

> *"Our school is old, but in the past two years the Government had refurbished the school and replaced the old furniture with the new ones. This had a positive impact on learning and teaching in our school."*

Principal J, a principal of a performing school, was unhappy about the state of the infrastructure of her school, but she acknowledged the fact that one block had been renovated. She described her mixed feelings about this situation as follows,

> *"When I was appointed here in 2011 as the principal, everything was old. It is just that they were in place but very old, even the sanitary system was very old. The appearance of the buildings, I may say, is 50% very old and 50% in a good*

condition. The block for the Senior Phase is dilapidated; the walls and the floors are cracked and I have been communicating with Department of Education about the matter. But up to so far nothing had been done. The other block including the administration, the building is fine, that is the reason I say 50/50."

In particular, Principal J's comments highlighted the poor state of the block for the Senior Phase of the primary school, which is the Phase when the learners are subjected to the ANA.

Principal G, also a principal of a performing school, described the conditions which impeded teaching and learning, such as the absence of a library and a proper laboratory for the teaching of science. He commented,

"We wish we could have more infrastructures in terms of the latest methods of teaching, that is, a media centre, library or science laboratory, like other countries, so that we may familiarize our learners with technology skills. Up to so far we received only 40 Samsung galaxy tablets and our learners are many in a class."

However, she also mentioned that she and her team had not remained passive about the poor infrastructure and made efforts to improve it, by saying

"The walls of the classrooms were very needy. We have recently painted them and they are OK."

Poor infrastructure also relates to the school grounds and the sports facilities. Principle B, who headed a performing school, mentioned the lack of sports grounds. Yet, in spite of this, the learners and the educators did their best to maintain a high morale and engaged in schooling. He said,

"Our schools don't have sports facilities like other schools in the suburbs. We wish our schools had enough space to cater for sports grounds but there is no space for that. Generally our kids try their level best in this type of infrastructure."

During my observation of the school sites (see Appendix J), with particular reference to the infrastructure and the surroundings of the ten primary schools which were headed by the interviewed principals, the following was noted:

The buildings of six out of the ten schools were very old. Four schools were recently built by the Gauteng Department of Education, well-maintained by the school management and were attractive and intact. Within the six older schools, four had been recently renovated, painted and indicated the care of the school management members. The remaining two schools were partly renovated (only the Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase blocks) but the older sections were neglected and dilapidated (Senior Phase blocks). The walls were cracked with the paint peeling off, and the cement floors were cracked with worn-out tiles. In those blocks, proper learning and teaching was affected. However due to a lack of funds, the learners and educators continued to occupy those classrooms. Some window panes were broken and several doors were without handles and locks.

The four new schools had enough chairs and tables for every learner. Three old schools out of the six did not have the basic furniture. In a number of instances two learners had to share one chair, and a double desk, meant for two learners,was used by four learners. Situations like these made effective learning and teaching very difficult.

All schools had flush toilets. However, in three of the ten schools the learners' ablution facilities were not adequate: pipes were leaking, there was water all over the floors, and the toilets emitted a bad odor. The window panes and the doors were broken. The maintenance of these toilets was inadequate; no one appeared responsible for their upkeep. The old ablution blocks required a complete overhaul.

All the schools had security guards at the main gates; they controlled the entrances and exits of the schools. However, two of the ten schools did not have proper fencing. The surrounding mesh fence was old with holes, and in some places the fence had fallen down. The result is that intruders can enter unnoticed, making it unsafe for the learners, and the educators. The insecurity at such schools promotes the risk of burglaries (cf. Table 5.2). The administration blocks of all the schools did, however, have alarm systems.

All ten the schools had inadequate space to accommodate all the sport activities. The available sports fields I observed were soccer fields, netball fields and athletic fields; however, most of them occupied very small areas.

Generally, the educational environment of four of the ten schools is adequate for learning and teaching to take place. Of the remaining six schools, four require refurbishment, and the remaining two are in dire need of new buildings. My observations thus confirmed the comments of the participants in this regard.

5.4.2.3 Theme 3: Participative planning

This theme explored the principal's role in formulating objectives for the school and developing and implementing educational plans for all activities within the school. According to Gumus and Akcaoglu (2013:290), principals are instructional leaders whose primary aim is the improving of the learning environments and the teaching practices in their schools. The role of the principal as instructional leader is to create a culture that is conducive to teaching and learning, or a culture where the educators, learners and parents work together to accomplish the task of education (cf. 2.3). These activities include the co-operation and input of all the teaching staff, the support staff, the SMT and the SGB in school planning. The general parent body should also have a say in formulating the school's objectives.

Most participants found that it was difficult to plan and share equally their planning responsibilities and activities with all the relevant stakeholders. This finding was also corroborated with the results of the questionnaire (cf. 5.2.3) where the larger group of the principal respondents expressed uncertainty about the success and extent of stakeholder collaboration in planning. Principals are expected to share their leadership responsibilities with educators and other stakeholders, and thus obtain broader ownership of the school's goals and plans (cf. 2.2).

Most of the participants felt that it was easier to share the planning and implementation responsibilities with the teaching staff and SMT but they experienced problems in working with the SGBs. They

claimed that most SGB members do not have the time to attend to school activities including meetings, as they are working.

Principal C explained that he held regular parents' meeting, where theeducators were expected to address parents on what the school's goals are in terms of parent support and disciplines. The role of the principals in terms of parent collaboration is well documented (Lemmer & Van Wyk 2009); cf. 2.4.7). The design and communication of the learners' Code of Conduct should also be part of this parent-teacher collaboration as well as classroom rules (Docking 2002:21)(cf.2.4.2.3). However, the principals relied on the support of the parent members of the SGB in this type of planning and implementation. In his school, the SGB chairperson failed to support him. The chairperson was quoted as saying,

> "*No, I cannot talk in a meeting that I did not convene and I am not going to address anyone…if that is the case I better leave."*

Without the support of the SGB, the principals are severely hampered in their role as instructional leaders. The participants felt that the main cause of conflict between the SMT and SGB was insufficient insight into and knowledge of the distinctive duties and responsibilities of a school manager and a school governor. Principal I vented his frustration due to this type of conflict as follows,

> *"It is very easy to work with educators as we fulfil the vision of the school but very difficult to work with parents and SGB. The SGBs are not thoroughly trained in their duties and responsibilities; they think that they are managing the school. They don't know the different between management and governance."*

Similarly, Principal G elaborated on her frustration with obtaining the participation of the SGB in planning as follows,

> *"I have a good relationship with other stakeholders, but the challenge is to work with SGB members, because some are not educated on issues like the mission and*

*vision statement, breaking down the objectives of the school. They will listen every time when you tell them about them, but when it comes to hands-on, walking the talk, it is very difficult to rope them in and drag them along the path. They are not just able to do the work. For example, my SGB never held SGB meeting this year [*since January 2014 to August 2014]. *I had been phoning the SGB chairperson and we agree on the date and time of the meeting, but you will be surprised, on the agreed date and time, you will find yourself alone, no one turns up."*

The participants felt that the SGBs should undergo rigorous workshop training for development so that they can distinguish their duties and responsibilities in governance from their management tasks. These kinds of workshops should also be extended to the SMT. This finding from the interviews evoked a concern about the relationship between the school management and the SGB. Conflict in this regard impedes the smooth running of the school and negatively affects the performance of the learners.

Only three participants rose to the challenge of wider collaboration and found it possible to plan their responsibilities and activities with all the relevant stakeholders, thus obtaining maximum 'buy-in' for the school plans. Principal A enjoyed working with the stakeholders and even included community organizations such as the local church. The SGB was also called on to fulfil its mandatory responsibilities. The principal said,

"You know, we involve and distribute responsibilities or tasks to all the stakeholders, that is, the churches, the SGB and educators. The SGB must raise fund, secure and supervise funding following the tendering procedures. In this school almost everybody is located with a responsibility, meaning that we are trying our level best. But that responsibility is given to the people who are motivated. This is essential. Also you can't just do things without any objectives."

In support of the above comment, Principal D stressed the importance of engaging all the stakeholders in the school activities. In this regard, he highlighted the benefit of having several sub-committees to deal with specific issues. Principal D illustrated the advantages of distributed leadership by saying

"After meeting with the SMT for discussions, we take issues to staff-meetings for further discussions. We allow the opinions of the staff members to convince us to things that are relevant to the school developmental strategies. There are some of the committees, for example, the Wellness and Health and Safety and Security committees that are headed by the SGB-members."

Likewise, principal H demonstrated how he, as the principal of the school, shared the responsibilities with the other stakeholders. He discussed this collaboration in terms of the professional development of educators and the engagement of the SGB in teaching and learning matters. He remarked,

"As the principal of the school, I encourage educators to attend workshops so that we all share information afterwards. This assists educators to come up with school developmental strategies, where we all participate in various activities. I allow the SGB to be involved in the educational activities of the children as well. They also do attend workshops."

The issue of a lack of participative planning for the school was alluded to in the questionnaire findings and the interviews allowed a full exploration of this issue.

5.4.2.4 Theme 4: Tuition and learning strategies

This theme was directly related to the role of the principal as instructional leader. The principals have to stay abreast of strategic ways of imparting knowledge and skills to the learners in order to ensure that the learners achieve academically to their maximum level. Thus, instructional leadership requires expertise and knowledge of subject matter content, pedagogy, good instruction and of knowledge of how to lead (cf. 2.3; 3.5.1).

All ten the primary school principals confirmed that the planning of the curricular activities is done in conjunction with the HODs. They also agreed that these activities ran smoothly in their schools. The procedure common to all schools was as follows: the HODs hold meetings with the teaching staff

according to the Phases of the primary school. The teaching time-tables (cf. 3.3.1) are strictly adhered to. The HODs check, monitor and control the subject files (learning areas) of the educators on a regular basis, including by means of the informal and formal assessments of the learners. The learners' results are diagnosed and analyzed on a quarterly basis.

In support of the above statement, principal A, principal of an underperforming school, felt that he and his team followed the correct procedures to ensure effective teaching and learning. He said,

> *"What I normally do: I communicate with my HODs and we plan together for the learning materials we give to learners and we ensure that educators always prepare their lessons. We also make sure that educators plan and follow the school timetables. The problems we encounter are in Mathematics and English as first additional language and we offer extra time for that. The HODs regularly controls that tasks are marked and learners are assessed as planned according to assessment plans. We have phase meetings, whereby we assist those educators who are unable to perform. The school normally enters competitions of Mathematics and Science such as Olympiads, and these really become motivational to our learners."*

In addition, Principal J, principal of a performing school, mentioned with conviction that the learners' results were regularly monitored and that struggling educators were assisted. He mentioned,

> *"We analyze learner results each term in a qualitative and quantitative manner. We implement academic performance improvement plans. We also determine the teaching level of the educators' methods and assist educators who fail in delivery."*

Participant B, also the principal of a performing school, indicated that the parents were involved in the planning of the curriculum, and special needs children were identified and referred. He said,

> *"We usually set ourselves a target, and we involve the parents so that they become part of our education. We analyze each learner's performance against the school's target. Those learners, who are not ready for the main stream education system, are*

referred to the relevant education system so that the performance standard of the school is not lowered."

All the participants confirmed that they trusted their teaching staff to do the required planning and preparation for tuition, this included principals of both performing and underperforming schools. However, according to Table 5.12, five participants head schools which are known to be underperforming. This finding highlights an area which still requires further investigation. According to Van der Berg et al. (2011:9), a survey of primary school classroom practices in South Africa found that low time on-task, content exposure and poor curriculum coverage erode the opportunity to learn (cf. 3.5.1).

5.4.2.5 Theme 5:Teacher conduct and learner discipline

This theme explored the conduct of both the educators and the learners in the primary schools headed by the participants. In many schools ill-discipline was the causeof problems in the performance of the learners. It is the responsibility of the school management team to maintain acceptable discipline so that the affairs of the school may run smoothly. A disciplined school wherethe educators and the learners comply with their respective Codes of Conduct will produce better academic results (cf. 2.4.2.3; 3.6).

In terms of educator conduct, all the participants confirmed that they follow the correct disciplinary policies and regulations in their professional relationship with the teaching staff. The following documents were mentioned by participants in order to assist them in maintaining acceptable discipline on the part of the educators, namely the South African Council for Educators (SACE) Code of Conduct; the regulations of the Education Labour Relation Council (ELRC), the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, leave forms, and control books for late arrivals and early departures. The participants confirmed that they also follow the correct procedures when reprimanding educators and dealing with misconduct.

In support of the above statement, principal E said,

"Well, for educators, I can say, we have system in place. They fill in leave forms. They complete the control book when they are late or when they leave the school before the real time."

However, most of the principals experienced the late-coming to work of the educators. This was a major problem and confirmed the results of the principals' questionnaire (cf. 5.2.3). As principal A pointed out,

"In terms of disciplinary process, we follow the legitimate procedures of discipline; verbal warning then followed by written warnings especially with late-coming of educators, not for learners. You will find learners in classroom waiting for an educator to arrive; normally what I do is to call the teacher, give him/her a verbal warning after doing that the message spreads to others educators."

Principal A further explained that the school's own policy around late-coming had been drafted with the support and consensus of the educators. This made the situation even more untenable when the educators did not comply. He explained,

"The policy says, you ought to be at school 15minutes before the school start, and we drafted this policy together, therefore disciplinary measures ought to be reinforced if the policy is contravened."

As regards the learners, all the participants are aware of the fact that corporal punishment has been abolished and that it is a criminal offence to punish the children. This was, however, a matter of concern and some frustration. Seven principals indicated that most of the educators were frustrated by having to make use of alternatives to corporal punishment. They felt that it did not work effectively in township schools as learners did not heed alternatives to corporal punishment, such as demerits, disallowing the learners to take part in extra-curricular activities, and other measures. They simply did not regard these as serious forms of punishment. Participant B explained this situation as follows,

"Our kids in the township schools are very much influential, particularly those who are unruly. They don't feel the new methods of disciplining them work. So they enjoy it when you can say to them, 'Stay behind and do extra-work as punishment'. They will keep on doing the same mistakes. We need to acquire the skills or methods of former Model c schools whereby there are officers of disciplinary committees, not educators, because educators spend more time disciplining learners rather than teaching them. There is a lot of frustration in this. You have recently seen in the media a school boy beating a teacher with a broomstick…now what's that?"

The participants felt that the parents also needed to be involved in their children's discipline. Other issues mentioned were, namely children being left in the charge of their grandparents, and the problems with public transport. Principal C stated,

"Yes, when you speak about learners, it goes back to parents. Learners come late - parents sometimes leave their children alone when they go to work, but, all in all, most of the parents are the drop-outs. They don't see the importance of education. Other children stay with their grannies who are very old, they cannot wake up early to prepare the kids before they come to school. In some instances are the transports that make learners to come to school late. Parents play major roles here, and this has negative impact on discipline at school."

Despres (2008:164) indicates that schooling takes place in the context of complex social interactions within the school, and between the school, the parents and the community structures. As mentioned before (cf. 2.4.7; cf.3.6), social problems are endemic in townships, and problems with transport add to the problem of late-coming. In this regard the principals as instructional leaders need to engage the parents and the nearby community structures to maintain discipline for better education. This, however, requires special skills in which many of the principals who were interviewed require special training. The principals are also hindered by a lack of time and resources to engage other structures to address social problems which impact on discipline. However, one area that can be addressed by the Department of Education is alternative and positive methods of discipline. The results of the questionnaires completed by the principals (cf. 5.2.3) indicated that the schools complied with the

drawing up of Codes of Conduct for the educators and the learners. However, problems emerged during the interviews, namely that the problem lies in its implementation, also of policies that have been agreed upon by both parties.

5.4.2.6 Theme 6: Curriculum implementation

This theme explored the curriculum and its objectives with the aim of determining what the principal as instructional leader intends to reach, including the purposeful interaction between the learners and the information and skills they are intended to acquire (see section 2.4.3). In South Africa the principals have been faced with a series of curriculum changes, including the most recent CAPS curriculum which has a great impact on primary schooling (cf. 3.3). Properly organized instruction would create opportunities for effective teaching and learning which, of course, will improve the learners' achievement.

All the participants indicated that they encouraged their staff members to attend cluster meetings, and departmental workshops for their specific subject (learning area) for developmental purposes. Principal E, a principal of a performing school, shared his strategies to improve curriculum delivery. This included individual improvement plans, workshops directed at the curriculum, and the recognition of the educators' efforts through an informal school reward system. He indicated,

> *"Firstly, what we do is to come up with a developmental individual teacher plan. We identify the needs of individual educators, and discuss with the particular teacher to plan a developmental programme. We also encourage educators to attend the cluster meetings, attend the workshops that are run by GDE that includes policies and management. By attending these workshops, educators become more equipped with instructional knowledge and skills. In motivating the educators we usually issue certificates at the end of the year for those educators who highly contributed to the development of the school including learner performance."*

The participants also encouraged their staff members to upgrade their qualifications by means of continuing their studies at higher education institutions. The fact that (Table 5.12) nine of the

principals had university degrees and six of these had postgraduate qualifications also indicated their own commitment to improving their qualifications. The principals mentioned their passion for improving their own academic qualifications and encouraged their subordinates to do likewise. They also saw the need for the educators to become computer literate.

In illustration of this point Principal B remarked,

> *"We are encouraging all educators to be computer literate and upgrade their qualifications, although the pace is very slow because of age, most educators are above 50 years, however they are interested."*

In accordance with the White Paper on e-Education (DoE2004), the educators' ICT knowledge and skills should be developed in order to enhance the educational experiences of the learners in the implementation of the curriculum (cf.3.9.13).

In this regard the participants also noted that the implementation of the IQMS is of the utmost importance. The IQMS (Integrated Quality Management System) comprises three programmes, namely Developmental Appraisal (DA), Performance Measurement (PM) and Whole School Evaluation (WSE). Each of these programmes has a distinct focus and purpose. The purpose of Developmental Appraisal is to appraise individual educators in a transparent manner with a view to determine areas of strength and weakness and to draw up programmes for individual development. The purpose of Performance Measurement is to evaluate individual educators for salary progression, grade progression, affirmation of appointments and rewards and incentives. The purpose of Whole School Evaluation is to evaluate the overall effectiveness of a school, including the support provided by the District, school management, infrastructure and learning resources, as well as the quality of teaching and learning (DoE 2003). The principal should ensure that the IQMS is implemented throughout the year as required, in other words, it should be part of the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).

However, only two of the ten principals cited that they have held internal workshops in their schools to assist the educators who experience problems in their service delivery. Thus, this function is left to the

Department or other officials. Spaull (2012:81) argues that a powerful factor which impacts learner performance is teacher content knowledge (cf. 3.5.1).

The discussion above suggests that the principals are concerned about the instructional knowledge and skills of individual educators. The principals are committed to send the educators for developmental programmes that may assist them to deliver the curriculum adequately to the learners. As stated in section 2.4.5, staff development is a significant vehicle for school improvement. If the educational institutions are to improve, the principal as instructional leader should ensure that the individuals within the institution are developed. However, on the whole, they are not involved in providing such training themselves.

All the participants pointed out that the educators identified those learners who struggled with their academic work, especially in respect of reading and Mathematics. These educators then worked together with the School-based Support Team (SBST) to draw up a performance improvement plan for the particular learners, and involve them in remediation. An academic improvement plan was implemented and this was supplemented by extra classes attended by the identified learners. The Extra School Support Programme (ESSP) (cf. 3.9.5), that comprises of homework supervisors and sports supervisors initiated by Gauteng Department of Education, is of great help. The homework supervisors assist the learners in completing their homework, and the sports supervisors guide the learner in matters related to sports.

Principal C explained that they made use of this important external support (SBST, ESSP) and partnerships with NGOs. This kind of external supplementary support is important in no fee-paying schools where the parents lack the means to assist their children with additional and often expensive support. Principal C said,

> *"We have the SBST that has a role in identifying learners with learning barriers. Educators in partnership with SBST come up with developmental programme to involve learners who struggle academically; remedial strategies are involved. We also use the ESSP and include partnership with NGOs to assist."*

Principal H, principal of an underperforming school, confirmed the availability of external support to learners, and also reiterated that this made a difference in terms of learner achievement at his school. He said,

> *"With the learners, we have programmes at our disposal; the educators teach and make follow-ups to identify those learners that are not performing well academically. We also have time tables for educators who remain behind after school for an hour to assist learners in support to the ESSP. We also invite volunteers in the subjects like Mathematics, Technology and basic computer literate to assist our learners. Our learners are improving in terms of academic performance."*

5.4.3 Findings from the interviews with the IDSOs

The data are presented according to the following six themes, namely professional experiences as ISDOs, the school's shared vision, the principal's commitment, the principal's motivation, working conditions and curriculum delivery.

5.4.3.1 Theme 1: Professional experiences as IDSOs

This theme explored the professional experience the sample of IDSOs, as indicated in Table 5.13. During the interviews all the participants indicated that they had considerable practical experience which would allow them to advise principals. All had served as former principals at different institutions for a number of years before being promoted to their positions as IDSO. Their experience ranged from five (5) to 17 years. Participant A had a high level experience as the Chief of Inspectors in Namibia during the 1990s, and he also participated in the amalgamation of the former different Education Departments in Gauteng after the first democratic elections. All this points to his formidable experience in respect of the education system on a macro level.

When questioned about the highs and lows of their careers as IDSOs and as the cluster leaders of different schools, the participants made the following comments.

Participant (IA) was delighted to share his experience of positive and enthusiastic school principals with whom he worked:

> *"Mm … basically as the former principal of schools and being the cluster leader now being in charge of cluster of schools and with my job specifically to do with support of heads of schools which are the school principals, my greatest experience is that we have principals that are basically supportive and willing to develop, and working with them is not a problem."*

However, he also explained his disappointment when the schools failed to meet the standards during the ANAs, and were then classified as underperforming schools. He mentioned the poor primary school results in relation to the poor Grade 12 results, and explained that the principals did not implement development strategies as intended. He said,

> *"The worst moment is when schools do underperform, both primary and secondary. You will find the schools have underperformed in terms of Grade 12 result (secondary) and for primary schools in terms of ANA results and the quality of teaching being very, very low and curriculum management not properly done. Some of the principals are not actually implementing the development strategies adequately."*

Participant (IC) confirmed the findings obtained during the interviews with the principals. A major problem in providing quality education is the lack of collaboration between the SGBs and the principals. This conflict escalates to the educators and the core function of teaching and learning is then neglected. He said as follows,

> *"Mm … when I arrived in 2007 in August, in schools that are under my supervision there were number of challenges. The worst ones were the conflicts in schools between the principals and SGBs, and also the challenges on curriculum delivery and its implementation. I will indicate to you that the main issue here was the conflict between the principals and SGBs that also impact on service delivery. It*

depends on service delivery on the basis that the principal will go down to the educators and share whatever frustration or to ask for support to ever stand they have , then the conflict took the centre stage and they forgot about the core business; that is service delivery…either the principals or the SGBs were serving their own interest and forgot what service deliberation was all about."

The participants felt that the issue in respect of the SGBs should be addressed in the Department of Education workshops for principals, educators and SGB members for developmental purposes. Furthermore, subject advisors who visit the schools on a regular basis should monitor and give support to individual principals in this regard.

5.4.3.2 Theme 2: The school's shared vision

This theme explored the IDSOs perceptions of the extent to which the principals and the schools under their care developed a school vision and mission. The questionnaire results and the findings in the interviews with the principals indicated that this is an area of concern. It is important for the principals to involve other educators, the SMT and the SGB in the development of a school vision, and it is the responsibility of the IDSO to ensure that the schools have a shared school vision.

According to the participants, a principal who attempts to exercise instructional leadership without including other structures is bound to fail. For the educators, the SGB, the SMT and the general parent body to embrace, support and ensure that the school's vision is effectively implemented, the principal as instructional leader has to ensure that from the early stages the definition and development of the school's vision is done through the involvement of all the stakeholders.

All the participants indicated that the school principals are supported by the District Office during workshops to formulate a school's mission, vision and goals, and this is also carried out during meetings with the principals. The principals are also encouraged to contact their IDSO in respect of specific challenges negatively affecting their schools. The principals are expected to hold workshops to train the SGBs in connection with their duties and responsibilities at the schools. The workshops and meetings should be scheduled throughout the year as part of the development plan.

Participant (IB) explained the ideal role of the SGB in terms of the school's mission and vision as follows,

> *"My take is the development of the school vision and mission is the responsibility of the School Governing Body, with the principal participating as ex-officio. Therefore it would be unfortunate if the vision and mission of the school is the responsibility of the principal alone. The SGB has got representatives in different committees from different stakeholders; as such it is their duty not necessary for the principal to do everything."*

Participant (IC) confirmed that many of the principals are doing their work in this regard. Heemphasized the importance of collaboration by saying,

> *"There are principals who are willing and capable, and have competency, the bottom line is that for school to perform the principal should actually share the vision and mission of the school with his or her subordinates."*

However, most of the participants raised the issue of the principals' engagement with all the stakeholders in developing the school's vision. They felt that only about half of the school principals collaborate well with their SGBs in developing and implementing the school's vision and mission, and work smoothly in conjunction with the SGB. This issue was prominent in the findings of this research.

5.4.3.3 Theme 3: The principals' commitment

This theme explored the IDSOs perceptions of the extent to which the primary school principals as instructional leaders ensure that all the educators remain committed to their responsibilities. The word *commitment* is defined as 'willingness to give your time and attention to something because you believe it is important' (South African Oxford Student's Dictionary 2008:118). The challenges facing the primary schools to perform well were mentioned in the literature study (see section 2.4.1.2). If the educators have high morals and are committed to teach, this would create a positive school climate, but

when the educators are not committed to the task of teaching and are not motivated, this would lead to a negative or a closed-school climate (Van Deventer & Kruger 2003:12).

During the interviews, all the participants saw the principal as the key player in the institution.

Participant (IB) commented on the dominant role of the principal in school effectiveness. He said,

> *"What one had actually observed is that principals are keys in the institutions, because they are able to identify problems. However, educators in the classrooms do experience challenges that need to address by the principals. Principals according to my observation are providing support to the educators, especially when coming to teaching materials."*

Participant (IE) shared his feeling, namely that the principals are hamstrung by their subordinates who do not fulfil their duties. According to him,

> *"I'm to be honest in my cluster the principal I'm dealing with, specifically primary school principals are performing. But there are challenges, I can actually put my head on the block that they are let down by their sub-ordinates…principals are complying, are taking instructions, they are willing and …ja… they are actually compliant."*

Likewise, participant (ID) mentioned the principal's reliance on the support from the SMT and the educators to do his task properly. Where this commitment is lacking, the principal's effectiveness suffers.

> *I think principals, both primary and secondary schools, are managers of institutions, of the schools. And as managers, they are responsible for professional matters, the day to day operation of the school. And for that to happen effectively, it will always be the principal and SMT who are actually the executives of the school. They are the ones who must give the direction, and it is the responsibility of the principal to*

support the SMT, and it is the responsibility of the SMT to support educators. If there are gaps in those structures, the out-put will not be there.

The discussions above suggest that most of the principals are committed to their duties. However, the principal should be in the position to support his subordinates, namely the Deputy Principal, the HODs and the educators, by seeking to provide whatever resources are needed in the school for enhancing the school's performance. However, this is not easy in no fee-paying schools with parents who are not able to contribute financially, even if the principals are committed to the improvement of the school.

5.4.3.4 Theme 4: The principals' motivation

This theme explored the perceptions of IDSOs on the extent to which primary school principals stay motivated and encouraged in whatever they are doing in their schools with the intention of the improvement of the school's performance. A school cannot achieve its objectives if its principal is discouraged. The principal as the instructional leader is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that his/her subordinates perform to the best of their abilities. The performance of educators hinges around their level of motivation (cf. 2.4.5.1).

During the interviews it was seen that two of the participants were convinced that in most cases the primary school principals remained consistently motivated in the face of many problems.

Participant (IA) stressed the strength of the motivation of the principals, and his own role in encouraging this motivation. He mentioned,

> *"Mmm...I understand that motivation is extrinsic and intrinsic. Those who do well in my cluster I tell them that their work is well or I do encourage them, which is extrinsic motivation. In most cases primary school principals who are managing in my cluster are intrinsically motivated because they are doing well themselves."*

Participant (IE) also commended the principals in his cluster. He felt that the ANA was a new development and that it alone was not the yardstick to measure motivation. He mentioned,

> *"The principals in my cluster are doing well, it might be one or two who may let me down but majority of them, let me say more than three quarter of them are doing their job as expected. We normally judge their performance through the performance of school and the external appearance of the school, but you will remember that the yard stick of their performance (ANA) has just been introduced some few years ago, it may not yet been reliable, but generally they are doing well."*

However, the other IDSOs felt that the benchmarking of the ANA gave a more objective picture of the primary schools' poor progress. They agreed that overwhelmingly negative contextual factors affected the principal's morale and caused discouragement.

Participant (IB) felt that the results of the ANA could not be dismissed, and it provided a true picture of what was happening in the school. His words were,

> *"Eish….it was difficult to determine if primary school principals are performing well because previously primary schools did not have a yard stick to measure their performance or has never been tested as compared to high schools which are determined by matric results, but after the introduction of ANA I think it has revealed a number of shortcomings and challenges in relation to what primary schools are facing, before the introduction of ANA it was very, very difficult but not impossible but very difficult to state the effectiveness of primary school principals."*

Participant (ID) acknowledged the poor morale of some principals, and felt that factors which contributed to discouragement should be identified and addressed. He said,

> *"I will say …eish…there can be a number of factors, but the principal must have the intrinsic motivation himself: you must have a goal to achieve, not for himself but for the school. You know you must be able to assess the level of your performance before the District can come and assess you. But when the principals are discouraged, there must be the factors to say what make them to be discouraged"*

Likewise, participant (IC) also felt that the principals often became discouraged due to discipline problems, and they required the support of the District. This issue could not be ignored. He said,

> *"There are many ways that make the principals to be less motivated, for example, the principal struggles with a teacher, based on performance. The principal hands over the matter to the District to assist, because in terms of ability and responsibility he had exhausted his responsibilities. Therefore, the District is there to support the*

principal. You know if the principals don't get assistance, there will be problems one way or the other; they will be undermined by their subordinates. This support is very, very important. We need to assist principals in terms of discipline in schools, so if that does not happen, let me tell you, we will have a serious problem".

The principals as managers should exhibit strong intrinsic motivation to fulfil their duties, but many fail in this area. It would appear that their motivation is eroded by continuous problems, such as those mentioned in the principals' interviews, namely poor infrastructure and lack of resources, conflict with the SGBs, and the lack of educator and learner compliance with the Codes of Conduct.

The discussion above suggests that the IDSOs have a role to play in providing extrinsic motivation to the principals in order for them to remain focused. The quality of leadership and management determines the success or failure of a school; as such the school principal has to be both a leader and a manager, one who is motivated (cf. 2.2.1).

5.4.3.5 Theme5: Working conditions

This theme explored the IDSOs perceptions of the working environment in the rural and township primary schools. The roles of the primary school principals as instructional leaders are also considered to ensure that educators are satisfied in their working environment. There are many features that contribute towards the dissatisfaction of the principal as well as the educators (see section 2.4). During the interviews the participants reflected on various matters relating to job dissatisfaction.

Participant (IB) highlighted the role of contextual factors in this regard. The lack of essential resources (cf. 5.2.2 and 5.2.3) has been confirmed in the principals' questionnaire results and the interviews with them. It was indicated that,

"Contextual factors are the problems in the township schools. Township school principals are trying their level best, but if all stakeholders do not support them, then is a problem. Parents are not supportive in this regard; however, the District is trying. We cannot compare city schools with township schools, township schools are

still lacking behind in terms of infrastructure, IT (Information Technology) and e-learning activities are still the problem to be implemented in the township primary schools."

Participant (IC) explained that the backlog with regard to resourcing of the no fee-paying schools was enormous. He said,

"The District is trying to give the resources but the gap is too wide to close. Remember parents are not paying school fees, and SGB cannot raise fund, whereas private companies are not willing to channel their monies to township schools because of high levels of crime, some of the donated resources are stolen over-night after been delivered. The Department of Education keeps on handing over resources to schools and is busy renovating some schools."

Participant (IE) also indicated the principals' dependence on the regulations of the Department of Education in terms of procuring additional resources to bolster the schools' learning environments. He mentioned,

"Yah… you know principals have limited control over that, because it depends on whether the school is Section 21 or non-Section 21. The fund that is received from Department of Education is usually ring fenced, you don't procure what you necessary need but you buy according to the prescription of Department of Education, that is why I indicated that principal have limited control in terms of school facilities and infrastructure."

Participant (ID) highlighted the importance of cooperation between the principal and the different management structures in the school. In this regard policies are essential to guide the relationships. According to him,

"The support that principal provides to the SMT will be the kind of support that the HODs actually render to the post level 1 educators. Principal must ensure that he

monitors the operation of the HODs and the HODs must on the other hand monitor the operation of the post level 1 educators. The principal must make sure that every department has departmental policy that guides the operation of the particular department. In this way, learning and teaching will continue in the school; however effective teaching and learning is another matter."

These findings indicate that the IDSOs agree that the principals of the primary schools in their District are working in difficult circumstances, and that internal and external factors often militate against their success as instructional leaders.

5.4.3.6 Theme 6:Curriculum delivery

This theme explored the IDSOs' perceptions of the performance of the primary schools in their Districts in relation to the learners' academic achievement in Mathematics and Languages (see section 3.2.2). Spaull (2012:34) indicates that the vast majority of South African primary school learners are significantly below where they should be in reference to the curriculum, and more generally, have not reached a host of normal literacy and numeracy milestones.

Participant (IA) shared his deep concerns concerning the general output of the primary schools in terms of academic learner achievements based on the ANA results of the previous years. His view was that the historical legacy of apartheid and pressing contextual factors outweigh any lack, rather than a lack in instructional leadership per se. He mentioned,

"It is definitely, not satisfactory. Eish…we look at analysis specifically from township schools, there is much to be done, in Mathematics and Languages and I'm tempted to blame our education system based on our history. If you look at ANA, township schools use the same yard stick that is used by the inner city schools with well infrastructure and well-resourced schools. There are quite a number of contextual factors in township schools which negatively affect the performance of learners, socioeconomic status, child headed families, etc. It will take some time to improve the level of performance in township schools."

According to participant (IA), it is unfair of the Department of Education to use the same yardstick (benchmark) for measuring the performance of primary schools in the township schools and the former Model C schools when the gap in provisioning has not been closed. It is further stipulated that when looking at learner performance in South Africa, there is a mere minority of learners (roughly 20%) who attend functional schools (formally Model C schools) and perform acceptably in the local and international tests, while the majority of the learners (roughly 80%) perform extremely poorly (cf. 3.7.3) in these tests.

Likewise, participant (IB) had mixed feelings about the role of the ANA in measuring the performance of the schools and thus, indirectly, the performance of the principals as instructional leaders. However, the ANA is a necessary caution that things are not going well. According to him,

> *"I think ANA yields a number of shortcoming, from its inception until now learners are not improving in the rate that it should be. Numbers of schools are not doing well in ANA, especially in Grade 3 and 6 in Mathematics and Languages* (see section 3.8.3*). However ANA is a wake-up call for us, after every ANA results, institutions are expected to put together their own academic improvement plans based on the results of ANA."*

Similarly, participant (ID) had a cautionary remark regarding the ANA, as follows,

> *"I am not sure to what extent does ANA able to detect the level of learner education at a particular time, but I only believe that it only guides. It is difficult to say how far primary schools do their work in terms of curriculum and to what extent, do they really do the work."*

Participants (IA), (IB) and (ID) felt that the ANA was introduced without thorough planning. They also felt that the Department of Education should give urgent attention to contextual factors that are negatively affecting the performance of both the rural and the township schools, before considering the ANA as the benchmark across the board. However, in spite of these misgivings about the limitations of

the ANA endeavour, all five participants indicated that the performance of the primary schools in the rural and townships in the Tshwane South District as indicated by the ANA results obtained in the previous years should be improved. This was a challenge in which they shared the responsibility as officials in a position of guiding the school principals under their jurisdiction.

5.5 CONCLUSIONS ON PHASES 1 AND 2

Chapter 5 presented the data obtained from the findings of Phase 1 (questionnaires) and Phase 2 (interviews) of the sequential mixed method inquiry. Both Phase 1 and Phase 2 dealt with the role of the principal as instructional leader as reported by selected principals of primary schools and selected IDSOs in the Tshwane South District.

The last chapter (Chapter 6) summarizes the study, provides the key findings of the literature and the empirical inquiry and makes recommendations for the improvement of practice.

CHAPTER 6
SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH, FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this concluding chapter (chapter 6) I focus on a summary of the literature study and the empirical investigation in the light of the problem formulation and aims. I reiterate key findings and make recommendations for the improvement of practice. I propose areas for future research, note the limitations of the study, and outline final conclusions.

At the beginning of this study I formulated the research problem and highlighted the aims of the study. The main research question was: *What is the role of the principal as instructional leader in improving learner achievement in primary schools in South Africa?* This research question was sub-divided into sub-questions that were specific and assisted in guiding the entire research so that it was focused and intentional. The main aim of the study was to explore the role of the principal as instructional leader in improving learning achievement in primary schools in South Africa. The discussion stressed the role of the principal as instructional leader in determining excellence in terms of learner achievement. I also stipulated the objectives of the study, which among others, were to determine the contextual factors which shape primary school learner achievement with reference to rural and township communities in South Africa, and to make recommendations for the improvement of practice based on the findings of the literature and the empirical inquiry (cf.1.3). I made use of a sequential mixed method as research method, informed by a literature review.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE RESEARCH IN THE LIGHT OF THE AIMS OF THE STUDY

According to the aims of the study formulated in 1.3, Chapter 2 set out to identify and explain the theoretical perspectives that inform the instructional role of the school principal, the features of instructional leadership that impact on learner achievement and selected models of instructional leadership.

I found it appropriate to define the concept of *leadership* as it laid the foundation for the research and made it easy to understand the notion of instructional leadership. In section 2.2 it was mentioned that the Department of Education (2008:18) maintains that *leadership* is the ability to influence people towards the achievement of goals; it is conceptualized as a process of influence that depends on a person's behaviour being recognized, and at least tacitly acknowledged to be a 'leader' by others who thereby cast themselves into the role of followers, thus consenting to be led. It was also indicated in section 2.3 that Wing's (2013) overview illustrates the multifunctional and demanding role of the principal as manager and as leader. Furthermore, Gumus and Akcaoglu (2013:290) indicated that principals are instructional leaders whose primary aim is improving the learning environments and teaching practices in their schools. In the literature study (section 2.2) it was emphasized that the principal as instructional leader is at the heart of the effort as the visionary, organizer, cheerleader and evaluator. Girvin (2005:10) also emphasized that as the instructional leader of the school, the principal has an obligation of developing and promoting the school's goal and objectives in order to enhance the learners' achievement.

In section 2.4 the important aspects of school functioning which determine the success of teaching and learning in the school and hence affect learner achievement directly or indirectly were mentioned and discussed in detail. Those features are, namely school climate, classroom climate, instructional programmes, managing different types of resources and community and parent involvement. The principal as instructional leader should manage these aspects appropriately and efficiently. In section 2.5 I presented and discussed in detailseven models (Sebastian & Allenworth 2012; Supovitz et al. 2009; Tienken 2010; Carrier 2014; Hallinger & Murphy 1986; Murphy 1990; Weber 1996) of instructional leadership. These comprehensive models were selected due to the contribution they make to understanding instructional leadership and its direct or indirect influence on learner achievement. Neider and Schriesheim (2002:221) mention that a model of instructional leadership embodies an empirical paradigm that considers the leader's and the group's interface results in organizational outcomes. This model assumes that leadership occurs in a social setting.

According to the aims of the study formulated in 1.3, Chapter 3 examined the contextual and school factors which shape primary school learner achievement with special reference to rural and township communities, the findings of international and national assessments of primary school learner

performance and the initiatives taken by the Department of Basic Education and other bodies to improve the schools.

In terms of the contextual factors, Spaull (2012:40) maintains that South Africa's schooling system is a by-product or reflection of the country's inherent socioeconomic inequalities. It was indicated that five types of inequalities are found throughout the country, namely racial, social, spatial, economic and linguistic. All these inequalities filter through to the education system and hinder the learners' optimal achievement. The geographical location of the schools that the learners attend has a significant impact on their achievement; learners in urban areas enjoy more advantages than learners in the township and rural areas. Jantjies and Joy (2012:1) argue that the legacy of the past education system in South Africa has led to problems that affect the current education system in a way whereby the resources that are considered as basic in the schools are still absent elsewhere in many township and rural schools. These include adequate classrooms, libraries, computer and science laboratories and adequately-skilled educators. Subject to the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (ss. 34) (RSA 1996) it is the responsibility of the state to fund public schools from public revenue on an equitable basis in order to ensure the proper exercise of the rights of learners to education and to redress the inequalities of the past in the provision of education. Public schools are funded, based on the following two cost-allocation categories, namely capital cost allocations - these include allocations for new classrooms and other buildings - and recurrent cost allocations. According to Chisholm (2012:94), three major curriculum reform initiatives have been launched since 1994 which have placed enormous pressure on the schooling system. I indicated how the school curriculum was replaced in 1997 with the Outcomes-based Curriculum 2005, based on constructivist rather than prescriptive principles. Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was launched in March 1997, with implementation in Grade 1 scheduled for 1998 and Grade 7 in 1999. C2005 was intended to be phased in progressively so that it would cover all sectors of schooling by 2005. However, the educators perceived the Outcomes-based Education (OBE) approach to education as more problematic than initially envisaged by the policymakers. These perceptions led to the implementation of RNCS in 2008 after a review was done of C2005 (Mouton et al. 2012:15). However, there were shortcomings associated with its implementation that provide important contexts for the current review process. There were challenges in the RNCS to produce the NCS, namely uncertainty and confusion in the system, and criticism of the delivery and implementation of the curriculum.

The instructional time and timetable for primary schools were discussed in section 3.3.1: the instructional time for Grades R, 1 and 2 was indicated as 23 hours and for Grade 3 it was 25 hours. The instructional time allocated in the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6) and the Senior Phase (Grade 7) was indicated as 27.5 hours. In Chapter 3 I also emphasized the effect of language policy and practice in primary schooling and its impact on learner achievement, also alluded to in several other instances in this research study. The RNCS (DoE 2002) clarified the LiEP (Language in Education Policy) by stipulating that all the learners should study their HL and at least one additional language as language subjects from Grade 1, and should complete the study of an African language for a minimum of three years by the end of their 12th year of schooling. This has been reaffirmed by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) (DBE 2012). It was furthermore indicated that a learner's socioeconomic status plays a major role in educational outcomes at primary school level in South Africa (see section 3.4.1). In this regard, the rural and township communities are associated with being poor communities in terms of their educational socioeconomic status (SES). According to Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006:93), *socio-economic status* (SES) refers to stratification that can be measured by factors such as economic status, family background, and job prestige. A broader term is *social class*, which involves large categories of people of similar SES who have in common such attributes as cultural identification, lifestyle and attitudes. SES is strongly correlated with academic success.

In section 3.4.2 I discussed the compulsory school attendance of learners. Subject to the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (section 3) (RSA 1996b), every parent must see to it that every learner for whom he or she is responsible to attend a school from the first school day of the year in which such a learner reaches the age of seven years until the last school day of the year in which such a learner reaches the age of fifteen years or the ninth grade, whichever occurs first. If a learner who is subject to compulsory attendance in terms of the Act is not enrolled at or fails to attend a school, the Head of Department may take the necessary steps to remedy the situation. According to the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (section 5) (RSA 1996b), a public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating against them in any way. The governing body of a public school may not administer any test related to the admission of a learner to a public

school or direct or authorize the principal of the school or any other person to administer such test. It was also highlighted that no learner may be refused admission to a public school.

I furthermore discussed the teacher's content knowledge in relation to the learners' performance in section 3.5.1. In this respect Spaull (2012:81) argues that a powerful factor which impacts learner performance is the teacher's content knowledge. The educators cannot teach what they do not know. Taole and Mncube (2012:154) argue that an environment that is conducive to effective learning and free of disruptive behaviour can only be achieved if the educator is adequately qualified and has a repertoire of classroom management skills. Preliminary analyses of the teacher's content knowledge in the essential subjects of Language and Mathematics show alarming results in respect of the primary school educators in the country. In addition, Spaull's study (2012:24) found that Grade Six Mathematics educators do not possess the requisite levels of Mathematics content knowledge. Lam et al. (2011:122) indicate that South Africa's schools have large systemic problems and struggle to meet their educational mandates in the three core functions of teaching, learning and management. It was also established that high teacher absenteeism is a grave concern, especially in more poorly resourced schools. According to Spaull (2012:80), educators are essential to the learning process. Thus it is logical to suspect that higher rates of teacher absenteeism are associated with lower learner performance. In section 3.6 the involvement of the parents was discussed as one component that may assist in discipline at school because discipline is another important area in which parental cooperation is typical. Significantly, parental involvement is considered important for supporting the learners outside the school with norms and values which are very useful in the school environment. Education should be seen as societal matter, and thus the parents, including all other stakeholders with an interest in education, should be involved in the education of learners. According to the Parent Support Programme, which is in line with Department's mandate of capacitating the parents and families as the main pillars of support for the schooling of their children, a parental guideline was designed to assist the parents in accessing the support services that the Department offers (Gauteng Department of Education 2012).

In terms of the performance of South Africa's primary school learners, Van der Berg (2008:146) discovered that their participation in international evaluation studies since the political transition indicates that their educational performance that was measured was extremely poor and that the

systematic difference between schools serving different parts of the population remains exceedingly large. I used tables and figures to make the information on performance more understandable. It was also indicated in section 3.7.1 that PIRLS (2011) tested learners in 49 countries. In South Africa the assessment focused on two purposes of reading: reading for literary experience and reading to acquire and use information and assessed reading literacy at Grade 4 level in the eleven official languages and at Grade 5 level in Afrikaans or English. At both levels the children achieved well below the International Centre Point. Both the PIRLS and SACMEQ studies identified that the factors contributing to poor performance included poor literacy resources in the homes and schools and the large classes. With reference to the learner-teacher ratio, I mentioned in section 3.7.3 that in the schools catering for black learners an average primary class size is based on a 40:1 learner-teacher ratio. This ratio is only applicable to the public rural and township primary schools, as they are generally unable to raise funds to hire additional educators to reduce the ratio from 40:1 to 35:1 or less (Gauteng Department of Education 2012: 45). Overcrowding has a negative impact on learner performance. It was also stipulated in the 2003 Systemic Evaluation of 54 000 Grade 3 learners that indicated serious shortcomings in education quality. According to the 2005 Intermediate Phase Systemic Evaluation Report, less than 50% of the Grade 6 learners were achieving the expected learning outcomes in Natural Sciences, 40% in the Language of learning (mainly English) and 20% in Mathematics (Department of Education 2005:75). In all the subjects the average scores were significantly higher for learners attending urban schools than for those attending rural schools. Since 2011, Annual National Assessments (ANA) have been carried out annually by the Department of Basic Education [DBE] (2011; 2012; 2013; 2014) to test the literacy and numeracy of primary school learners. The ANA endeavour is focused on the performance of learners from Grades 1-6, and Grade 9 is the latest in a series of initiatives by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) which is aimed at measuring the learners' performance and in identifying areas for improvement. An overall performance in the ANA in 2014 showed an upward trend in performance in all the Grades. In support of the ANA statistical report, I made use of Table 3.7, which suggests that there is a remarkable increase in the average percentages in the Foundation Phase (Grades 1-3) ranging from 56 (2013) to 60 (2014) in Home Language and in Mathematics from 57(2013) to 62 (2014). In the Senior Phase it ranged from 43(2013) to 48(2014) in Home Language, and in Mathematics it decreased from 46(2013) to 45(2014). All in all, the results of the ANA 2014 showed that the educators as well as the learners

prepared well in advance by using the previous ANA questions and other effective methods to improve their performance.

In section 3.9 I mentioned the initiatives undertaken by the Department of Basic Education and the Gauteng Department of Education to improve the schools. These include the Education Sector Plan, Action to 2014: Towards the Realization of Schooling 2025, and they were discussed in detail. I indicated that the government's latest strategy for turning education around is known as "Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025", which aims to improve the learners' learning and the work of educators. I further highlighted that, according to the DBE (2011:27) clear goals and flexible strategies of the Action Plan to 2014 explained the 27 national goals. The 13 goals to be achieved related to learning and enrolment in schools, and the 14 goals dealt with the things that had to happen for the output goals to be realized to make schooling better. I also noted that the Extra School Support Programme (ESSP) is one of the programmes introduced by Gauteng Department of Education in the endeavour to improve the quality of learning and teaching in primary schools, particularly in the area of homework. In addition, the Department implemented a number of poverty-combating measures, one of which is through the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) (DoE 2005). The National School Nutrition Programme aims at promoting punctuality amongst the learners, and alleviates short-term hunger, with the view to improving concentration and contributing to the general health and development of needy learners. The Early Childhood Development (ECD) strategy was also included to ensure that diverse services are experienced at ground level as an integrated package of comprehensive efficiently-delivered support. This strategy includes services related to education, social development, health and nutrition, sports, the arts, recreation and culture, and community safety. In section 3.9.6(Chapter 3), the Gauteng Department of Education (2008) at District level continued planning programmes for developing the educators (Teacher in-service training).The programme is offered by trained subject specialists in particular subjects. At the beginning of each year the District offers "road shows" which introduce the educators to the planning of schemes of work, lesson plans, learner assessments, record sheets and some techniques of lesson presentations. In section 3.9.8 (Chapter 3) it was mentioned that the public schools were trained on the South African Schools Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS). This system aims to provide for the required learner data in the schools and is used as a component of the national learner tracking system (Gauteng Department of Education 2012:112). Furthermore, the importance that the Department of Basic

Education places on ICT and e-Education is reflected in the Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realization of Schooling 2025 (cf. par 3.9.1). The role of ICT in education cannot be overemphasized in the quest for quality teaching and learning for all educators and learners. Lastly, in section 3.9.13 I referred to the Gauteng Online Programme as a provincial government programme aimed at improving internet access in schools (Gauteng Department of Education 2004:11).

6.3 SUMMARY OF THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION IN THE LIGHT OF THE AIMS OF THE STUDY

According to the aims of the study formulated in 1.3, Chapter 4 and 5 were devoted to an empirical investigation into the instructional role of the principal in selected primary schools in Gauteng Province.

Chapter 4 provided a detailed explanation of the research design used: a sequential mixed method comprising a quantitative phase (Phase 1) and a qualitative phase (Phase 2). During the first phase the quantitative data was collected, analyzed and interpreted, followed by the second, qualitative phase which added depth and richness to the study.

In chapter 5 I presented the data obtained from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the sequential mixed method inquiry. In the first phase in the principals' questionnaire it was indicated in Table 5.1 that just over half of the respondents (52.6%) were males while the remainder (47.4%) were females. It was also indicated that the ages of most of the principals were between 41 and 50 years (45.6%) or between 51 and 60 years (40.4%).Most of the principals (61.42%, combined score) had more than 20 years' experience in the teaching profession. Furthermore a substantial percentage (33.3%) had more than ten years experience in the teaching profession.It was deduced that most of the respondents held adequate qualifications, and a substantial percentage (54.4%, combined score) held a postgraduate qualification. In terms of the type of schools, more than two thirds (68.4%) of the primary schools headed by the principals were Section 21 schools (schools allocated with finance by the Gauteng Department of Education to purchase resources) (see section 3.2.5). Almost a third (31.6%) were non-section 21 schools (schools that receive a paper allocation of funds by the Gauteng Department of Education;

procurement is done by the Department on their behalf). Thus it was deduced that most of the primary schools headed by the principals in the sample were formerly disadvantaged schools with a developmental backlog due to the apartheid legacy. Formerly disadvantaged schools serving a learner body from a low socioeconomic group are more likely to underperform than well-resourced schools situated in middle-income suburban areas. One of the factors that negatively affect learner performance is overcrowding in the classrooms. A third of the schools had a ratio of 40+:1 which has implications for performance of the learners.

In terms of academic programmes, it was indicated in table 5.4 that 82.1% of the principals (31.6% + 50.9%) agreed that the schools have effective academic programmes. However, only 68.4% of the principals (7.0% + 61.4%) agreed that what was planned was successfully implemented (mean value of 2.3). Thus, as in the case of planning the implementation, there was less certainty about the success of the implementation. The same applies to the participation of all the role-players in policy development. This is an area of concern, because not all the stakeholders are involved, particularly the SGBs. In maintaining discipline in the schools, the majority of the principals agreed that a learner Code of Conduct and an educator Code of Conduct were in place (87.7% and 91.2%, respective combined scores) and were successfully implemented as part of the school policies.

With regard to resources, it is indicated in Table 5.2 that most schools (96.5%) had e-learning facilities. According to Section 3.9.13 the Gauteng Department of Education (2004:11) initiated the Gauteng Online Programme. In Table 5.2 it is indicated that only one third of schools (31.6%) have science laboratories. This is a serious lack in the delivery of effective science education. In respect of teaching and learning resources, most principals (combined score, 80.7%) still considered textbooks as fundamental to teaching and learning. It was indicated that only a small number of schools focused on the incorporation of multimedia in teaching and learning. It was indicated in table 5.5 that 42.1% of the principals disagreed on the issue of multimedia, and 22.8% were undecided (mean value of 3.04). This result reflects the conditions in poorly resourced township schools (cf. 3.4.1) which lack additional funding to purchase multimedia items to upgrade their teaching and learning. Only 28.1% of the respondents classified their schools as performing schools. This finding correlates with the location of the school and its fee-paying status. Formerly disadvantaged schools serving a learner body from a low

socioeconomic group are more likely to underperform than well-resourced schools situated in middle-income suburban areas.

I mentioned in section 5.2.4 that the implementation of English as LoLT and the hesitancy around the use of Home Language as the complementary language medium in classroom instruction reflects the common linguistic practice in South African schools. Many black parents view Home Language instruction and maintenance as unnecessary. The black elite and middle-class prefer to enroll their children in independent or in public schools (so-called ex-model C schools) where English language learning is supported by rich material resources and a qualified, English-proficient teaching corps (Lemmer 2010) (cf. 3.3.2). With regard to assessments and learner progress reports, it was noted that the principals fulfil their role as instructional leaders, namely that the assessment activities are conducted consistently and fairly and that there is clear communication between the school and home regarding the learners' academic progress. The overall results presented in Table 5.6 suggest that the principals as instructional leaders have succeeded in creating and maintaining an orderly and disciplined school environment based on appropriate Codes of Conduct for the learners and the educators. However, significant problems exist in nearly half of the schools regarding late-coming and teacher and learner absenteeism. These results indicated areas of obvious concern which have to be dealt with by the principals as instructional leaders if they are to fulfil their mandate.

In terms of the IDSOs questionnaire, most of the IDSO respondents (5) were male; three (3) were female. The majority of the respondents (7) fell in the age range from 41-50 years, and all of the respondents had postgraduate qualifications. This result, together with the length of professional experience, confirms the adequacy of the ISDOs' competence to act as officials in an advisory capacity to the principals in the primary schools in the Tshwane South District. It was found that most of the IDSO respondents (6) were responsible for both section 21 and non-section 21 schools. Furthermore, most of them (6) were primarily responsible for performing schools, and only two (2) were responsible for under-performing schools. In the discussion it was indicated that most of the schools had appropriate policies and procedures in place, but its implementation was another issue. A range of opinions was highlighted regarding teaching methods that were due to the introduction of several curriculum reform efforts in primary schools during the past 20 years which required from the officials to constantly change their approaches.

In the second phase, it was indicated in Table 5.12 that each of the five Circuits in the Tshwane South District was represented by at least one principal during the interviews. The participants reflected a range of experiences as principals from two to 14 years. Of the ten primary schools headed by the principals, five were ranked as under-performing and five were ranked as performing for the academic year 2013, according to the ANA for 2013 (cf.3.8.3.1). All the participants headed no fee-paying public primary schools(cf.3.2.3).In 2006 The Department of Education amended the National Norms and Standards for school funding, thereby lifting the legal obligation for parents in low income communities to pay school fees for their children (Chisholm 2012:92). The interview data gathered during the interviews with principals were presented according to the following six themes, namely managerial experience, school infrastructure, participative planning, tuition and learning strategies, teacher conduct and learner discipline, and curriculum implementation.

6.3.1 Managerial experience

Most of the participants explained that their present experience as principal had, in all cases, been preceded by valuable managerial experience obtained during their career progression. The finding indicated the importance of the participants' continually upgrading their leadership and managerial skills as well as obtaining further academic qualifications. The participants remarked on the difficulties encountered in schools where the principal assumed a heavy teaching load as well as managerial duties. No fee-paying schools had no extra funds to appoint additional educators to reduce the principal's teaching time. In such cases time management skills and the appropriate delegation of tasks were important.

6.3.2 School infrastructure

The nature of the physical environment and the availability of facilities and equipment are essential building blocks in establishing a sound culture of learning and teaching at school (Van Deventer & Kruger 2003:7). Effective instructional leadership is significantly influenced by external conditions and principals in disadvantaged environments face greater challenges in this aspect of their task as leaders. It was indicated that the buildings of six out of ten schools were very old. Four schools were recently built by the Gauteng Department of Education, well-maintained by school management and were attractive and intact. Of the six older schools, four had been recently renovated and painted and showed care by the school management. The remaining two schools have been partly renovated (only the Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase blocks) but the older parts were neglected and dilapidated (Senior Phase blocks). The walls were cracked, with peeling paint, the cement floors were cracked with worn-out tiles. In those blocks proper learning and teaching was affected. However, due to a lack of funds, the learners and educators had to continue to make use of those classrooms. Some window panes were broken and several doors were without handles and locks.

6.3.3 Participative planning

Most of the participants found that it was difficult to plan and equally share their planning responsibilities and activities with all the relevant stakeholders. Without the support of the SGB,

principals are severely hampered in their role as instructional leaders. The participants felt that the main cause of conflict between the SMT and the SGB was insufficient insight into and knowledge of the distinctive duties and responsibilities of the school manager and the school governor.

6.3.4 Tuition and learning strategies

All ten primary school principals confirmed that the planning of curricular activities is done in conjunction with the HODs. They also agreed that these activities ran smoothly in their schools. The procedure common to all the schools was as follows, namely the HODs hold meetings with the teaching staff according to the Phases of the primary school. The teaching time tables (cf. 3.3.1) are correctly followed. The HODs check, monitor and control the subject files (learning areas) of the educators on a regular basis, including the informal and formal assessments of learners. The learners' results are diagnosed and analyzed on a quarterly basis.

6.3.5 Teacher conduct and learner discipline

It is the responsibility of the school management team to maintain acceptable discipline in order to run the school properly. A disciplined school where the educators and learners comply with their respective Codes of Conduct will produce good academic results (cf. 2.4.2.3; 3.6). Despres (2008:164) indicates that schooling takes place in the context of complex social interactions within the school and between the school and parents and community structures. As mentioned before (cf. 2.4.7; cf.3.6), social problems are endemic in the townships, and problems with transport add to the issue of late-coming. In this regard the principals as instructional leaders need to engage the parents and the nearby community structures to maintain discipline for better education. This however, requires special skills in which many of the principals interviewed require special training. The principals are also hindered by a lack of time and resources to engage other structures to address social problems which impact on discipline. However, one area that can be addressed by the Department of Education is alternative and positive methods of discipline.

6.3.6 Curriculum implementation

In the discussion it was discovered that South Africa's principals have been faced with a series of curriculum changes, including the most recent CAPS curriculum which has a great impact on primary schooling (cf. 3.3). Furthermore, it was indicated that properly organized instruction would create opportunities for effective teaching and learning which of course, would improve learner achievement. Most of the principals were concerned about the instructional knowledge and skills of individual educators. The principals are committed to send the educators on developmental programmes that may assist them to deliver the curriculum adequately to the learners. As stated in section 2.4.5, staff development is a significant vehicle for school improvement. If educational institutions are to improve, the principal as instructional leader should ensure that the individual within the institution is developed.

In the interviews with the IDSO the data were presented according to the following six themes, namely their professional experience as IDSOs, the schools' shared vision, the principals' commitment, the principals' motivation, working conditions and curriculum delivery.

6.3.7 Professional experience as IDSOs

The entire IDSO sample had served as former principals of different institutions for a number of years before being promoted to their IDSO positions. Their experience ranged from five to 17 years, and they possessed post-graduate degrees, and one had a doctoral degree.

6.3.8 The school's shared vision

Most of the participants raised the issue of the principals' engagement with all the stakeholders in developing the school's vision. They felt that only about half of the school principals collaborate well with their SGBs in developing and implementing the school's vision and mission, and work smoothly in conjunction with their SGBs.

6.3.9 The principals' commitment

Challenges facing the primary schools to perform well were mentioned in the literature study (see section 2.4.1.2). It was mentioned that if the educators have high morals and are committed to teaching, this could create a positive school climate, but when the educators are not committed to the task of teaching and are not motivated, this would lead to a negative or closed-school climate (Van Deventer & Kruger 2003:12). In the discussions it was indicated that most of the principals were committed to their duties.

6.3.10 The principals' motivation

The principals as managers should exhibit strong intrinsic motivation to fulfill their duties, but many fail in this area. It would appear that their motivation was eroded by continuous problems, such as those mentioned in the interviews with the principals, namely poor infrastructure and the lack of resources, conflict with the SGBs and the lack of educator and learner compliance with the Codes of Conduct.

6.3.11 Working conditions

Many issues contribute towards the dissatisfaction of the principals as well as the educators (see section 2.4). The findings indicated that the IDSOs agreed that the principals of the primary schools in their district are working under difficult circumstances, and that internal and external factors often militate against their success as instructional leaders.

6.3.12 Curriculum delivery

Spaull (2012:34) indicated that the vast majority of South Africa's primary school learners are significantly below where they should be in reference to the curriculum, and more generally, have not reached a host of normal literacy and numeracy milestones. All the participants showed that the performance of the primary schools in the rural and townships in the Tshwane South District, as determined by the ANA results of the previous years, is poor and should be improved.

6.4 KEY FINDINGS

The key findings addressed the objectives of the study as follows:

- South Africa's schooling system is a by-product or reflection of the country's inherent socioeconomic inequalities. It has led to problems that affect the current education system in such a way that resources that are considered as basic in schools elsewhere are still absent in many township and rural schools.
- The public rural and township primary schools are poorly resourced, and lack additional funding to purchase multimedia items to upgrade teaching and learning.
- In the poorly resourced schools (public rural and township) high teacher absenteeism is a grave concern.
- The formerly disadvantaged schools serving a learner body from a low socioeconomic group are more likely to underperform than well-resourced schools situated in middle-income suburban areas.
- Most of the public rural and township schools consist of Mathematics educators who do not possess the desired levels of mathematics content knowledge.
- The public rural and township schools have many systemic problems and struggle to meet their educational mandates in the three core functions of teaching, learning and management.
- The Gauteng Department of Education at District level has continued with a planned programme for developing its educators (Teacher in-service training).The programme is offered by trained subject specialists.
- According to the survey and the interviews, all of the participants (the principals and the IDSOs) were experienced, held adequate qualifications, with a substantial number holding a postgraduate qualification.
- All the schools with a learner-teacher ratio of 40+:1 represent overcrowding, with the implication of the poor performance of the learners. This ratio is only applicable to the public rural and township primary schools, as they are generally unable to raise funds to hire additional educators in order to reduce the ratio from 40:1 to 35:1, or less.
- The principals of small public rural and township schools face many systemic problems which filter down to issues such as inadequate school resources. The no fee-paying schools had no

extra funds to appoint additional educators to reduce the principal's teaching time and to enhance resources.

- An interesting finding emerging mainly from the interviews was the conflict between the principal and their SMTs and their SGBs due partly to the latter's insufficient insight into and knowledge of the distinctive duties and responsibilities of a school manager and school governor.
- The inconsistency of teaching methods is due to the introduction of several curriculum reform efforts in primary schools during the past 20 years which have required from the officials to constantly change their approaches.
- The management of the curriculum is correctly followed by the school management teams. However, the actual implementation is another issue.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF PRACTICE

Based on the findings of the empirical study and the literature, the following recommendations for the improvement of practice are made:

a) The Department of Education should train principals in the strategic skills of project management, including fund-raising skills, so that they can secure sponsorships for poorly-resourced schools, and head projects aimed at infrastructural improvement which would provide better conditions for the learners. This kind of training would equip the principals and their SMTs to approach private enterprises for sponsorships, donations and for funds to develop the schools' infrastructure. Skills in fundraising would also facilitate the hiring of additional staff members to reduce the learner-teacher ratio where it exceeds 40:1 (cf. 2.4.2.1). Furthermore, sponsorships of the schools would allow the recruitment of persons with expertise such as social workers, educational psychologists and remedial experts to assist the learners and their families who are frequently the victims of poor socioeconomic conditions. The principal as instructional leader should incorporate sponsored projects into the vision and planning of the school with a view to long-term improvement.

b) The Department of Education should organize an annual series of intensive workshops for both the SGBs (governance skills) and the SMTs (management skills) which pertain to their specific duties and responsibilities as governors and managers. This would assist both groups in avoiding the infringement of each other's duties and responsibilities, thus minimizing conflict. In this way both groups can function as intended by the SASA (RSA 1996b) as partners, and time and energy could be directed at strategies which benefit the learners. In particular, the principal as instructional leader should be equipped with the sophisticated skills of negotiation and conflict-reduction to establish and maintain an authentic partnership between the SGBs and the SMTs. To this end ongoing professional development is necessary.

c) In terms of learner discipline, the Department of Education, together with the principals as instructional leaders should train the educators in alternative and positive methods of discipline. Most of the educators needed training on this area. If this problem is addressed properly, adequate time could be spent on teaching and learning rather than on the disciplining of learners. Parent education-programmes should also be launched by the principal and the management team to inform the parents of positive discipline strategies which can be implemented at home.

d) The educators' and the learners' late-coming and absenteeism are also areas of concern. In this regard, the principals as instructional leaders should initiate and hold ongoing professional training sessions for the educators and the learners on the correct utilization of time. Where possible, arrangements should be made with private taxi companies and public transport services to facilitate the daily transporting of educators to and from the schools.

e) The principals as instructional leaders should identify educators in need of supervision and help, and organize school-based professional development workshops conducted by the Department of Education and other experts to inspire the educators and equip them in their professional responsibility as educators. This is particularly important in view of the ongoing curriculum changes, and also the demands of teaching in a LoLT which differs from the home language of the majority of the educators and the learners.

f) The ongoing professional development of the school principals should be encouraged by the Department of Education in the form of bursaries and grants for further study in educational management, whether formal or informal.

6.6 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings of this study on the role of the principal as instructional leader in improving learning achievement in primary schools with special reference to the Tshwane South District suggest the following priority areas for further research:

- The impact of external factors such as the SES of the learner body, poor school infrastructure and poor transport services on the duties and responsibilities of the principal as instructional leader.

- The impact of the overload of the duties and responsibilities of the principals of small overcrowded public rural and township schools in terms of school performance.

- Strategies to assist the principals of public rural and township schools to improve their leadership and managerial skills, particularly with regard to coping with external factors.

- The partnership between the principal and their SMTs and SGBs, particularly with regard to the designing of training programmes for all the stakeholders in the principles and practice of partnerships.

6.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of this study must be acknowledged when considering the findings. Firstly, the study was confined to a small geographical area, the Tshwane South District, Gauteng, and to primary schools in this area. Although the results obtained by the administration of a questionnaire to a random sample of primary school principals can be generalized to the larger population, the results cannot be generalized to other primary schools in other areas of South Africa. Secondly, the small population of

the IDSOs and the low rate of response to the IDSO questionnaire imply that the results are only a reflection of opinion among the respondents themselves. Generalizability is not possible. Typical of a qualitative study, Phase 2 makes no claim to generalizability since the aim of the research was depth and richness of data, and not breadth. Additional research over a wider demographic area including a greater sample may enhance the insight and enable greater generalization regarding the instructional leadership role of principals in South Africa.

It is also acknowledged that the questionnaires and the interviews were self-report instruments. Limitations in relation to self-report instruments include issues in respect of validity and reliability. There is also no guarantee that the respondents/participants had necessarily reported their respective views accurately.

6.8 CONCLUSION

In conclusion of the foregoing views and discussions it was discovered that in formerly disadvantaged South African primary schools the learners' academic performance is a matter of great concern. With the view to its improvement the principals as instructional leaders should play a key role in creating an environment conducive to learning in order for the learners to achieve and produce better results. In chapter 2 referred to the theoretical data that were gathered and the features of instructional leadership which impact on learner achievement. In chapter 3the researcher dealt with contextual and school factors which impact on the principal's role as instructional leader and learner performance in the schools. The performance of the learners was based on national and international assessment endeavours and improvement plans initiated by the national Department of Basic Education and the Gauteng Department of Education. The chapter thus provided a background to the particular challenges faced by the principals as instructional leaders of primary schools within the South African context, with special reference to Gauteng.

It is trusted that the research will serve as a cornerstone for further research on the role of the principal as instructional leader. I trust that this study will assist future researchers in investigating the problem areas identified as the cause of the low performance of learners in South Africa's public rural and township primary schools. I would thus contend that all the research questions and sub-questions have

been satisfactorily addressed and that this study has produced recommendations that could contribute to improved practice and delivery in the field of the instructional management of public rural and township primary schools.

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APPENDIX A

P.O.Box 43890
Theresa Park
0155
07 March 2014

Enq: Maponya SH
E-mail:sekolomaponya647@mail.com
Cell: 0764666001

The Head of Department
Gauteng Department of Education
P. O. Box 7710
Johannesburg
2001

Sir/Madam

RE: Application for conducting research in Gauteng Department of Education: Tshwane South District.

I am currently enrolled with UNISA studying DEd in Management. I have to embark on empirical study (very soon) whereby I am expected to collect data from IDSOs and selected primary school principals in Tshwane South District. I will be using questionnaires and interviews to collect data.

My research topic is: **The principal as instructional leader in improving learner achievement in South African primary schools.** The random and purposive sampling will be used to select participating schools for both under-performing and performing primary schools in Tshwane South District.

The aim of this study is to investigate the role and tasks of the principal as instructional leader with a view to improving school management and learner achievement in primary schools in South Africa. The findings of the study will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the principal's role as instructional leader and may thus assist in improving learner achievement in primary schools in the district.

I am aware of the fact that ethics are part of research and commit myself to observe issues of confidentiality and the rights of respondents. I am also willing to share the findings with Department of Education. After the completion of the study, a summary of the findings of the research will be made available to you by email or regular mail depending on your preference.

I hope my request will be speedily considered.

Yours sincerely
Maponya SH

P. O. Box 43890
Theresa Park
0155
14 April 2014

Enq: Maponya SH
E-mail: sekolomaponya647@gmail.com
Cell: 0764666001

The District Director
Tshwane South District
Private Bag x125
Pretoria
0001

Sir/Madam

RE: Permission to conduct research in your district.

I am currently doing DEd in Management with UNISA. I have to embark on empirical study whereby I am expected to collect data from IDSOs and selected primary school principals in Tshwane South District. I have requested permission from Head Office and attached find the response.

My research topic is: **The relationship between the principal as instructional leader and learner achievement in South African primary schools.** I have randomly and purposively sampled a number of schools and respondents in Tshwane South District. I am aware of the fact that ethics are part of research and I commit myself to observe issues of confidentiality and the rights of respondents.

The aim of this study is to investigate the role and tasks of the principal as instructional leader with a view to improving school management and learner achievement in primary schools in South Africa. The findings of the study will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the principal's role as instructional leader and may thus assist in improving learner achievement in primary schools in the district.

I hope my request will be speedily considered.

Yours sincerely

Maponya SH

APPENDIX B

P. O. Box 43890
Theresapark
0155

Dear Respondent

This questionnaire forms part of my doctoral thesis entitled: T**he role of the principal as instructional leader in improvng learner achievement in South African primary schools**, for the degree of D Ed (Educational Management) at the University of South Africa. You have been selected by a simple random sampling strategy from the population of primary school principals in Tshwane South District.

The aim of this study is to investigate the role and tasks of the principal as instructional leader with a view to improving school management and learner achievement in primary schools in South Africa. The findings of the study will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the principal's role as instructional leader and may thus assist in improving learner achievement in primary schools in the district.
You are kindly requested to complete this survey questionnaire, comprising six sections as honestly as possible according to your personal views and experience. No foreseeable risks are associated with the completion of the questionnaire which is for research purposes only. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

You are not required to indicate your name or school and your anonymity will be ensured; however, indication of your age, gender, occupation position etc. will contribute to a more comprehensive analysis. All information obtained from this questionnaire will remain confidential. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you have the right to omit any question if so desired or to withdraw from answering this survey without penalty at any stage. After the completion of the study, a summary of the findings of the research will be made available to you by email or regular mail depending on your preference.

Permission to undertake this survey has been granted by the Head, Gauteng Department of Education and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, Unisa. If you have any research related enquiries, they can be addressed to me or my supervisor. Contact details are: SHMaponya email: sekolomaponya467@gmail.comor the study supervisor, Prof EMLemmer, email:lemmeem@unisa.ac.za.

If you are willing to participate, please indicate your consent by filling in the consent form below.

Thank you for your cooperation.

S H Maponya

INFORMED CONSENT

I have been given the chance to read this covering letter. I understand the information about this study and the conditions under which I will complete the questionnaire. My signature says that I am willing to participate in this study.

_____ _____

PARTICIPANT NAME (PRINTPLEASE) PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

DATE: _____

_____ _____

RESEARCHER NAME (PRINT PLEASE) RESEARCHER SIGNATURE

DATE: _____

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE PRINCIPALS

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER IN IMPROVING LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

INSTRUCTIONS:
Please mark your choice with "x" in the relevant field and select only one option unless otherwise indicated.
The questionnaire consists of six sections.

- **Section A: Biographical data**
- **Section B: Institutional factors**
- **Section C: Planning**
- **Section D: Instructional procedures**
- **Section E: Discipline**
- **Section F: Comments**

……
……..

Section A: Biographical data **Office use only**

Date: 13/03/2014

3

1. Gender

1	Male	
2	Female	

4

2. Age category

1	20 – 30 yrs	
2	31 – 40 yrs	
3	41 – 50 yrs	
4	51 – 60 yrs	
5	Above 60 yrs	

5

3. Years of experience

1	1 - 10	
2	11 - 20	
3	21 - 30	
4	Above 30	

6

4. Qualifications (please indicate your highest qualification only)

1	Teacher's certificate	
2	Teacher's diploma	
3	First degree	
4	Honours degree	
5	Masters' degree	
6	Doctoral degree	

7

Section B: Institutional factors
Mark your relevant choice with "x".

5. Is your school classified as:

1	Section 21	
2	Non section 21	

8

6. Is your school located in:

1	Urban area	
2	Rural area	
3	Township	

9

7. The status of your school is:

1	School fee paying	
2	Non-school fee paying	

10

8. Is your school classified as:

1	Performing	
2	Under-performing	

11

9. Does your school have security fence?

1	Yes	
2	No	

12

10. How often does your school experience burglaries?

1	Once a month	
2	Once a term	
3	Once a year	
4	More than once a year	
5	Never	

13

11. E-learning facilities (e.g. computers, internet) are available at school for teaching and learning.

1	Yes	
2	No	

14

12. Science laboratory is available at school.

1	Yes	
2	No	

15

12.1 If yes, is used for:

1	Carrying out experiments by educators and learners	
2	Storage of unused science equipment only	
3	Other purpose than science experiments	

16

13. Library is available at school.

1	Yes	
2	No	

17

13.1 If yes, is used for:

1	Study and research by educators and learners	
2	Storage for unused books only	
3	Community service only	

18

14. School hall is available.

1	Yes	
2	No	

19

14.1 If yes, is used for:

1	School gatherings and other activities	
2	School gatherings only	
3	Community services only	

20

15. Class size; each class-room has approximately:

1	Less than 30 learners	
2	30 learners	
3	35 learners	
4	40 learners	
5	More than 40 learners	

21

Section C: Planning
Please indicate your extent of agreement with each of the following statement by ticking the appropriate box.
Please use the following five-point scale.
1: Strongly agree
2: Agree
3: Undecided
4: Disagree
5: Strongly disagree

ITEMS	1	2	3	4	5		For office use only
1. As a principal I do planning in advance.							
2. School goals are clear.							
3. School goals are achievable.							
4. Methods to attain school goals are achievable.							
5. The school has an effective academic programme.							
6. What has been planned is successfully implemented.							
7. Educators know what is expected from them.							
8. The development of policy documents includes all role players (SMT, SGB, staff-members and parents).							
9. Educators support the vision of the school.							
10. Shared vision takes the school forward.							
11. Vision ensures that resources are effectively utilized.							
12. Workload is distributed equally among educators.							
13. I ensure that educators are busy the entire day.							
14. I ensure that the correct disciplinary procedure is implemented regarding educators who are not committed to their professional task.							

15. I ensure that educators work together harmoniously in teams.							
16. The following policies had been updated and are implemented.							
16.1 Safety and security							
16.2 Discipline							
16.3 Learner code of conduct							
16. 4 Educator code of conduct							

41

Section D: Instructional procedures

Please indicate your extent of agreement with each of the following statement by ticking the appropriate box.
Use the following five-point scale.

1: Strongly agree
2: Agree
3:Undecided
4: Disagree
5: Strongly disagree

ITEMS	1	2	3	4	5		For office use only
1. The learner-educator ratio in the class is satisfactory.							
2. The traditional teaching methods are very useful when teaching in primary school.							
3. A combination of traditional and CAPS oriented methods is useful when teaching certain skills in primary schools.							
4. CAPS oriented methods are very useful when teaching in primary school.							
5. As a principal, learner achievement is my focus.							
6. I encourage educators to use English only as the medium of instruction when teaching.							
7. I believe that the development of skills such as understanding, speaking, reading and writing is the goal of our school.							
8. I encourage educators to explain in their Home Language when learners do not understand.							
9. The Department of Basic Education workbooks are the basis of our teaching.							
10. Textbooks are the basis of our teaching.							
11. We do not teach everything out of textbook.							
12. We often use multimedia (e.g. DVD's, CD's etc.) in our classes.							
13. Learners are assessed regularly.							
14. All the assessment activities are moderated by the relevant HOD's before learners write them.							

15. Assessment time-tables are sent to parents in order to support their children when preparing for assessment activities.							
16. Parents receive quarterly progress reports of their children.							

56

Section E: Discipline
Please indicate your extent of agreement with each of the following statement by ticking the appropriate box.
Please use the following five-point scale.

- **1: Strongly agree**
- **2: Agree**
- **3: Undecided**
- **4: Disagree**
- **5: Disagree**

ITEMS	1	2	3	4	5		For office use only
1. There is the atmosphere of order, discipline and purpose at school.							
2. There are clear classroom instructions in each classroom.							
3. Educators have high morals and commitment to teaching.							
4. There is educator code of conduct which ensures a disciplined and orderly environment.							
5. Educators perceive the principal as hindering their professional duties.							
6. There is learner code of conduct which ensures a disciplined and orderly environment.							
7. Educators are late.							
8. Learners are late.							
9. Educators are absent.							
10. Learners are absent.							

66

Section F: Further Comments	
Please add any comments about your role as instructional leader in your school which you think to be important and relevant to the purpose of this survey)	

I take this opportunity to thank you for honestly answering the questions.

APPENDIX C

P. O. Box 43890
Theresapark
0155

Dear Respondent

This questionnaire forms part of my doctoral thesis entitled: T**he role of the principal as instructional leader in improving learner achievement in South African primary schools***,* for the degree of D Ed (Educational Management) at the University of South Africa. You have been selected by a comprehensive sampling strategy from the population of the Institutes Development Officials in Tshwane South District.

The aim of this study is to investigate the role and tasks of the principal as instructional leader with a view to improving school management and learner achievement in primary schools in South Africa. The findings of the study will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the principal's role as instructional leader and may thus assist in improving learner achievement in primary schools in the district.

You are kindly requested to complete this survey questionnaire, comprising six sections as honestly as possible according to your personal views and experience. No foreseeable risks are associated with the completion of the questionnaire which is for research purposes only. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

You are not required to indicate your name or school and your anonymity will be ensured; however, indication of your age, gender, occupation position etc. will contribute to a more comprehensive analysis. All information obtained from this questionnaire will remain confidential. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you have the right to omit any question if so desired or to withdraw from answering this survey without penalty at any stage. After the completion of the study, a summary of the findings of the research will be made available to you by email or regular mail depending on your preference.

Permission to undertake this survey has been granted by the Head, Gauteng Department of Education and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, Unisa. If you have any research related enquiries, they can be addressed to me or my supervisor. Contact details are: SHMaponya email: sekolomaponya467@gmail.comor the study supervisor, Prof EMLemmer, email:lemmeem@unisa.ac.za.

If you are willing to participate, please indicate your consent by filling in the consent form below.

Thank you for your cooperation.

S H Maponya

INFORMED CONSENT

I have been given the chance to read this covering letter. I understand the information about this study and the conditions under which I will complete the questionnaire. My signature says that I am willing to participate in this study.

_____ _____

PARTICIPANT NAME (PRINTPLEASE) PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE
DATE: _____

RESEARCHER NAME (PRINT PLEASE) RESEARCHER SIGNATURE
DATE: _____

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE IDSOs

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER IN IMPROVING LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

INSTRUCTIONS:
Please mark your choice with "x" in the relevant field and select only one option unless otherwise indicated.
The questionnaire consists of sIx sections.

Section A: Biographical data
Section B: Institutional factors
Section C: Planning
Section D: Procedures
Section E: Discipline
Section F: Further Comments

……

Section A: Biographical data **Office use only**

Date: 22/03/2014

3

……

1. Gender

1	Male	
2	Female	

4

2. Age category

1	20 – 30 yrs	
2	31 – 40 yrs	
3	41 – 50 yrs	
4	51 – 60 yrs	
5	Above 60 yrs	

5

3.Years of experience

1	1 – 10	
2	11 – 20	
3	21 – 30	
4	Above 30	

6

4. Qualifications (please indicate your highest qualification only)

1	Teacher's certificate	
2	Teacher's diploma	
3	First degree	
4	Honours degree	
5	Masters' degree	
6	Doctoral degree	

7

B. INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

Mark your relevant choice with "x".

5. Are your schools classified as:

1. Section 21 only		
2.Non section 21 only		
3. Both section 21 and non-section 21		

8

6. Are your schools located in:

1	Urban area only			
2	Rural area only			
3	Township only			
4	Urban and rural or township areas			

9

7. The status of your schools:

1	School fee paying only			
2	Non-school fee paying only			
3	School fee and non-school fee paying			

10

8. How would you categories your schools in terms of academic performance? You may choose more than one answer.

1	Less than 50% of my schools are under-performing			
2	Less than 50% of my schools are performing			
3	More than 50% of my schools are under-performing			
4	More than 50% of my schools are performing			

11

9.Security at schools

1	None of my primary schools have security fence			
2	Less than 50% of my primary schools have security fence			
3	More than 50% of my primary schools have security fence			
4	All my primary schools have security fence			

12

10. Burglaries in primary schools

1	I have never received report of burglaries from principals			
2	I often receive report of burglaries from principals			
3	I seldom receive report of burglaries from principals			

13

C. Planning

Please answer each item by ticking off the "x" for the appropriate box. Use the following four point scale.

1. None
2. Only few
3. Many
4. All

	Items	1	2	3	4		For office use
1	My schools have appropriate policies and procedures in place to enable them to run smoothly.						
2	My schools have educators' codes of conduct and they are implemented effectively.						
3	My schools have learners' codes of conduct and they are applied for disciplinary measures.						
4	My schools have school development plans in place and had been drawn by all stakeholders.						
5	My schools have strategies to prepare for ANA exams.						
6	My schools have management plans for curriculum matters.						

19

D. Procedures.

Please answer each item by ticking off the "x" for the relevant option. Use the following five point scale.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3.Undecided
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

	Items	1	2	3	4	5		For office use
1	In my entire schools learner-educator ratio in the classes is satisfactory.							
2	The traditional teaching methods are very useful in teaching learners.							
3	A combination of traditional and CAPS oriented methods is useful when teaching certain skills in primary schools.							
4	CAPS oriented methods are very useful when teaching in primary schools.							
5	Principals as instructional leaders focus on learner achievement.							
6	Development of skills such as speaking, writing and understanding are the goals of our schools.							

25

E. Discipline

Please answer each item by ticking off "x" for the relevant option. Use the following five point scale.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3.Undecided
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

	Items	1	2	3	4	5		
1	There is the atmosphere of order, discipline and purpose in all my primary schools.							
2	Principals have high morals and commitment to manage as instructional leaders.							
3	Most of the principals are frequently absent from work.							
4	Most of the principals are frequently late to work.							
5	Most principals absent themselves from cluster meetings with apologies.							

30

F**. Comments**

Please add any comments about the role of the principal as instructional leaders in their respective primary schools.

Thank for your honest response to the questions. **END.**

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS (additional questions may be added in the light of the findings of the survey and the sequential mixed method design)

1. Introductory question

Briefly tell me about yourself, your management experience as the principal and how long have been at this school.
How would you describe the tasks of instructional leadership?

2. School infrastructure

How would you explain/describe your school infrastructure in terms of factors which contribute to learning and teaching? What weaknesses do you experience which detract from teaching and learning?

3. Planning

To what extent do you ensure that role players such as educators, SMT and SGB share in the planning activities for the development of the school. How do you and your team plan for improved academic achievement on an annual basis?

4. Procedures

As a principal of the school, what strategies have you and your team implemented to ensure that learners achieve academically to their maximum level.

In the light of your schools' academic achievement, how successful are these measures?

5. Discipline

What disciplinary measures are in place at your school to maintain acceptable discipline for educators?
For learners?

6. Curriculum

What plans have you envisaged/currently implementing to support:

a. educators in their teaching?

b. learners who struggle academically?

Think you for your participation. **The end.**

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR IDSO (additional questions may be added after the findings of the survey in the light of a sequential mixed method design)

1. Introductory question
Tell me about your experience as a cluster leader (IDSO): highlights and the worst moments in your career as the cluster leader with regard to the instructional leadership of schools.

2. Shared vision
In your opinion do you think that principals are able to allow other educators, SMT and SGB share in the development of school vision?

If not, how do you as the IDSO envisage ensuring that primary schools have a shared school vision?

3. Commitment
To what extent does the primary school principal as instructional leaders ensure that all their educators remain committed to their responsibility as educators?

How do you assist unsuccessful primary school principals to instil the culture of commitment in education?

4. Motivation
In your opinion, to what extent do primary school principals stay motivated and on task regarding their instructional leadership?

How do you assist those who are discouraged in their role and task?

5. Productive working environment
Do you think that primary school principals are successful in creating a conducive and satisfying working environment?

6. Curriculum
Do you think that the general output of primary schools in terms of academic learner achievement is satisfactory based on the ANA results of the previous years?

How can the principal as instructional leader continuously improve learner achievement?

Thank you for your participation, **this is the end.**

APPENDIX F

P. O. Box 43890
Theresapark
0155

Dear Participant

This interview forms part of my doctoral thesis entitled: T**he role of the principal as instructional leader in improving learner achievement in South African primary schools**, for the degree of D Ed (Educational Management) at the University of South Africa. You have been selected by a purposive strategy from the population of primary school principals in Tshwane South District.

The aim of this study is to investigate the role and tasks of the principal as instructional leader with a view to improving school management and learner achievement in primary schools in South Africa. The findings of the study will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the principal's role as instructional leader and may thus assist in improving learner achievement in primary schools in the district.

You are kindly requested to answer the interview questions, as honestly as possible according to your personal views and experience. No foreseeable risks are associated with the answering of the questions which is for research purposes only. The interview questions will take approximately 20 minutes to answer.

You are not required to mention your name or institution and your anonymity will be ensured. All information obtained from this interview questions will remain confidential. Your participation in this interview is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the interview if so desired without penalty at any stage. After the completion of the study, a summary of the findings of the research will be made available to you by email or regular mail depending on your preference.

Permission to undertake this interview has been granted by the Head, Gauteng Department of Education and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, Unisa. If you have any research related enquiries, they can be addressed to me or my supervisor. Contact details are: SHMaponya email: sekolomaponya467@gmail.comor the study supervisor, Prof EMLemmer, email:lemmeem@unisa.ac.za.

If you are willing to participate, please indicate your consent by filling in the consent form below. Thank you for your cooperation.

S H Maponya

INFORMED CONSENT

I have been given the chance to read this covering letter. I understand the information about this study and the conditions under which I will answer the interview questions. My signature says that I am willing to participate in this study.

_____ _____

PARTICIPANT NAME (PRINTPLEASE) PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

DATE: _____

_____ _____

RESEARCHER NAME (PRINT PLEASE) RESEARCHER SIGNATURE

DATE: _____

APPENDIX G

P. O. Box 43890
Theresapark
0155

Dear Participant

This interview forms part of my doctoral thesis entitled: T**he role of the principal in improving learner achievement in South African primary schools**, for the degree of D Ed (Educational Management) at the University of South Africa. You have been selected by a systematic strategy from the population of IDSOs in Tshwane South District.

The aim of this study is to investigate the role and tasks of the principal as instructional leader with a view to improving school management and learner achievement in primary schools in South Africa. The findings of the study will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the principal's role as instructional leader and may thus assist in improving learner achievement in primary schools in the district.

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If you are willing to participate, please indicate your consent by filling in the consent form below. Thank you for your cooperation.

S H Maponya

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_____ _____

PARTICIPANT NAME (PRINTPLEASE) PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE
DATE: _____

_____ _____

RESEARCHER NAME (PRINT PLEASE) RESEARCHER SIGNATURE
DATE: _____

APPENDIX H

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

For administrative use:
Reference no: D2014 / 393

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	**26 March 2014**
Validity of Research Approval:	**25 March to 3 October 2014**
Name of Researcher:	**Maponya S.H.**
Address of Researcher:	**P.O. Box 43890**
	Theresa Park
Telephone Number:	**0165** **076 466 6001**
Email address:	**sekolomaponya647@gmail.com**
Research Topic:	**The relationship between the principal as instructional leader and learner achievement in South African primary schools**
Number and type of schools:	**SIXTY Primary Schools**
District/s/HO	**Tshwane South**

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

Approved
2014/03/26

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research
9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0505
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

APPENDIX I

UNISA college of education

Research Ethics Clearance Certificate

This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by

SH Maponya [07611461]

for a D Ed study entitled

The role of the principal as instructional leader in improving learner achievement in South African primary schools

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two years from the date of issue.

Prof VI McKay
Executive Dean : CEDU

Dr M Claassens
CEDU REC (Chairperson)
mcdtc@netactive.co.za

Reference number: 2014 MAY /07611461/MC

19 MAY 2014

APPENDIX J

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Date:…… Time: …… School: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, or J.

A	**Discipline**	**V.good**	**Good**	**Bad**	**Worse**	Comment
1	Control of late coming:					
1.1	Staff members					
1.2	Learners					
2	Control of early departure:					
2.1	Staff members					
2.2	Learners					
B	**Human relation**					
3	Communication:					
3.1	Communication among learners					
3.2	Communication between learners and staff					
C	**Infrastructure**					
4	Buildings:					
4.1	Appearance of buildings					

4.2	State of ablution facilities					
4.3	State of sports field					
D	**Safety and security**					
5	Availability of security measures					
E	**Environment**					
6	Conduciveness for learning and teaching					

APPENDIX K

Table 1: Frequency of Burglaries (Q10)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Once a month	1	1.8	1.8	1.8
	Once a term	4	7.0	7.0	8.8
	Once a year	28	49.0	49.0	57.9
	More than once a year	12	21.1	21.1	78.9
	Never	12	21.1	21.1	100.0
	Total	57	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Use of science lab (Q12.1)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Carrying out experiments by teachers and learners	22	38.6	91.7	91.7
	Storage of unused science equipment	2	3.5	8.3	100.0
	Total	24	42.1	100.0	
Missing	System	33	57.9		
Total		57	100.0		

Table 3: Use of library (Q13.1)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Study and research by teachers and learners	42	73.7	95.5	95.5
	Storage for unused books	2	3.5	4.5	100.0
	Total	44	77.2	100.0	
Missing	System	13	22.8		
Total		57	100.0		

Table 4 Use of school hall (Q14.1)

School hall used for

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	School gatherings and other activities	24	42.1	100.0	100.0
Missing	System[3]	33	57.9		
Total		57	100.0		

Table 5 Security fencing of ISDO schools

Security fencing		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	More than 50% of my primary schools have a security fence	4	50.0	50.0	50.0

[3]It is part of the SPSS output which indicated the missing values in the data set. System missing means that no values were defined for missing values (e.g. “don’t know”, “not applicable” etc). (Source: Dr Liezel Korf, statistician responsible for analysis. Email correspondence with supervisor, 6 September, 2015.)

	All my primary schools have a security fence	4	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	8	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 Frequency of burglary reports of ISDO schools

Burglaries		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I often receive reports of burglaries from principals	3	37.5	37.5	37.5
	I seldom receive reports of burglaries from principals	5	62.5	62.5	100.0
	Total	8	100.0	100.0	