

**THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL  
LEADER: A CASE STUDY OF THREE SCHOOLS IN THE  
MOTUPA CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO**

**A.B. MOHALE**

**THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER: A CASE  
STUDY OF THREE SCHOOLS IN THE MOTUPA CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO**

By

**ASSAN BOTTOMLY MOHALE**

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Supervisor: Prof. P.M. SEBATE

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Student number: **0597-135-7**

**DECLARATION**

I declare that **The role of the principal as an instructional leader: a case study of three schools in the Motupa Circuit, Limpopo** 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.

.....  
**MR AB MOHALE**

.....  
**DATE**

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my late father and brother, Allie and Peter Mohale who inspired me to keep on furthering my studies.

To my mother Mamaila Annah Mohale, Sister Mrs. Jane Nare and husband Mr. R.L. Nare. To my mother-in-law Mrs. Alina Rikhotso, my wife, Mrs. Merriam Mohale and children, words cannot express how much your love, support, and understanding throughout this process has meant to me.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANA	:	Annual National Assessment
BA	:	Bachelor of Art
BEd (Hons)	:	Bachelor of Education Honours
CAPS	:	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DSG	:	Development Support Group
ELRC	:	Education Labour Relation Council
FFLC	:	Foundation for Learning Campaign
HED	:	Higher Education Diploma
HODs	:	Head of Departments (school-based)
IQMS	:	Integrated Quality Management System
LTSM	:	Learner Teacher Support Materials
NCS	:	National Curriculum Statement
OBE	:	Outcomes-Based Education
PGP	:	Personal Growth Plan
PIRLS	:	Progress in International Reading and Literacy Studies
PTC	:	Primary Teachers' Certificate
PTD	:	Primary Teacher's Diploma
RNCS	:	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACMEQ	:	Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Educational Quality
SASA	:	South African Schools' Act
SDT	:	School Development Team

## **ABSTRACT**

The study focused on the role of the principal as an instructional leader in the Motupa Circuit primary schools of Limpopo Province. The nature and effectiveness of the education system depend on the role of school principals as instructional leaders in the effective and efficient monitoring and support of educators' curriculum implementation in the classrooms, evidenced by learners' performance and the effective functioning of educational institutions.

The literature review undertaken benchmarked on the instructional leadership roles of school principals. Qualitative research approach in the form of observations, interviews and the analysis of written documents was employed to elicit the principals' perceptions on their instructional leadership roles and how they enhance effective teaching and learning towards improving learners' performances.

The study anticipated that principals as instructional leaders will be increasingly involved in ensuring that curriculum implementation in the classrooms is monitored and supported for effective teaching and learning to be realised. The study's findings revealed that this is not happening as it should. A synopsis of the research findings revealed that principals are beset with a number of contextual factors such as, an inadequate provision of teaching and learning resources and infrastructure needs, lack of monitoring and support of curriculum implementation, inadequate support from the Department of Basic Education, and lack of parental involvement and concern on the education of their children.

It is anticipated that the literature review and the findings from the empirical study will contribute to, and strengthen principals' instructional leadership roles in creating conditions for effective teaching and learning, by monitoring and supporting educators in curriculum delivery and implementation in the classrooms. The research recommended that principals should conduct regular class visits and



also ensure that strategies are developed to involve parents of learners in the education of their children, and that teaching and learning resources should be provided. The Provincial Department of Basic Education must provide the much needed basic school infrastructure and basic school resources such as LTSM, the national norms and standard for school funding (NSSF) earlier during the first term, in support of principals' instructional leadership roles. It is recommended that attention to these issues by school principals and the Department of Basic Education will contribute towards effective teaching and learning and improve learners' performances in Limpopo Province and the Motupa Circuit in particular.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The principal as an instructional leader is responsible for taking the lead in putting the curriculum into practice and to ensure that there is a culture of teaching and learning in the school (Murphy, Hallinger, Weil & Mitman, 1983:145). These authors further maintain that when the principal carries out the instructional leadership tasks, the point of departure should be the determination of the desired academic goals for the school; for example, improving learners' performance in examinations, formulation of school policies that promote effective teaching and learning, and the practice of behaviours that are consistent with the already determined school goals and formulated school policies.

According to Smith, Sparkes and Thurlow (2001:10), instructional leadership entails commitment to the core mission of the school which is teaching and learning. It also entails devotion to school curriculum and instruction as opposed to the bureaucratic school management and administration. Whitaker (1997:156) argues that instructional leadership is the most critical responsibility for the school principal. This implies the influence the principal's instructional leadership has on the success of the school and its core mission. Marishane (2011) cited in Taole (2013) point out that instructional leadership has gained popularity, as much pressure is placed on academic standards and the need for schools to be accountable, and demand for greater accountability on the part of principals in the quest for high learner achievement, hence currently an increased attention is being paid to the role of principals as instructional leaders in order to improve learners' performances. Therefore, learners' academic success is directly related to the principal's instructional leadership role.

Phillips (2012) asserts that even though instructional leadership is critical in the realisation of effective schools, it is seldom practised. He further points out that among the many tasks that principals perform; less time is devoted to providing instructional leadership. Instructional leadership is not given the attention it deserves. The researcher identified the instructional leadership roles of principals as a challenge in the Motupa Circuit, Limpopo. Therefore, the study sought to investigate the instructional leadership roles of principals in the Motupa Circuit as an attempt to address this challenge. This chapter focuses on the study's overview by providing the background, formulation of the problem, aims and objectives as well as the methodology selected to address the research problem. The background of the study follows hereunder in section 1.2.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND**

Since its inception in 1994, the post – apartheid South African government has undertaken a number of initiatives to transform the education system, aimed not only at redressing the legacy of apartheid, but also to improve the quality of education. The initiatives undertaken were the enactment of the South African Schools' ACT No. 84 of 1996 (SASA); the launch of the culture of learning and teaching services (COLTS); the streamlining of an outcomes – based education (OBE) into the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) which later culminated into the Curriculum and Assessment Policy statement (CAPS). All these efforts were undertaken to improve curriculum implementation and the quality of teaching and learning in schools. However, education transformation in South Africa is still faced with a number of challenges.

Studies conducted to assess the state of the Education System in South Africa revealed that the country has “the worst education system of all the middle-income countries that participated in cross-national assessments of educational achievements”, and that the learners' performance in South Africa is worse than

any low-income African countries (Department of Education, 2008). Progress in International Reading and Literacy Studies (PIRLS) and the Southern and Eastern African Consortiums for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) tested the mathematics and reading skills of grade 6 learners which showed that there was no improvement in South African grade 6 literacy and numeracy performances. The study revealed that South African learners were rated tenth for reading and eighth for mathematics, and that literacy levels of 27% of South African grade 6 learners were very low or below expected standards (Department of Basic Education, 2010). Therefore, the nature and effectiveness of an education system depend on the instructional leadership role of school principals in ensuring effective and efficient implementation of the curriculum, evidenced by improved learners' performance and the effective functioning of educational institutions.

The problem of poor performance in examinations is costly for any country since education is a major contributor to economic growth. Education opens new horizons, extends freedom, creates opportunities, provides the people with the knowledge which raises productivity, stimulates innovation, raises their income or increases their choices of earning a livelihood and raises their standard of living because economic prosperity comes with education (MacKay, 2000:68). The reasons for poor performance cannot be easily discerned without a focused investigation. When looking for answers to questions relating to poor learners' performances in our public schools, we prefer to start our quest by examining the role of school principals as instructional leaders. Therefore, it is behind this background that this study on the instructional leadership role of school principals is vital in addressing the challenges confronting the South African Education system, the Limpopo Province and Motupa Circuit in particular.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The role of the principal as an instructional leader in the Motupa Circuit has been a course for concern to the education fraternity in the Limpopo Province. The 2010 Annual National Assessment (ANA) results revealed that only one school in the Motupa Circuit performed fairly well out of the 19 primary schools (Mafenya, 2010). It should be noted that the poor results is an indication of some mishaps with regard to the daily running of schools. According to Clarke (2011:15), principals spend most of their time on administrative matters rather than on managing and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Therefore, the researcher assumes that the quality of teaching and learning in most primary schools in the Motupa Circuit leaves much to be desired.

The National Senior Certificate (NSC) pass rate in South Africa has been improving in recent years since 2009; however, this measure cannot be seen as an accurate indication of an improvement in the quality of education in the country. Motupa Circuit has been number last out of the 24 circuits in the district's (NSC) results for a number of years. According to Masetla (2011), Motupa Circuit was number last in the 2010 National Senior Certificate results in the district, with 32, 3%, which is far below the provincial norm of 60%. For several years, the performance of Motupa Circuit high schools in the National Senior Certificate examinations remained poor. It is on record that the average pass percentage of the circuit above has been 41, 5% in 2009; 32, 3% in 2010 and 46, 5% in 2011 respectively. This demonstrated an improvement of 14, 2 % from 2010. However, it is on record that for the past three years the Motupa Circuit performed below the provincial norm. The grade 12 results provide an indicator of the functioning of the schooling system, its schools and learners' results remain the major public barometer of the performance of the whole education system (Christie, Butler & Potterton, 2007: 4). The National Senior Certificate examination set the minimum standard for university entrance which is a pass in bachelor, and also marks the

completion of a 12 year school programme which started in Grade 1. Therefore, the investigation into the instructional leadership role of the principal in the area under study is quite vital.

According to Christie *et al.* (2007), the primary school curriculum is problematic. The three authors assert that learners from primary schools arrive at high schools without the ability to read and write properly, lack systematic knowledge and find the transition to senior grades difficult. Minister Motshekga remarked that the low levels of literacy and numeracy in primary schools were worrying precisely because the critical skills of literacy and numeracy are fundamental to further education and achievements in both education and work (Mohlala, 2010). This is a burden for teachers in grades 10 to 12, and lead to increased failure and dropout rate at the end of grade 10. Therefore, high schools have a problem with the quality of learners being fed to them by primary schools. According to Ledwaba (1999:4), it is widely accepted that there is a total breakdown in the management of most schools in the Limpopo Province and that school principals have no control over learners and teachers' work. Memela (1998:11) maintains that the culture of teaching and learning has been eroded, and this has affected confidence and faith in the principal's capacity to manage and lead the curriculum and instruction.

What makes the study even more pertinent and necessary is the fact that neighbouring former model C schools are doing well in producing good results. All the schools at which the study was undertaken are quintile 1. They are known as "no fee" schools, and they receive funds for the norms and standards to assist them with daily running costs. One would assume that these schools must be highly resourceful. Van der berg (2004) asserts that inputs such as more money, more teaching materials, learning aids and small class sizes are not the only crucial factors in school performance. He further remarks that the most powerful factor in determining how well a school functions is the quality of principals as

instructional leaders, which above all raised the level of teacher commitment for effective teaching and learning.

Minister Motshekga, responsible for the Department of Basic Education notes, “the problem is that as a country we use the performance of pupils at the end of their 12-year schooling to measure the health of our education system . . . and this cannot be right because it does not allow us to comprehend deeply enough what goes on lower down in the system on a year-by-year basis” (Mohlala, 2010). Therefore, the researcher restricted this study to primary schools as the primary school is the basis or foundation for life-long learning.

It is at the primary phase of schooling that learners are supposed to be taught how to read, write and count so that they can be able to use these skills in later years of schooling. Learners who cannot read, write and count will be unemployable later in life, or even worse drop out of the education system, and youth joblessness will perpetually remain while this appalling situation plays itself out in the primary schools (Christie *et. al*, 2007). Mafenya (2012) argues that there is no way that we can have a significant change in our high schools if primary schools are not performing and learners are micro-waved when they are in the Further Education and Training (FET). Therefore, the grade 12 results cannot improve whilst the primary schools’ learner performance remain poor.

The learners’ performance in the Motupa Circuit schools motivated the researcher to undertake this study. The researcher assumed that there could be contextual factors that impact on primary school principals’ instructional leadership role in the creation of a successful environment for quality teaching and learning to be realised. The researcher also assumes that there could be other factors regarding the instructional leadership roles of primary school principals that impact on the primary school learners’ performance as they proceed to high schools.

## **1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.4.1 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this study is to investigate the instructional leadership role of primary school principals in the Motupa Circuit, by identifying the contextual factors that impact on their instructional leadership.

### **1.4.2 OBJECTIVES**

The following are the objectives of this study.

- To describe the concept instructional leadership;
- To investigate and identify the contextual factors that impact on the instructional leadership roles of primary school principals in the Motupa Circuit;
- To describe the significance of the instructional leadership role of principals; and
- To determine how the findings of this study can contribute to and strengthen the instructional leadership role of the principals.

### **1.4.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following are the research questions of this study.

#### **1.4.4 MAIN QUESTION**

What is the instructional leadership role of the primary school principals in the Motupa Circuit?

#### 1.4.5 SUB - QUESTIONS

The following are the sub-questions of this study:

- What is instructional leadership?
- What are the contextual factors that impact on the instructional leadership roles of primary school principals in the Motupa Circuit?
- What is the significance of the instructional leadership role of principals?
- How can the findings of this study contribute to and strengthen the instructional leadership role of the principals?

#### 1.5 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

According to Hoberg (1999:190), demarcating a study means establishing the boundaries of the research problem area within which the research will progress. Le Roux (2000:36) concurs and maintains that boundaries are purposely put on the study, usually stated in terms of time, place and subject (participants). The demarcation of the problem helps to make it manageable because the researcher only focuses on aspects that have been identified or demarcated. This study or problem has been demarcated as follows:

- The study has provincial and national significance; however, due to the limited scope of this research, the study concentrated only on three selected primary schools in the Motupa Circuit of Mopani District in the Limpopo Province.
- A number of stakeholders are responsible for the effective leadership of schools, such as School Governing Body (SGB) members, School Management Team (SMT) and Circuit officials; however, this study was



only limited to the instructional leadership role of the three selected primary school principals in the Motupa Circuit.

## **1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Standardised methods and techniques were applied in the pursuit of valid knowledge (Mouton, 2002:35). The research methodology encompasses the complete research process such as the research approaches, procedures or sampling methods and data collection methods used (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:74). According to Nkatini (2005:26), research methodology should be seen as a system through which a researcher is able to collect, analyse and interpret data so that the researcher's aims and objectives may be achieved. The research methodology of the study is discussed hereunder in section 1.6.1.

### **1.6.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

This study is qualitative in nature. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:315), in qualitative method of inquiry, researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their natural setting, thereby describing and analysing their individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. The researcher invokes a set of research techniques in which data are obtained from relatively small group of respondents and not analysed with statistical techniques, but rather follows an inductive process involving collections and analysis of qualitative (that is, non-numerical) data to search for patterns, themes and holistic features.

Qualitative research is an enquiry process of understanding a social or human problem-based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants and conducted in a natural setting (Creswell,1994: 06). Qualitative approaches deal with how people understand their experiences. In

addition, qualitative methods explore meanings and are used for the investigation of issues which, for ethical, practical or epistemological reasons are difficult to measure. According to Strauss and Corbin (2008:17), qualitative research is any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification such as persons' lives, stories, behaviour, organisational functioning, social movements, or interactional relationships. Baynard and Hanekom (2005:02) add that qualitative research produces descriptive data—generally people's own written or spoken words.

The qualitative approach was considered suitable for this study, based upon the above definition and after consultation with the supervisor.

Due to the aim of the study namely, to investigate the instructional leadership role of primary school principals, a qualitative approach had been used to allow research participants to describe their experiences in their own words. A qualitative research method is therefore preferred in this study because of the following reasons:

- It allows the researcher to explore the perceptions of school principals and Heads of Departments (HODs) about the instructional leadership role of primary school principals.
- The qualitative approach allows the researcher to remain committed to the opinions of the participants as major data sources.
- The qualitative approach allows the researcher to obtain data from participants' natural context, with a minimum of disruption of the natural context. Case study is discussed hereunder in section 1.6.2.

## 1.6.2 CASE STUDY

Research design is defined as a set of guidelines and instructions that must be followed in addressing the research problem (Mouton, 2002:107). This implies that once the researcher has formulated the problem, research questions and objectives, before starting with the collection of data, the researcher needs to decide and plan how the research will be conducted. In this study, a case study design has been employed to explore and describe the instructional leadership role of primary school principals in the Motupa Circuit.

A case study is defined by Babbie (2007:298) as an in-depth collection, examination and presentation of detailed information of some social phenomenon, such as a particular participant, a village, a school, a family or a juvenile gang. Welma, Kruger and Mitchell (2006:25) assert that the objective of a case study is usually to investigate the dynamics of some single bounded system, typically of a social nature, such as a family, a group, a community or participants in a project, institution and practice. A case study illuminates the general by looking at the particular; it offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon and results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon (Walsh, 2001).

Therefore, a case study has been used in this study on the basis that an in-depth and thorough study of purposely selected group of information-rich participants. Participants included the primary school principals, who gave detailed new insights on their instructional leadership role. According to this method, a researcher gathers data covering a given phenomenon with a view to analysing, synthesising and evaluating the data, so that effective remedies could be put in place (Nkatini, 2005:6). Data collection strategies of the study are discussed hereunder in section 1.4.3.

### 1.6.3 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The concept “data collection” or “data gathering” refers to the process of consulting resources for raw information (Kothari, 2007:98). Interviews are used in this study as the main data collection instrument from the respondents. Baynard and Hanekom (2005:32) define interviewing as a method of collecting data that allows the researcher to ask interviewee questions. This instrument is preferred in this study because it makes data collection flexible and it also provides the researcher with more information to establish relationships with respondents. The researcher is interested in gaining a rich and inclusive account of the participants’ experiences. Hence, through interviews, participants are more likely to produce accounts of sufficient depth and breath.

#### 1.6.3.1 Interviews

According to Nigel (2002:80), individual interview is a face-to-face interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. Nachmias and Nachmias (1992:232) state that a personal or individual interview’ is a face-to-face interpersonal role situation in which an interviewer asks respondent questions designed to elicit answers pertinent to the research objectives”. The focus is to find out what other people feel and think about the phenomenon under investigations.

Data collection was carried out in the form of individual interviews at the three sampled schools. The respondents were the principals and heads of departments (HOD’s) from each school. Interview schedules were designed for each category of respondents in order to focus on the research objectives and in accordance with the literature consulted. The individual interviews were complemented by observations and documents analysis as data collection strategies in this study.

### **1.6.3.2 Observations**

Another strategy adopted by the researcher for data collection during the empirical study is observation. The strategy entails taking a close look at matters relevant to the subject of the study while on-site. According to Kothari (2007:17), observation as a method of data collection, implies the collection of information by way of the investigator's own observation, without necessarily interviewing the respondents. An observation checklist was designed in order to implement the strategy successfully.

### **1.6.3.3 Documents Analysis**

Documents are an important source of data common in most schools and provide evidence and details of professional lives of school personnel (Briggs & Coleman, 2007:278). Document analysis can include internal documents such as memos, external communication documents such as newsletters, news releases and minutes books to mention a few. Document analysis will provide the researcher with an opportunity to read between the lines of official discourse and then triangulate this information through interviews and observations.

## **1.7 POPULATION**

A population is a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying (Mouton, 2002:134). Population in this study consisted of school principals and heads of departments (HoDs) from the public primary schools in the Motupa Circuit- Limpopo Province, South Africa.

## **1.8 SAMPLING AND SUBJECTS**

In this study the researcher employed non-probability sampling method as it does not give equal opportunity of selection for every individual in the target population. Purposive or judgemental sampling is employed as information-rich respondents are sought in order to meet the purpose of the study.

A sample of nine (9) subjects, consisting of three (3) primary school principals and six (6) heads of department (HoDs) was selected for this study. The subjects were purposively selected on the basis of being information-rich informants and as representative samples for the target population and thus meet the purpose of the study. The participants were from schools with similar characteristics as those that were not sampled. Principals and HoDs represent all individuals responsible for the day-to-day curriculum management of schools in the Motupa Circuit primary schools. The subjects were identified as important data sources for analysis and interpretation in the study.

## **1.9 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis involves reducing to manageable proportion the wealth of data one has collected or has available (Mouton, 1996:161). Analysis, according to White (2005:256), entails bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of time-consuming creative and fascinating process. The raw data collected in this study in the form of interviews, field notes and tape recorded conversations will be converted into write-ups that can be read and edited for accuracy, commented on and analysed. This raw data will be analysed qualitatively. According to Hoberg (1999:131), qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising data into codes, categories and identifying patterns and themes among the categories.

The researcher first transcribed all tape recorded interviews verbatim immediately after the interviews had taken place. The transcription was done by the researcher himself in order to retain the form and style of the participants' expressions. The researcher further searched through the data collected for any regularity, patterns and topics in the data and wrote words and phrases to represent these topics and patterns. Verbatim words and phrases from the interviews were analysed and used as data to illustrate the findings. The "uhs", "ers", pauses, word emphases, mispronunciations and incomplete sentences are taken and converted into write-ups. Welman *et al.* (2006:214) assert that the purpose of coding data is to analyse and make sense of the data that have been collected. Therefore, codes are used to attach meaning to the raw data using descriptive codes, interpretative codes, pattern codes, reflective remarks and marginal remarks. Coding is a systematic way of developing and refining interpretations of data. Thus, the researcher divide data into topics or categories in order to work with it easily and these emerged categories or topics are used further to compile coding lists with labels and common themes from the respondents' description of their experiences. The themes identified are coded and categorised in order to provide an explanation of a single specific thought, reflecting various aspects of meanings to be used to develop an overall description of data as seen by the respondents in their natural setting. The analysed data from each respondent are displayed in table forms to indicate the findings.

## **1.10 DATA INTERPRETATION**

Once the collected data has been analysed, the researcher proceeded with the interpretation of the results. Qualitative data obtained and analysed are presented and interpreted through various themes and patterns which emerged from the data collected during the semi-structured interviews with the three principals and six heads of departments (HoDs).

The reason for conducting interviews with principals is quite vital. As the main research respondent, the principals are considered to have rich information regarding the research question. Interviews conducted with HoDs assisted the researcher to confirm data collected from the principals. If data collected from principals has reliability weaknesses, this will be compared with data in which reliability is strength from the unobtrusive measures and the HoDs as independent data sources. Individual interviews with HoDs are conducted in order to find out to what extent they are involved in the curriculum and instruction as members of the SMT, and moreover that they work hand in hand with the principal. As Leedy (1993:320) asserts, the aim of interpretation of data is to defend one's research that is to justify one's conclusions, to support one's statement with that which has been set initially as a research question. Interpretation of the findings will take into account the main theme of the study, which is the role of the principal as instructional leader and the contextual factors that impact on the instructional leadership role of the principals in the Motupa Circuit.

### **1.11 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE RESEARCH**

Determining the accuracy of the data, discussing the generalisability of it, and advancing the possibilities of replicating a study have long been considered the scientific evidence of a scholarly study (Creswell, 1994:157). This can only be achieved by establishing the reliability and validity of the research instrument.

The study is based on the investigation of the role of primary school principals as instructional leaders; hence reliability of principals' responses is addressed through individual-interviews conducted with the HoDs. The strength and weaknesses of the data collected from the principals is confirmed by the data from the other respondents. If data collected from principals has reliability weaknesses this is compared with data in which reliability is strength from the other respondents, hence, triangulation. Data collected from an in-depth individual-interview with HoDs



and other data sources in the study is triangulated with data from individual interviews with principals as dependent data sources in this study.

In order to increase the reliability of the study, the researcher did the following:

- Tape record the interview proceedings;
- Transcribe data by using verbatim accounts of conversations, transcripts and direct quotations;
- Use low-inference descriptions such as concrete, precise descriptions of field notes in order to corroborate the findings for reliability;
- Qualitative reliability indicates that the researcher's approach will be consistent across different researchers and different projects (Creswell, 2008:190). The reliability procedures to be considered in this Checking transcript to make sure that they do not contain obvious mistakes during transcription; and
- Making sure that that there is no drift in the definition of codes, a shift of meaning of codes during the process of coding (Creswell, 2008:190).

The researcher employed the following validity strategies to ensure the accuracy of the findings:

- Reviewing the relevant literature on the problem in order to establish their findings and by discussing the research problem with the respondents before administering the instrument;

- Allowing interim data analysis and corroboration to ensure a match between findings and participants' findings;
- Obtaining literal statements of participants and quotations from documents;
- Recording precise, almost literal and detailed descriptions of people and situations;
- The researcher triangulated different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build coherent justification of themes;
- When qualitative researchers refer to validity, they imply that the research will be plausible, credible, trustworthy and defensible (Walsh: 2001), hence, triangulation was used through different data sources and the information obtained from educators and HoDs ensured the extent to which these independent measures confirm or contradict the research findings;
- Using member checking to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings by taking the final report or specific descriptions or themes back to the participants and determining whether these participants felt that they were accurate;
- Clarifying bias which might have been brought to the study;
- Preventing negative or discrepant information that could run counter to the themes; and

- Using an external auditor to review the entire project. In this case my supervisor reviewed the entire project at the conclusion of the study (Creswell, 2008:190-192).

Internal validity refers to the degree to which the explanations of a phenomenon match the reality of the world. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:324) describe validity of qualitative design as the degree to which the interpretations and concepts have mutual meaning for the participants and the researcher. The participants and the researcher agreed on the descriptions and meanings of different events. The following strategies were used to increase internal validity of the study; the language used in the interview was familiar to both the participants and the researcher, which increased a common understanding. The interviews were conducted in natural setting of schools, and reflected the reality of life experiences accurately.

## **1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Conducting research is an ethical enterprise; ethics is referred to as a system of morals, rules of behaviour and provide researchers with a code of moral guidelines on how to conduct research in a morally acceptable way (Struwig & Stead, 2001). According to Babbie (2004:62), the term ethical is defined as confirming to the standards of conduct of a given profession or group.

In this study, the researcher adhered to the most important ethical standards of research, such as:

- Voluntary participation: participants were not compelled, coerced or not required to participate without their will to do so;

- Informed consent: informing participants about the research study in a way that is clear to them. The benefit of participation was explained and informed consent was obtained in writing;
- Confidentiality and anonymity: ensure that participants' right to privacy was protected by ensuring confidentiality;
- Access and acceptance: the researcher respected individual participants' freedom to decline participation or to withdraw from the research study; hence they were made aware of the purpose and their roles in the study;
- Confidentiality, anonymity (relating to participants) and freedom of participation;
- All participants were required to complete a consent form;
- The researcher did not engage in any form of deception throughout the course of the study;
- All the hard data were stored in a locked cabinet and the data was destroyed after completion of the analysis; and
- All electronic data was stored on a computer requiring a password to access.

Ethical considerations are discussed in more detail in section 3.8 of Chapter 3.

### **1.13 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study will highlight the significance of principals' instructional leadership role as one of the means towards improving the quality of teaching and learning for quality results. In addition, the findings of the study can contribute towards strengthening the principals' role in the Motupa Circuit schools, and further enhance their professional competency in the management of the curriculum with a view towards improving school effectiveness and functionality for excellence in learners' achievements.

The study may be used as an important tool for advancing knowledge, promoting progress and enabling principals and educators to relate more effectively to their working environment, and to accomplish their assigned purposes and to resolve their conflicts. The findings and recommendations from this study may be useful to policy makers in the Department of Basic Education, District Senior Managers, Circuit Officials, Curriculum Advisors, Principals and subjects specialists involved in curriculum advisory services and in other further research projects.

### **1.14 DEFINITION OF TERMS / CONCEPTS**

Neumann (1997:40) asserts that everyday culture is filled with concepts, but many of them are vague and full of definitions. Thus, it is imperative to clarify concepts used in the study as they may have different meanings for different people, and as a result, one may lose their connotative meaning. The concepts clarified below are crucial to an understanding of the discourse in this study.

#### 1.14.1 PRINCIPAL

The word principal as used in the study means an educator who is appointed to be the head of the school (Kwazulu-Natal Education Department, 1996:04) cited in Mbatha (2004). This definition is in line with the views of Smith *et al.* (2001:10) who maintain that the principal at school may be referred to as the head teacher. These authors further assert that as the head teacher, the principal becomes the controller of the classroom processes, namely; teaching and learning at school.

#### 1.14.2 ROLE

According to Babbie (2004:46), the role of a person in an institution is a set of expected behaviours in that institution. In the same way, Whisenand (1996:14) defines the role as the behaviour requirements, expected of a person filling a particular position in an organisation. By phrases “expected behaviours” and “behaviour requirements” as used in the two above mentioned definitions of role, one can argue that such expectations associated with the position a person holds in an institution, for example; the obligation associated with the principal’s position at school would amount to his/her role at school.

#### 1.14.3 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Keefe and Jenkins (1991:vii) define instructional leadership as the provision of education resources and support to teachers and learners for the improvement of teaching and learning at school. According to De Bevoise (1984:15), instructional leadership is all actions that a principal takes or delegates to others to promote growth in learners’ learning. In this study, instructional leadership means all the efforts and actions the principal takes to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place at school. Instructional leadership entails the management of the curriculum and instruction which involves the setting of clear goals, allocation of

learning and teaching resources, monitoring lesson plans and developing and evaluating teachers (Flath, 1989:12). Oldroyd, Elssner and Poster (1996:67) describe instructional leadership as the one in school in which a head teacher's activities are focused centrally on supporting teaching and learning in the classroom and always strive to ensure excellence in learners' performance. In short, these are actions that a principal takes or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning.

## **1.15 CHAPTER DIVISIONS**

The study is divided into five chapters which are described here under.

Chapter 1 introduces and provides background to the study, the problem statement, research questions, the purposes of research, defines key concepts, discusses the research methodology and captures the significance of the study in a succinct manner.

Chapter 2 discusses the literature review. It discusses current debates on the role of the principal as an instructional leader, and recognises that the principal ensures that teaching and learning is carried out more effectively with the vision of the school in mind with a view to improving learner performance.

Chapter 3 outlines the research design and methodology used in the study. It also provides information on how the qualitative research approach which involves interviews, observations and document analysis as the major data collection techniques were conducted.

Chapter 4 focused on data analysis and interpretation from biographical details of participants, observations, interviews and written documentations. This process involved unitising data, identifying categories and discussing emerging patterns.

From these emerging patterns, the researcher was able to derive findings for analysis and discussion. The study also identified contextual factors that impact on the principal's instructional leadership roles.

Chapter 5 summarises the findings, recommendations and conclusions of the study. This is the final chapter of the dissertation, and provides closure to the study.

## **1.16 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided a general introductory background to the study on the role of the principal as instructional leader which raised concerns in the education fraternity, given the poor state of learners' performance in the Motupa Circuit, Limpopo Province. The chapter also discussed the research problem, and alluded to the primary school curriculum as problematic. The primary school learners' inability to read, write and count was revealed by the Annual National Assessment (ANA) results. The study's research questions, aims, objectives and purpose of the study were highlighted. The qualitative research methodology is singled out as the suitable research methodology for the study. The significance of the study is outlined and key concepts involved in the study were clarified. The chapter further provides the demarcation and programme of the study.

The next chapter provides literature review on the instructional leadership role of the principal.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides literature review on the role of the principal as an instructional leader. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:474), literature review is a summary and analysis of related literature that is conducted to provide insight about a study. Therefore, this chapter gives an overview of the current context in which the research is situated, and also provides contemporary debates by researchers, academics and policy makers on the instructional leadership role of the principal. The purpose is to share the results of other studies that are closely related to the one being undertaken.

The literature review of a study provides a benchmark for comparing the results of other studies and their findings (Creswell, 2005:25). Therefore, this study's literature review provides the larger, ongoing dialogue on the instructional leadership role of the principal, filling in gaps and extending prior studies.

The concept of "instructional leadership" is discussed hereunder in Section 2.2.

#### **2.2 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP - WORKING DEFINITION**

A brief reference to the meaning of the concept "instructional leadership" was made in section 1.12.3 in Chapter One. However, the concept will be defined in greater detail in this section in order to formulate a working definition of instructional leadership for this study in this chapter. Various authors have defined instructional leadership in different ways. The following are views or assertions of some authors.

De Bevoice (1984) defines instructional leadership as those actions that the principal takes or delegates to others to promote growth in student learning. Those actions may include, amongst other things, arranging for extra classes, organising and supervising after school study periods, and other activities related to teaching and learning. Greenfield (1987:60) agrees with De Bevoice and defines instructional leadership as the actions taken by the principal with the intention of developing a productive and satisfying working environment for teachers and desirable learning condition for children. Suggested in the above definition is the principal's ability to take actions that ensure effective teaching and learning at school.

The assertion by Peterson (1987:143) is that instructional leadership is a set of behaviours by which the principal facilitates the academic achievement in schools and classrooms. These behaviours include:

- regularly observing teachers and providing feedback.
- monitoring student academic progress by reviewing tests results with teachers.
- promoting staff development by organising staff meetings, workshops, and in-service training for teachers.
- securing the needed instructional resources for teachers and learners.
- communicating to teachers on their responsibilities for student achievements.
- working with teachers to build a co-ordinate instructional progress at school.

The concept "instructional leadership" is closely related to the concept of supervision to the extent that one may think that they mean one and the same thing. Clarification of these concepts is necessary to draw a line between them. According to Burke and Krey (2006:20), supervision is an instructional leadership

task that relates perspectives to behaviour, focuses on purposes, contributes to and supports organisational actions, coordinates interactions, provides for improvements and maintenance of the instructional programme and assesses goal achievements. While the concepts sound like they are the same, instructional leadership is a supervisory work applicable to the teaching and learning situation. Supervision is a concept that is applicable to any work situation in which two or more people are involved.

According to Kruger and Van Schalkwyk (1993:111), instructional leadership entails:

- Staff development;
- Class visitation and follow-up discussions;
- Viewing the learners' work;
- Discussing teaching methods with teachers individually;
- Moderation of tests and examinations;
- Checking scheme of works and records of work done; and
- Discussing with individual learners' and teachers about academic work.

Budhal (2000:03) defines instructional leadership as the process by which principals in effective schools immerse themselves in the actual teaching and learning programmes of the school in order to identify the instructional and general problems the educators and learners may experience at the school. In identifying the instructional and general problems of educators and learners, the principal as an instructional leader offers guidance and support to solve the experienced problems so that at the end effective teaching and learning occur at school.

From the views expressed by different authors in the definitions cited above, it can be concluded that instructional leadership entails:

- The promotion of effective teaching and learning as the principal's central concern;
- The principal's actions to develop desirable learning conditions for learners;
- The principal's role in providing direction, resources and support to teachers and learners;
- The principal's various ways of facilitating academic achievement in school and classrooms;
- The principal's ways of empowering educators in order to enhance commitment to student learning;
- The principal's involvement in the actual teaching and learning programmes; and
- The principal's identification of and assisting in solving instructional and general problems at school.

For the purpose of this study, instructional leadership is understood to mean the principal's actions to promote effective teaching and learning at school. The principal's actions would encompass, amongst other things, the provision of direction, resources and support to teachers and improvement of teaching and learning at school for learners' excellent performance in examinations.

Contemporary debates on the leadership role of principals follow hereunder in section 2.3.

## **2.3 CONTEMPORARY DEBATES ON THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE OF PRINCIPALS**

There is a discussion going on in South Africa on the principals' instructional leadership role. Over the past decades, principals' accountability within the educational discourse has attracted more attention from various researchers, academics and policy makers (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2009:235). The debates were motivated by the deteriorating standards on learners' performance, and the changing roles of principals from being managers and administrators to instructional or curriculum leaders, who should ensure effective and quality teaching and learning for learners' excellent performance.

According to Sacred Heart College (2000:01), instructional leadership is about guiding and inspiring. School principals as instructional leaders are responsible for taking and putting the school curriculum into practice and improving it. Therefore, good instructional leadership is the path to good learning and teaching. In an educational context, Bush and West-Burnham (1994:67) define instructional leadership in a school situation as consistently recognised and a vital factor in school effectiveness. Therefore, instructional leadership role is the ability to take initiatives and to act decisively. It involves the degree of influence on colleagues in making decisions, and the extent to which a leader acts in terms of priorities, opportunities, insight, point of view and judgement that determines principals' instructional leadership qualities.

The Department of Basic Education (2014:01) fully defines the leadership role of school principals and the key aspects of their professionalism as follows: that principals must effectively promote, record, manage and support the best quality teaching and learning; the purpose of which is to enable learners to attain the highest levels of achievement for their own good, the good of their community and of the country as a whole. Therefore, principals have a responsibility to promote a

successful learning culture within the school and to develop the school as a learning organisation, and at the heart of the principal's role is a fundamental responsibility for the management of the curriculum, the enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning and the raising of levels of learner achievement.

School principals are leaders par excellence. According to Mullican and Ainsworth (2012), leadership is a broader term than educational leadership. The two authors point out that research findings in the fields other than education have challenged some beliefs regarding leadership. Mullican and Ainsworth (2012), assert that leadership requires status and power within organisations and that a leader should maintain some degree of psychological distance from his or her subordinates.

According to Hodgkins (in Ramalepe, 2010:10), Leadership is the moving of men towards goals through organisations, and it can be done well, badly or indifferently, and that leaders shape the goals, motivates actions of others. Therefore, school leadership is the process whereby teachers, learners and parents are influenced by the school management towards goal setting and attainment. Hence principals play a cardinal role in the management of schools. Ornstein(2012) concurs with the above authors by pointing out that it is essential for principals to be skilled in school management and instruction as the most important and influential individual in the school.

Management is, according to Robbins and Coulter (2005), coordinating work activities, so that they are completed efficiently and effectively with and through other people, and involve functions such as planning, organising, leading and controlling. Lemmer and Badenhorst (2006:343) assert that the principal is the most important and influential individual in the school, and in his or her capacity, sets the tone of the school, the climate for learning and teaching, the level of professionalism and morale, and the degree of concern for what students may or may not become. As a school manager, the principal is responsible for the practical

operation of the school. He or she evokes newness, change, encouragement and inspiration.

Leadership has been widely acknowledged amongst the majority of countries in the western world as the lead component in educational effectiveness and the need to raise standards (Clarke, 2005:71). Clarke (2005) points out that leadership is closely concerned with matters such as power, authority and responsibility. A principal is charged with the responsibility of running a school, and in order to do so he or she needs to have the authority to make certain decisions, hence invested authority gives the principal that power to act. Effective school leadership and management can help improve school principals' effectiveness, as they require the function of quality assurance control, learner management, staffing, parent management, staff motivation and conflict management (Ramalepe, 2010:3). Therefore, the successful principal should have strong leadership and management qualities to enable him or her to manage the curriculum and instruction.

Angie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education responded to the findings by the Limpopo Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate on the implementation of the Foundation for Learning campaign (FFLC) since 2008, which revealed that learners are still experiencing challenges in reading, and perform poorly in literacy and numeracy, remarked that some of the contributory factors to the underperforming schools are:

- a lack of instructional leadership skills by principals.
- inadequate supervision of the work of both learners and educators.
- school management teams who do not understand their roles and responsibilities.
- poor curriculum planning and poor subject offerings and combinations (Department of Basic Education, 2010).

The Minister recommended the need for major intervention in terms of management and leadership by principals. The Minister further made reference to the decline in the 2009 matric results; from 62% in 2008 to 60% in 2009, and suggested strategies to address the challenges to enhance the culture of learning and teaching in schools. The following recommendations were made that school principals should make every effort to support the (FFLC), by ensuring that:

- every classroom has the basic teaching and learning resources to enable teachers to teach effectively.
- every teacher in the Foundation and Intermediate phase sets aside reading time (at least 30 minutes every day) on additional reading for all learners.
- every teacher does regular assessments to monitor and track learner progress.
- every teacher takes initiative to ensure positive change amongst his or her learners.
- every principal guides, monitors and provides leadership to teachers so that they have the critical skills to build the required learner competencies (DBE, 2010).

A study by Maenetje (2007:100) recommended a further research on school managers' competency as the study failed to uncover that competency might be the cause of poor performance in the public schools in Limpopo Province. According to Mohlala (2010:2), the assessment of underperforming schools showed that Limpopo Province tops the list with 186 schools, and this assessment indicated that rural public schools have enormous challenges.

Kobola (2007: 124) recommends that the Department of Basic Education should train principals on the management of curriculum change and implementation. He further asserts that most principals do not play their roles as instructional leaders,



hence this retarded progress and school effectiveness in curriculum delivery, as most principals do not have adequate information on the curriculum due to inadequate training. Therefore, principals must be knowledgeable persons who will be able to facilitate staff development and create opportunities for professional growth.

At the launch of the Culture of Learning and Teaching Services (COLTS), former South African President Mbeki (2006:1) called upon all stakeholders in education to “begin working together with the government and the country as a whole to ensure that the culture of learning and teaching is developed in our institutions”. In doing so, he stressed that the process of establishing a “culture of learning and teaching in our institutions is indeed a very urgent one” (Mbeki, 2006:1).

A similar call was made by the current South African President, Jacob Zuma (2009a: 65) at the opening of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) Annual Congress, where he very pertinently stated that “a teacher’s union such as the South African Democratic Teacher’s Union (SADTU), must actively take up broader educational issues such as how to bring back the culture of learning and teaching which is not nationally prevalent within all South African schools and academic institutions”.

Addressing church leaders, President Zuma (2009b) also indicated that government had made education a priority for the next five years and wanted to promote a new culture of effective learning and teaching. He further referred to the role that the church has historically played in education, and requested their support in the transformation of education in South Africa. The difficulty encountered in moving from rallying cries and mere rhetoric of the need for a culture of learning, to making it a reality in South African schools and institutions could well stem from the fact that its very foundations are flawed.

Numerous researchers, academics and policy makers have stressed that a focus on effective leadership and management is crucial in order to bring about the envisaged change for excellence in schools. It is a well-known fact that principals' instructional leadership role can play a key role in school improvement and effectiveness. The instructional leadership roles of the principal are discussed hereunder in section 2.4.

## **2.4 THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL**

There was a change during the 1980's, which called for a shift in emphasis from principals being managers or administrators to being instructional, curriculum or academic leaders. Instructional leaders are required to be involved in direct supervision of the instructional process and had to ensure that their schools remained focused on learning and teaching (Clarke, 2011). Later, in the first half of the 1990's attention to instructional leadership seemed to waiver, displaced by discussions of school-based management and facilitative leadership (Van der Bank, 2006:118). The role of a learning expert remains important today, but in addition principals are now expected to be not only learning experts but also experts in knowledge areas. According to the Department of Basic Education (2014:11), the school principal needs to know about:

- The National Curriculum Statement and the value and goals which shape it;
- Practices of effective teaching and learning which support the delivery of the National Curriculum Statement;
- Strategies for the effective monitoring and evaluation of performance in relation to the National Curriculum Statement;
- Methods of accumulating data, and of data analysis, relevant to monitoring and evaluating performance in relation to the National Curriculum Statement;

- Using evidence derived from research and practice to inform the improvement of teaching and learning and the enhancement of a learning culture;
- Using technology to support teaching, learning and assessment;
- Accessing and utilising resources to support teaching and learning;
- Strategies and approaches for the development of a learning culture in the school and for raising levels of achievement and excellence in any context;
- Building and developing a nurturing and supportive environment for effective teaching and learning;
- Approaches and current trends in building and developing the school as a learning organization;
- Social, political, economic and health conditions of the school and wider community which impact upon individual learning behaviours, needs, attendance and well-being;
- Approaches to managing specific learning needs, learner behaviour and attendance; and
- Approaches to ensuring equity in learner access to high quality teaching and learning.

Principals have historically spent little time coordinating activities in curriculum and instruction, while also spending much less time observing teachers in the classrooms. According to Ornstein (2012), there is a considerable agreement in the literature on the need for the principal to be a leader in the areas of curriculum and instruction, but there is considerable disagreement on what specific roles and behaviours should be exhibited and how much time should be devoted to these areas of leadership. The principal's dealing with the daily operation of the school and even attending to unscheduled meetings tend to take up most of their time.

Murphy (2007) suggested six curriculum and instructional roles for the principal:

- Promoting quality instruction: Ensuring consistency and coordination of instructional programme, and defining recommended methods of instruction.
- Supervising and evaluating instruction: Ensuring that school goals are translated into practice at the classroom level, and monitoring classroom instruction through numerous classroom observations.
- Allocating and protecting instructional time: Providing teachers with uninterrupted blocks of instructional time and ensuring that basic skills and/or academic subjects are taught.
- Coordinating the curriculum: Translating curriculum knowledge into meaningful curricular program, matching instructional objectives with curricular materials and standardised tests, and ensuring curriculum continuity vertically and across grade levels.
- Promoting content coverage: Ensuring that content of specific courses is covered in class and extended outside of classroom by developing and enforcing homework policies.
- Monitoring students' progress: Using both criterion and standardised reference and evaluate their progress, as well as using test results to set or modify school goals (Murphy, 2007).

To espouse the responsibilities of school principals, Van Deventer and Kruger (2007:246) maintain that the instructional leadership role of principals is multifaceted and includes three dimensions:

- The first dimension involves defining the school's vision and mission, which includes framing and communicating the school's aims.
- The second dimension involves managing the instructional programme, which involves knowing and coordinating the curriculum and instruction, supervising and evaluating instruction and monitoring learner progress.
- The third dimension involves promoting a positive learning environment by setting standards and expectations, protecting instructional time and promoting quality learners' performance.

Drawing from the three dimensions, Van Deventer and Kruger (2007:249) argue that the instructional leadership role of school principals would lead to an enhancement of quality teaching and learning for quality learners' results. Therefore, curricular knowledge of the principal enables him or her to direct, inspire and energise the team. This is further supported by Mason (2009:20) who states that an instructional leader provides curricular direction for the team, inspires and energises the team, motivates and mediates educational policies to the team, and monitors the process. Mason (2009) further indicates that in providing instructional leadership, the principal and members of the SMT will do the following:

- Oversee curriculum planning in the school;
- Develop and manage assessment programme and strategies;
- Ensure that teaching and learning is effective;
- Ensure that classroom activities are learner-paced and learner-centred;
- Develop and use team planning techniques; and
- Develop and manage learning and teaching resources.

The third dimension provides that the principal should in addition to overseeing the curriculum in the school, supervise and evaluate. Instructional supervision is an instructional leadership task of the principal that relates to functions such as directing schools' curriculum goals, contributing to and supporting school's purposes and activities, coordinating various interactions within the school, and maintaining instructional programme and assessing goal achievement. In addition to the supervision responsibility, the school principal protects the instructional time by drawing up an effective time table.

The school time table is crucial because it ensures that the teaching and learning process proceeds in the most predictable and ideal circumstances. In managing the instructional programme, school principals should give guidance to educators on aspects such as modes of assessments, validity, reliability and objectivity of examination, marking of papers, administration of internal and external examination, the relationship and influence of formative and summative assessment, on teaching and recording, reporting evidence of learner performance.

Kruger (2007:203) further asserts that the principal's main responsibility is to create conditions in the school in which the learners can receive quality instruction both inside and outside the classroom. According to Van Deventer and Kruger (2007:247), the following are widely regarded as the five basic elements of the instructional leadership task of a principal:

- Defining the school's mission;
- Managing curriculum and instruction;
- Supervising teaching;
- Monitoring learner progress; and
- Promoting an instructional climate.

Mason (2006:24) recognises the existence of members of the SMT and their cooperation in managing the school. He encourages participative leadership which involves colleagues in the decision-making process and in sharing power. Although he did not give a definition of instructional leadership, he described the duties of an instructional leader. For the purposes of this study, instructional leadership refers to the action the principal, together with other members of the school management team, take to promote effective teaching and learning.

The principal must acknowledge educators for exemplary teaching and encourage them to share with others. He or she must identify good teaching through class visits so as to provide feedback that will promote professional growth. The principal should communicate to the staff the essential beliefs that:

- all learners can learn and experience success.
- success builds upon success.
- schools can enhance learner success and that,
- learners' outcomes must be clearly defined to guide instructional programme and decisions.
- Furthermore, he/she must create a visible presence in day-to-day activities and model behaviour consistent with the school' vision (Spady & Marshall in Mazibuko, 2003:26).

The school principal as instructional leader must provide orientation and training on curriculum delivery and implementation to the whole staff, both experienced and new educators through a staff development programme, by establishing a School Development Team (SDT) (DOE, 2006:15). The school development team should include some members of the SMT and some of the teaching and administrative staff. The SDT, therefore, plans and runs the whole staff development programme and report regularly to the SMT.

According to the DOE (2006:15-20), the following are factors that principals as instructional leaders must consider in turning schools into learning organisations:

- Develop the curriculum: The SDT must ensure that the curriculum is developed. To do this, they should form curriculum committees.
- The Curriculum Committee makes sure that the whole school is using the current Curriculum principles and practices properly; it helps educators to develop programme organisers, to design learning activities, and to work in teams.
- Provide information: According to the Department of Education (2006: 16), educators need information to successfully put the curriculum into practice. Therefore, principals must ensure that key curriculum policies are developed and implemented.
- Organise meetings for the different phases: In primary schools, the Curriculum Committee organises meetings for educators in the three different phases- Foundation, Intermediate and Senior – and these three groups probably meet separately. In secondary schools, the committee organises similar meetings for each learning area. At the beginning of each term, each group discusses and plans the curriculum content for their phases or learning area, and the use of resources and assessment methods.
- Call the groups together: Once a term, the Curriculum Committee calls all the groups together.  
Each group presents its curriculum to the bigger group of educators for joint discussion. All the educators reach an agreement on the content



and outcomes for each phase or learning area. In this way, the Curriculum Committee ensures progression from one phase to another.

The following three points were suggested to principals as instructional leaders in ensuring that quality and effective teaching is promoted (DOE, 2006).

- Make sure that grade teachers do short-term planning: Once a week, groups of grade teachers meet to develop short-term plans for the grade. They develop programme organisers with activities and assessment strategies.
- Develop lessons: The Curriculum Committee needs to help educators to design their lessons based on the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). They need to consider that it is important to plan the presentation of their lessons, especially necessary for lessons that include practical work. These lessons should comply with the mode of delivery, classroom organisation, resources needed and the assessment methods and criteria.
- Conduct formal and informal classroom visits: Formal classroom visits for development appraisal must be conducted. All schools in South Africa are conducting official development appraisal for all educators (from beginner educators to heads of department to principals). The Staff Development Teams of each school organise it through the Development Appraisal Team (DAT). They organise two classroom observations for each educator (one announced and one unannounced) to assess their practice and decide what forms of help the school can provide if an educator needs it. Informal classroom visits for curriculum development must also be conducted. The purpose of this visit is to help educators with their work, like implementing continuous assessment

strategies, establishing a learner-centred classroom, observing the effectiveness of group work, managing time, or evaluating the learners' use of worksheets.

Mason (2006:29) states that an instructional leader provides curricular direction for the team, inspires and energises the team, motivates and mediates educational policy to the team, mentors and supports the team and monitors progress. The principal as an instructional leader must, therefore, acknowledge educators for exemplary teaching and encourage them to share with others. He or she must identify good teaching and provide feedback that promotes professional growth.

According to Kruger (2007:204), the following are characteristics of principals who are good instructional leaders:

- They are dedicated to the aims of the school.
- They have insight into the instructional programme of the school.
- They have positive relationships with teachers and learners.
- They show consideration for others.
- They support the staff and learners.
- They practise participative management, which includes teachers, learners and the community.
- They practise strong and visible leadership.
- They mobilise aids in the attainment of the school's objectives.
- They have high expectations.

They place a premium on the orderly running of the school's instructional programme and show this by not interrupting it unnecessarily.

In South Africa, principals face three major challenges in their day-to-day management duties, namely,

- Handling a greater variety of school-based decisions than before;
- Restoration of a sound culture of teaching and learning in which effective education can take place; and.
- Improving the quality of education in South Africa (Kruger, 2007:206).  
The core roles and responsibilities of principals as instructional leaders as perceived by various scholars and authors are; focus on teaching and learning, motivation, monitoring and supporting educators, managing the curriculum and instruction, and the promotion of instructional climate. These core roles and responsibilities are briefly discussed hereunder from section 2.4.1 to 2.4.5.

#### 2.4.1 FOCUS ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

Instructional leaders maintain and model a focus on improving teaching and learning by helping teachers improve their instructional practices and making student achievement the highest priority (Department of Education, 2006:23). Instructional leaders always motivate students to learn and teachers to improve their qualifications in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

#### 2.4.2 MOTIVATION

Thorkildsen (2006: xi) defines motivation as an internal force that activates, guides and maintains behaviour over time. It is difficult to define motivation because it is characterised by complex forces, incentives, needs, tensions and other mechanisms which start and maintain voluntary activity for the attainment of personal aims, indicating that this is an internally generated activity. It can also be regarded as a force which causes action which is based on particular human needs. Human needs are directly connected to human action. If a need is not

satisfied, people will do everything in their power to satisfy. As such, a need is a potential motivator until it has been satisfied.

According to Reeve (2005:6), motivation concerns those processes that give behaviour its energy and direction. He goes on to say that a motive is an internal process that energises and directs behaviour. For the purpose of this study, motivation can be defined as a management strategy to inspire people with the vision, mission and goals of the institution so that attainment of the institution goals becomes the individual's driving force. Therefore, the principal should keep the above definitions in mind when motivating the staff to deliver curriculum effectively. It is important to keep in mind that people have a need to understand their levels of ability and the correctness of their opinions. The principal may motivate staff members by allocating new challenging duties and allowing them the opportunity to make decisions within policy guidelines. This can be done as follows:

- The principal should clearly communicate positive and negative rewards that are linked directly to performance improvement.
- The principal should demonstrate patience and persistent follow-through when providing positive feedback and reinforcement.
- The principal should be realistic regarding the types of rewards offered. It is also important to try to establish indicators by which the principal can see when an educator is motivated. Motivated educators do the following:
  - They are punctual at work.
  - They look for better ways of doing their work.
  - They are concerned about the quality of their work.
  - They are more productive than apathetic.

- They are committed and give themselves enough time to do their work, even if it means working extra hours (Burke & Krey, 2006: 42).

Therefore, the principal should take into account the basic human needs in his or her strategies for motivation. When delegating duties to staff, the principal should also consider individual potential, abilities and interests for stimulation. Staff members should get as much information as possible on how to do a job and the purpose for which the job is done. Involving staff in decision making may also help to motivate them. Motivation goes hand in hand with monitoring and supporting. Thus, the principal should monitor and support educators in practice.

Monitoring and supporting educators in curriculum activities is discussed in the following section 2.4.3.

### 2.4.3 MONITORING AND SUPPORTING EDUCATORS

The principal, together with the school management team (SMT), manages the process of teaching and learning within the school in accordance with curriculum policy and within the framework of the provincial and national education policy (Department of Education, 2000).

Monitoring and supporting of both educators and learners for quality teaching and learning are among the roles of the principal as an instructional leader. Mason (2006:47-48) indicates that the SMT should monitor and support the following;

- Content teaching: to ensure that the content for teaching and learning is in line with the approved curriculum statement.

- Integration in planning and presentation: to ensure that integration of assessments standards and various methods of teaching are done properly.
- Learning outcomes and assessments standards: to ensure that learning outcomes and assessments standards are correctly arranged to allow progression.
- Learner-centred and learner-paced teaching: to ensure that the teaching pace is determined by the learners' learning progress.
- Application of the curriculum principles as outlined in the policy statements and overview documents such as progression requirements and inclusivity: to ensure that learners with various learning barriers are considered during planning and presentation.

Cunningham and Cordeiro (2005:188) see monitoring and support in the context of class visits. Class visits create opportunity for the SMT to observe teachers' work, give motivation and exercise influence. During supervisory discussion educators will also have the opportunity to talk to the instructional leader about the problems they encounter in their teaching practice.

The principal should conduct class visits in order to give support to educators. He/she should draw up a monitoring instrument which helps during class visits. An Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) should be in place. Structures such as the School Development Team (SDT) and the Development Support Groups (DSG) should be established (Education Labour Relation Council, 2003:8). The appraisal of educators should take place for educators to share their experiences and support each other professionally and morally. In this manner, communication will be strengthened.

Sullivan and Glanz (2005:162) see communication as the most important thing in the observation process. According to them, communication for classroom observation has three basic parts, namely, the planning conference, the observation and feedback conference. During the planning conference, the principal or SMT member and the educator confer about the purpose of the observation and they decide on a focus for the lesson. In addition, they decide on the tool used for observation. It should be the goal of the principal to make the educator feel at ease throughout the observation process. During the lesson presentation, the principal should observe the behaviour, teaching techniques and all issues discussed in the conference. The educator with the guidance of the principal evaluates the lesson using the observation tool. The principal assists while trying to push the educator towards independent reflection so that the latter can continue the process without the principal.

Therefore, the principal should be able to determine areas that need monitoring and together with educators, take into consideration the hidden curriculum in all activities. The principal, together with the SMT, educators and the whole school community, must be able to reap the benefit of the effective instructional leadership role of the principal. Hence, the need to exercise consistency and to sustain quality teaching and learning for quality learner attainment over a longer period of time is possible provided that the principal can manage the curriculum and instruction most effectively.

Management of curriculum and instruction is dealt with in the next section 2.4.4.

#### 2.4.4 MANAGING THE CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

The management of curriculum and instruction is regarded as one of the most important roles and core responsibilities of a principal as an instructional leader.

According to Kruger (2007: 206), the following aspects are important in managing the school's instructional programme: namely,

- Designing an effective school timetable which reflects intra-curricular as well as extra-curricular activities: the principal plays an important role in organising and structuring the school curriculum through the drawing up of a school time table. The timetable is a key to ensuring that the flow of teaching and learning goes on in the most predictable and ideal circumstances.
- Providing efficient administrative support to ensure the effective realisation of the teaching and learning activities: The following administrative activities should be performed when managing the curriculum and instruction;
- The efficient use of teaching time can be ensured by allocating the correct time and periods according to departmental prescriptions, introducing fixed-test periods and avoiding unnecessary encroachment upon lesson periods.
- When drawing up the school timetables, the principal and his/her management team must ensure that classes have been composed as efficiently as possible.
- The principal must ensure that there is an effective provisioning system to support the teaching programme adequately.
- The principal's distribution of work must be as balanced and fair as possible so that staff can proceed unhindered with their teaching task (Kruger, 2007).



- Providing the resources that teachers need to carry out their tasks: Adequate teaching and learning resources are some of the requirements for a successful curriculum and instructional management role by the principal. Principals need to prioritise and make significant decisions which will determine the effectiveness of their school's resource needs.

For the purpose of this study, the term “resource” is taken to include finances, people, materials and equipment. In order to meet the core purpose of the school, financial resources need to be transferred into other forms of resources and the most important resources in this context are those that will enable educators to implement the curriculum with ease in their classrooms (Kobola, 2007:45).

Therefore, the principal as a resource person responsible for providing resources for teaching and learning is in a way promoting the school climate which is expected to be as conducive as possible to ensure effective teaching and learning for quality results.

The promotion of the school climate by the principal as instructional leader is dealt with in section 2.4.5 below.

#### 2.4.5 PROMOTING THE INSTRUCTIONAL CLIMATE

The establishment and maintenance of a positive school climate is mainly the instructional leadership task of the principal (Kruger, 2007: 253). A positive school climate has a direct effect on the school productivity, performance and job satisfaction; therefore, it is one of the important tasks of the principal.

According to Kobola (2007:47), organisational climate contributes to the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the school. The principal should have full

knowledge of what constitutes positive school climate so that she/he behaves in such a way that she/he is able to create and maintain a positive school climate.

Principals can carefully plan the creation of positive school climate by being positive, knowledgeable, energetic and communicative leaders. They should involve educators in the decision-making process and empower educators to identify, discuss and internalise the process of curriculum and instruction. Principals should present positive attitudes, be consistent, honest and credible in leading the process of curriculum instruction (Sergiovanni & Starrat, 2007:339, cited in Kobola, 2007). They should be able to remove fear, reward risk taking and generate organisational commitment to the school.

Therefore, a positive school climate will foster the spirit of cooperation and collegiality and further motivate principals and educators to face the challenges of curriculum instruction with confidence. The quality of work relationship that exists in a school has an influence on the schools' ability to improve. This will further improve learners' performance, hence the realisation of the significance of the instructional leadership role of the principal.

In section 2.5 below, the significance of the instructional leadership role of the principal is dealt with.

## **2.5 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL**

Principals who spend most of their time on administrative matters rather than on managing and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning experience a dismal learner performance in externally benchmarked tests (Clarke, 2011). Clarke (2011) further points out that principal and their leadership teams tend to focus their efforts on ensuring that they comply with departmental rules and regulations and the bureaucratic administrative demands of district officials rather than on addressing

the needs of their learners, particularly in underperforming schools. Therefore, principals are not only administrative leaders, but are instructional leaders as well. According to Ornstein (2012), principals have historically spent little time coordinating activities in curriculum and instruction, and they spent less time observing teachers in the classrooms. Therefore, principals must assume instructional leadership function in helping to determine what is needed now as well as what will be needed in the future to improve learners' performance.

According to King in Van der Bank (2006:118-121), the significance of the principal's instructional leadership role is as follows:

- Principals as instructional leaders maintain and model a focus on improving teaching and learning by helping teachers improve their instructional practices and by making student achievement their highest priority.
- They devote significant time to developing instructional leadership capacity in others in their schools, by distributing responsibilities for getting the work done among teachers and other staff members.
- The new generation of instructional leaders actively creates conditions that encourage professional learning communities. Research findings show that schools that function as learning communities produce higher levels of student achievements.
- Instructional leaders provide regular opportunities for educators to work together on issues of teaching and learning. They allocate time during the school day for conversation and study about effective practices.
- They work with parents, school board members, and other interested groups to share and interpret achievement results about what students

are learning, areas that need improvement, and plans for improvement efforts.

- They focus on improving learning, and this drives every conversation about budget development and every decision about how to use existing resources cost effectively (Van der Bank, 2006).

## **2.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has covered the literature related to principals as instructional leaders. It discussed contemporary debates on the principal's instructional leadership role. These debates were motivated by the deteriorating standards on learners' performance, and the changing roles of principals from being managers and administrators to instructional or curriculum leaders, who should ensure effective and quality teaching and learning for excellence.

The instructional leadership role of the principal is basically to ensure that teaching and learning is carried out more effectively with the vision of the school in mind, and to improve the quality of learners' performances. Given the conceptual framework in this literature, one is well aware of all the roles and responsibilities expected of a principal, and the significance of the instructional leadership role. What is not yet known is whether principals are fully aware of their roles as instructional leaders as revealed in the literature study or review. One cannot also rule out the fact that principals in different contexts may have different experiences that could add to the description of their roles as instructional leaders. The chapter clearly outlined the relevant literature as the basis of the research study.

In the next chapter the research methodology is discussed.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the research methodology employed in conducting the study. It explains how the research methodology was applied to address the research questions formulated in section 1.3. The chapter outlines the methodological processes followed in generating data from research participants on the instructional leadership role of principals in the Motupa Circuit, Limpopo.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology is a description and analysis of the research methods chosen for the study, their limitations and resources of clarifying their presuppositions and consequences (Naidoo, 2006:64). Naidoo points out that the selected methodology must enable the researcher to deliver data findings that address the research question. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 118), research methodology is a plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures to answer research question(s). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) maintain that the goal is to provide results that are judged to be credible. Similarly, Creswell (2007:3) asserts that the research methodology is a plan or procedures that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collections and analysis.

There are two main types of research methodologies, namely: quantitative and qualitative. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:14), the two terms “quantitative” and “qualitative” are used frequently to identify different modes of inquiry or approaches to research. Quantitative and qualitative research studies

are both conducted in education. The most obvious distinction is the form of data presentation. In quantitative research, statistical results are presented in numbers, while in qualitative research data are presented as a narration with words (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:15). It is therefore essential to discuss the approach that was used in this study for ensuring that it is the most suitable research methodology selected for this study.

An overview of the quantitative research methodology is briefly discussed hereunder in section 3.2.1.

### 3.2.1 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

Denzin and Lincoln (2011:4) assert that a quantitative study emphasizes the use of numerical measures to arrive at specific findings. Data collection in quantitative research is accumulated by means of inanimate instruments such as scales, tests, surveys, questionnaires and computers (Storbeck, 1994:4). Data analysis in quantitative inquiry is achieved deductively by statistical methods. Creswell (2008:14) is of the opinion that quantitative research is . . . “more impersonal and experimental”. According to Best and Kahn (2006:89), quantitative research consists of those studies in which data are collected and analysed in terms of numbers. Leedy and Ormrod (2001:157) concur with Best and Kahn that if data are collected in numerical forms, the research is therefore quantitative in nature. Leedy and Ormrod (2001:159) define quantitative research as follows:

- The situation being studied is studied in quantitative terms as data are described in numerical form.
- Questionnaires are used as the research instruments.
- The researcher begins the research process by formulating the hypothesis statement.

According to Best and Kahn (2006), case studies are generally qualitative studies. However, case studies can still be employed in quantitative studies, when used in combination with qualitative research methodology as mixed – method design. In this study, the research preferred to employ qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research is discussed in details hereunder as the methodology of the study in section 3.2.2.

### 3.2.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:11) describe qualitative research as a research technique used to collect and present data in the form of words rather than numbers. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) further maintain that qualitative research is a naturalistic inquiry involving the use of non-interfering data collection strategies to discover the natural flow of events and processes and how participants interpret them. The qualitative research approach is thus an interactive approach which aims to obtain an in-depth understanding of the individual, group or event. According to Bazeley (2007:2), qualitative methods are chosen in situations where an in-depth or detailed understanding of information, process or experience is sought to determine the exact nature of the phenomenon being investigated, or where the only information available is in non-numeric form.

Krathwohl (2009:233) is of the opinion that qualitative research is based on naturalistic inquiry where researchers use multi-method strategies to gather data. Krathwohl further maintain that qualitative researchers focus on individuals' social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. In terms of this approach, data are collected by interacting with research participants in their natural settings such as schools, and there is no manipulation of variables, simulation or externally imposed structures in the situation.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:40) suggest that qualitative research is characterised by the following features;

- They are conducted with individuals and small groups of people to capture participants' perspectives of the phenomenon under study.
- They are semi-structured and open-ended to provide participants with opportunities to describe and explain the most salient issues about the phenomenon.
- Verbatim words and phrases from the interviews are analysed and used as data to illustrate the findings.
- Qualitative research seeks understanding and employs qualitative methods and an in-depth interviewing and participant observations.
- Qualitative methods are humanistic. The methods by which people are studied affect how they are viewed. When people's words and acts are reduced to statistical equations we lose the human side of social life. Qualitative methods enable people to learn about concepts such as pain, beauty, suffering, frustration and love whose essence is lost through other research approaches.
- In qualitative research, the researcher has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument. The researcher looks at the setting and people historically. The people being studied are not reduced to variables but are viewed as a whole. In contrast to a natural sciences approach, the qualitative researcher or a phenomenologist strives for what Max Weber called "Verstehen",



understanding on a personal level of the motives and beliefs behind peoples' actions.

- Qualitative research is descriptive and the data collected in a qualitative study are in the verbal form rather than numerical. The written results of the research contain quotations from the data to illustrate and substantiate the findings.
- Meaning is of essential concern for qualitative research. Researchers who use this approach are interested in the way different people make sense out of their lives.
- The task of the qualitative researcher is to describe the meanings shared with the participants which may in turn make it possible to explain why people behave as they do.
- Qualitative researchers tend to analyse their data inductively (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992:51). They do not search out data or evidence to prove or disprove any hypothesis they hold before entering the study, rather, the abstractions are built as the particulars that have been gathered and grouped together (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992:29).

### **3.2.2.1 The Rationale for using qualitative research**

The rationale for using qualitative research is in line with Krathwohl (2009:236-238) who maintains that qualitative research methodology is characterised by the following:

- It enables the researcher to reveal the nature and detailed description of the situation, setting, processes, systems, or people;

- It enables the researcher to gain new insights about a particular phenomenon and the problems that exist within the phenomenon;
- It provides a means through which a researcher can judge the effectiveness of particular policies, practice, or innovations;
- It uses qualitative procedures which are ideal for exploring complex phenomena about which there is little knowledge;
- It allows the researcher to explore the perceptions of participants on the phenomenon under study;
- It allows the researcher to remain committed to the opinions of the participants as major data sources;
- It allows the researcher to obtain data from the participants' natural context, with a minimum disruption of the natural context (Krathwohl, 2009: 238).

There are a number of different qualitative research designs, such as, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, content analysis and case study. These qualitative research designs differ with regard to their purposes, focus, methods of data collection and data analysis (Leedy & Ormrod, 2006:144). In this study, a case study is employed to make an in-depth understanding of a situation, perhaps a very small number of participants or a few cases within their natural setting. To highlight the appropriateness of this method further, a discussion of a case study follows hereunder in section 3. 2. 2. 2.

### **3.2.2.2 Case study**

According to Cohen, Manion and Marrison (2007:180), one of the main characteristics of quality research is its focus on the intensive study of specific instances of a phenomenon. An example of an instance can be a child, a clique, a school and or a community to elucidate the concept of “an instance” further. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:37) use the term “case” instead of “an instance”. A case study will thus be used to conduct this qualitative research.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:470), a case study refers to a qualitative research that examines a bounded system over time in detail, employing multiple sources of data found in the setting. Gall, Borg and Gall (1996:545) refer to a case study as an in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural setting. In this study, a case study is employed, because of its flexibility and adaptability to a range of contexts, processes, people and foci, and provides some of the most useful methods available in educational research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:375). It further provides researchers an opportunity to ask questions and make discoveries on important educational issues so as to pursue further inquiry and prevent educational research from being stagnant and filled with rhetorical abstraction.

A qualitative research method uses a case study to investigate small, distinct groups as representative samples of the targeted population in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon under study (Maree, 2011:5). Therefore, the study sought to explore an in-depth understanding of the instructional leadership role of principals: a case study of three primary schools in the Motupa Circuit, in Limpopo Province.

In a qualitative case study, the researcher also records details about the context surrounding the case, including information about the physical environment and

any historical, economic, and social factors that have a bearing on the situation (Leedy and Ormrod, 2006:135). Therefore, it is vital for the researcher to collect details of the schools' infrastructures included in the study, and biographical information of participants as required by qualitative case study. Leedy and Ormrod (2006) point out that identifying the context of the study helps readers to draw conclusions on the findings and other social situations with the same conditions as the ones under study.

#### 3.2.2.2.1 The rationale for using case study

A case study has been selected as appropriate for this study because of the following reasons:

- It constitutes an important and useful means for gathering qualitative data.
- It is an in-depth and thorough study of a phenomenon the researcher has selected to study, such as the instructional leadership role of the principal.
- It enables the researcher to provide detailed new insights and information on a small representative sample of informants, such as the three primary school principals, rather than studying all primary school principals in the Motupa Circuit.
- A case study illuminates the general by looking at the particular; it offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding an information-rich and holistic account of a phenomenon.
- According to this method, an inquirer gathers data covering a given phenomenon with a view to analysing, synthesising and evaluating data so

that effective remedies could be put in place (Welma *et al.* 2006:25). Welma *et.al.* (2006) further point out that the objective is usually to investigate the dynamics of some single bounded system, typically of a social nature, such as a family, group, community, participants in a project, institution and practice

### **3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

#### **3.3.1 POPULATION**

The population for this study is all the primary school principals of Motupa Circuit, Limpopo. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:342), choosing a site is a negotiated process to obtain freedom of access to a site that is suitable for the research problems and feasible for the researcher's resources of time, mobility and skills.

#### **3.3.2 SAMPLING**

The researcher chose three (3) public primary schools in the Motupa Circuit of the Limpopo Province, South Africa. The researcher used purposeful sampling to choose participants. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:138), purposive sampling involves choosing samples on the basis of being likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon of interest; selecting cases without needing or desiring to generalise to all such cases. Therefore, a few cases studied in-depth may yield more information about a phenomenon, which makes purposeful sampling more useful in this study than probability sampling. A number of purposeful sampling strategies can be identified. These include comprehensive sampling, maximum variation sampling, network sampling and sampling by case type.

### 3.3.2.1 Sampling by case type

Concept/theory based sampling is an example which involves selecting information-rich people or situation known to experience the concept under investigation. This means that prior information is used to decide on samples as well as in-site selection. The aspects that the researcher considers are thus the research problem, the major data collection strategy and the availability of information rich cases. The sample size thus depends on information richness cases. As stated earlier, three principals and six HoDs were sampled from the three schools for the study. The sample size was therefore,  $(3 + 6) = 9$ . Table 3.2 represents the sample and sample size for the study.

**Table 3.1: Samples and sample size**

Respondents	School A	School B	School C	Totals
Principals	1	1	1	3
HODs	2	2	2	6
Totals	3	3	3	9

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:312) maintain that in any particular design and data collection strategy, data collected must be analysed. The researcher discussed how data was collected and analysed in section 3.4.

## 3.4 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The following data collection instrument were used to collect data; observations, interviews and document analysis. Here-under is the data collection matrix which explicitly shows how the researcher went about collecting data.

**TABLE: 3.2 Data collection matrix**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Targeted Number</b>	<b>Research Design</b>	<b>Data Instruments</b>	<b>Collection</b>
Principals	3	Qualitative	Interviews Documents Analysis Observations	
HODs	6			

### 3.4.1 OBSERVATIONS

In order to understand the complexities of many situations more completely, Patton (2002:21) recommends the use of direct participation and observation of the phenomenon of interest. Marshall and Rossman (1995:140) define observation as “the systematic description of events, behaviours, and artefacts in the social setting chosen for the study”. In this regard, qualitative observation provides a first-hand account of the actual situation through the action of carefully watching the instructional leadership role of principals in the Motupa Circuit so as to notice things scientifically.

Qualitative research involves observing all the relevant phenomena in their natural settings and taking field notes without predetermining what is to be observed. Field notes are the written accounts of what the researcher will hear, see, experience and think in the course of collecting and reflecting on data. Field notes consisted of descriptive notes meant to provide a picture of the setting, people, actions and conversations observed as well as reflective or analytical notes meant to capture more of the researcher’s frame of mind, ideas and concerns about the study.

Conrad and Serlin (2006:381) view observations as a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction as it occurs. Through

observations, the researcher was able to establish a link between reality and his theoretical assumptions. The role of the researcher during observations was that of a participant observer. According to Conrad and Serlin (2006:381), participant observer involves gaining access into a setting. The researcher was guided by an observation checklist that included the physical setting, the activities and interactions of participants, conversations, and even subtle factors of a less obvious nature.

The researcher's observation check list included amongst others the following:

- School's infrastructure;
- Availability of learning and teaching resources;
- Learners' enrolment;
- Number of educators;
- Deputy principal post;
- Number of HoDs;
- Number of vacant posts; and
- Educator to learner ratio (See Appendix F).

#### **3.4.1.1 The rationale for using observation**

Qualitative observations were used as a research instrument because of the importance of the social setting and the researcher's interest in finding out more about what happens in it. The following are the rationale of qualitative observations as cited by Patton (2002:262-264) which the researcher used as a tool for gathering qualitative data:

- Observation provided the researcher with first-hand experiences of a setting and this permits the researcher to be open, discovery-oriented and inductive because the researcher does not have to depend on prior



conceptualisation of the setting. Getting close to the people in a setting through first-hand experience will allow the researcher to draw on personal knowledge during the formal interaction stage of analysis.

- Observational fieldwork will give the researcher the opportunity to see things that may routinely escape awareness among people in the setting. Observations will also give the researcher chance to learn things that participants would otherwise be reluctant to talk about in an interview due to their sensitivity.
- Observation will enable knowledge or evidence of the social world to be generated by observing, or participating in or experiencing “natural or real” life settings or interactive situations. The assumption behind the meaningful knowledge will be generated by observing phenomena, since not all knowledge can be articulated, recountable or constructible in an interview.

#### **3.4.1.2 Limitations for using observations**

According to Airasian and Gray (2003:198), there are five limitations associated with the use of observation as a research instrument.

- The researcher as the main instrument may lose objectivity and become emotionally involved with participants.
- The researcher may have difficulty in observing and taking detailed field notes.
- The researcher may not be there at the time of a spontaneous occurrence, which may be of interest.
- Observations are limited to the duration of the events and therefore, life histories cannot be obtained through observations.

- There are situations that are taboo for observations.

Due to the limitations cited above, the researcher also used qualitative interviews in data collection.

### 3.4.2 INTERVIEWS

Interviews are one of the most commonly recognised forms of the qualitative research methods (Mason, 2009:63). These writers assert that interviewing is one of the commonest and most powerful ways a researcher can use to understand human behaviour. Some of the interviews were on-the spur-of-the moment interchanges, whereas others were planned carefully and highly structured. Berg (2004:75) defines interviewing as a conversation with the purpose of gathering information. In addition, Interviews are regarded by Glanz (2006a: 66-67) as the most suitable data collection method often used to understand the experiences of others and the meanings they make of them.

Interviews were particularly useful in this study because the researcher was engaged in constructing a version of the participants' world. Meanings were constructed by the participants regarding the ways they were interpreting their natural setting (Creswell, 2008:9). Interviews included informal conversations, which were completely open-ended as well as semi-informal and formally structured conversations during which questions were asked in a standardised manner. Interviews yielded direct quotations from the participants about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge. The first interviews were held with principals at their respective schools. Each individual interview lasted for 45 minutes to an hour. These individual interviews with school principals were later followed by individual interviews with heads of departments (HoDs).

The qualitative semi-structured interviews used to gather data consisted of open-ended questions which were set to the participants to obtain realistic data regarding how principals carried out their instructional leadership roles in the Motupa Circuit. According to Maree (2011:89), recording of interviews will be done in a meticulous manner. In this study, permission was sought from participants to audiotape the interviews and field notes taken to support the recordings as this will assist with transcription and data analysis. Interview schedules are developed for each of the two sets of the targeted respondents. (See Appendix D and E)

#### **3.4.2.1 The rationale for using Interviews**

Patton (2002:345) argue in favour of interviewing when he says that we cannot observe everything such as the feelings, thoughts, interactions and behaviours that have occurred at some point in time. Glanz (2006a:67) is of the opinion that interviews enable the researcher to learn about the complexities of participants' experiences from their own point of view. The goal of an interviewer is to understand participants' experiences and perceptions related to a given situation in a non-threatening way so that the meanings emerge, develop and are shaped by and in turn, shape the discourse.

The purpose of qualitative interviewing is to find out what is on someone else's mind with regard to a predetermined objective. During semi-structured interviews, predetermined questions are posed to each participant in a systematic and consistent manner but the participants are also given the opportunity to discuss issues beyond the questions' confines (Mason, 2009: 62). Mason has further influenced the researcher's choice of employing qualitative interviewing to gather data. The interviews are found to be suitable to be used as research instrument in this study because of the following:

- It offers a versatile way of collecting data, and this enables the researcher to obtain multiple responses to set questions and allow detailed responses.
- Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to use probes with a view to clearing up vague responses, or to ask for elaboration of incomplete answers.
- The open-ended questions provide participants with every opportunity to describe and explain what is most salient to them.
- An Interview Guide/Schedule used in this study will ensure that all relevant aspects of the research are covered in the interviews.
- An open-ended interview makes data collection flexible.
- It provides the researcher with more information and to establish relationships with respondents.
- The open-ended interviews are more likely to produce accounts of sufficient depth and breath.
- Field notes taken during the interview session and the tape recorded conversations enable the researcher to capture data as seen by the respondents.
- The researcher talks interactively with participants, ask questions, listen to them, gain access to their accounts and circumstances and analyses their use of language construction of discourse on the phenomenon researched.

- Interviews enable the researcher to conceptualise himself as active in data generation, which is preferable in trying to remain neutral in data collection and this permitted the verbatim recording of responses.
- Interviews allowed the researcher to clarify certain issues and probe further for more information.
- Qualitative interviews will be appropriate for issues that lend themselves to open-ended questions.
- Qualitative interviews allow non-verbal cues to be read; consequently, the data generated could easily be cross-checked for authenticity.

### 3.4.3 DOCUMENTS ANALYSIS

Documents are an important source of data common in most schools, and provide evidence and details of personal and professional lives of school personnel (Briggs and Coleman, 2007:278). Bogdan and Biklen (1992:136) contend that schools like other organisations produce documents for specific kinds of consumptions. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:433), this is a non-interactive strategy with little or no reciprocity between the researcher and participants. McMillan and Schumacher further define artefacts as tangible manifestations of the beliefs and behaviours that form a culture and describe peoples' expressions, knowledge, actions and values.

Artefacts in educational institutions may take the form of personal documents, official documents, objects and erosion measures. For the purpose of this study, a brief discussion of personal documents and official documents will follow in order to clarify how the researcher went about with document analysis.

a) Personal documents

These are any first person narratives that describe an individual's action, experiences and beliefs. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:454), these documents may be discovered by the researcher or may be requested from participants. These include journals, notes on lesson plans or teachers' developments, records of learners and diaries.

b) Official documents

According to Best and Kahn (2006:257), official documents for analysis serve to add knowledge to research and explain certain social events. In this study, sources of documentary data to be analysed included those that are used by school principals in their day to day practice of their instructional leadership role. These are abundant in organisations and the following were scrutinised at each school:

- Minutes books;
- Policy documents;
- School management plans;
- IQMS Implementation;
- Monitoring and assessment tools; and
- Class visit schedule.

Document analysis was concerned with the explanation of the current nature and state of instructional leadership role of school principals in the Motupa Circuit (See Appendix G).

### **3.4.3.1 Limitations for the use of document analysis**

The use of document analysis as a data collecting instrument may have some limitations with which the researcher has to contend. The documents may be unreliable, inaccurate and unavailable. In some cases, the documents may be complex, badly filed and disparate to the extent that retrieving them might be problematic (Masson, 2009:110). The limitations of documents analysis in this study relate to availability and accessibility. The researcher was limited in his document analysis to those sources that were available and to which the researcher was granted access.

## **3.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

According to Creswell (2008:190), data analysis in qualitative research is “a process of categorisation, description and synthesis.” Data analysis in qualitative research can be a daunting task due to the voluminous data that are collected and the generally interpretative nature of the qualitative research paradigm.

Patton (2002:432) offered guidance in his statement when he said: “The challenge of qualitative analysis lies in making sense of massive amounts of data. This involves reading the volume of raw information, sifting trivia from significance, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal.” Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:367). According to Welma *et al.* (2006:211), raw field notes, tape recordings compiled during qualitative interviews had to be processed and converted into write-ups which should be intelligible products that can be read, edited for accuracy, commented on, and analysed. Data analysis involves reducing to manageable proportion the wealth of data one has collected or has available (Fox & Bayat, 2007:109). Once

the data had been organised, the second step is to describe the various pertinent aspects of the study and the respondents' views are described in terms of the categories and the identified patterns and themes among the categories.

The researcher heeded advice provided by Maxwell (2005:95) in not "letting your analysed field notes and transcripts pile up." Instead, analysis began following the first interview and observation. Following a review of data collected from each participant, the researcher made process notes that addressed initial understanding and thoughts about the perceptions of the participants. The researcher reviewed field notes made during in-depth interviews, documents analysis and observations.

The researcher transcribed all tape-recorded interviews verbatim immediately after the interviews had taken place. The transcription was done by the researcher himself in order to retain the form and style of the participant's expressions. The goal in transcribing the data was to be as true to the conversation as possible, yet pragmatic in dealing with the data. Field notes are also kept to record phrases and body language immediately than after the interviews. Audio files were replayed and transcribed to identify emerging categories, themes and patterns that were used to organise data. This process was followed after each encounter with a participant. Common themes and patterns which emerged were noted and analysed; they guided adjustments made to questions for interviews with the remaining participants.

The themes identified will be coded and categorised in order to provide an explanation of a single specific thought, reflecting various aspects of meanings to be used to develop an overall description of data as seen by the respondents in their natural setting. The analysed data will be displayed in table forms to indicate the findings in the next chapter. Reduction of data using categorisation and coding



made interpretations of rich description of participants more manageable and were used as the basis for findings and conclusions.

The researcher must ensure that the data analysed is reliable and valid. Therefore, a discussion of reliability and validity of the study follows hereunder in section 3.6.

### **3.6 RELIABILITY OF THE RESEARCH**

The qualitative process is somewhat personal and subjective. Therefore no two observers, interviewers or documents analyst can interpret same phenomena exactly alike. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:386) mention the multi-modal nature of the qualitative method. This means that in addition to interviews and observations, the researcher may use tape recorders or other technical instruments to collect additional data to corroborate findings. To further ensure that other researchers in similar studies using the same methods of data collection and analysis obtain results that closely resemble results to be obtained in this study, the researcher considered a number of aspects.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:387) suggest that in an attempt to improve reliability, attention must be paid to the researcher's role, information selection, social context, data collection and analytical strategies. A discussion of the strategies that will be applied to enhance reliability in this study follows.

#### **3.6.1 RELIABILITY IN DATA COLLECTION PROCESS**

Verbatim accounts, low inference descriptors, multiple researchers, mechanically recorded data, participant researcher, member checking, participants review and negative cases were strategies that were be used in combination to reduce threats to reliability by qualitative researcher (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006: 364). From

this list the researcher will discuss only those strategies that will be applied in this study namely; verbatim account and low inference.

#### **3.6.1.1 Verbatim account**

These are word-for-word accounts of interviews, transcripts and direct quotations from documents recorded to illustrate participants' meaning. The researcher in this study used tape recorders during interview sessions. Taped discussions were translated and listed in the Appendices section. The advantage is that the researcher was afforded what Gall *et al.* (1996:23) refers to as tacit knowledge. This includes largely unarticulated, contextual understanding that is often manifested in nods, silences, humour and naughty nuances. Tape recorders also helped to eliminate shortcomings that could result from memory loss.

#### **3.6.1.2 Low inference descriptors**

This involves recording precise, almost literal and detailed description of people and situations. The aspects to be considered are history, physical setting, environment and members amongst others (Borg & Gall, 1996:572). This information helps one to make informed judgement about whether findings from a particular study are useful in understanding other situations. The researcher provided an outline of the physical setting, a brief historical background and some significant events of each chosen school.

The researcher has thus addressed reliability of the research by using alternative data sources and the data collection instruments and thereafter triangulated the research data collected. Reliability was enhanced further by describing the socio-economic status of the communities in which the schools are situated, the schools' broader context, the conditions of the buildings and the type of social relationships that prevailed. It is evident from the discussions above that reliability is a serious

threat to qualitative research. These problems may be attributed to the fact that each individual being studied construct his or her own reality. The researcher becomes the central focus of the inquiry process and no inquiry has any authenticity over any other, on the other hand, as will be seen in the following discussion, validity may be the major strength of qualitative research.

### **3.7 VALIDITY OF THE RESEARCH**

The term validity, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:391), refers to the degree to which explanations of phenomena match realities of the world. Budhal (2000:572) describes validity as “the authentic representation of what is happening in a social situation.” Two types of validity are external and internal validity.

#### **3.7.1 EXTERNAL VALIDITY**

The term refers to the extent to which findings of a case study can be generalised to similar cases (Gall *et al.*, 1996:375). The use of a case study design is however not regarded as a probability sample of a larger population. The aim of this study is thus to generalise the findings but to extend understanding of a phenomenon. Application of qualitative method in this study is therefore useful to the degree to which it contains detailed description to enable others to understand similar situations and extend that understanding in subsequent research.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:319) argue that external validity depends on translatability and comparability. Comparability refers to the degree to which the research design is adequately described so that researchers may use the study to extend the findings to other studies. Translatability, on the other hand, is the degree to which the researcher use theoretical frameworks and research strategies that are understood by other researchers.

To establish both comparability and translatability, the researcher made an extensive literature study for a theoretical framework on which to base this study. The selected schools were considered on the basis of how typical they were. The researcher looked into the socio-economic status, educational attainment, location and other relevant factors pertaining to these schools. To highlight the contextual features further he will clearly state the common and contrasting dimensions of the instructional leadership roles observed under situation analysis in the next chapter in order to reduce the effect of unique historical experiences that could limit validity.

### 3.7.2 INTERNAL VALIDITY

This term refers to the degree to which the interpretation and concepts have mutual meanings between participants and the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:371). According to Budhal (2000:62), ensuring internal validity in turn increases external validity. Strategies that increase internal validity include lengthy data collection period, participants' language, field research and disciplined subjectivity. In this study, validity will be strengthened by the participants' language and field research.

#### **3.7.2.1 Participants' language**

The researcher was familiar with the language usage at the selected research sites. The study's participants were mostly professionals and they were all good with the use of English. This placed the researcher at an advantage as there were communication challenges as all of the participants were familiar with denotative meanings of expressions used.

### **3.7.2.2 Field research**

The nature of participants' observation and in-depth interviews was such that reality of the impact of the principals' instructional leadership roles was reflected in natural settings. Collected data was thus relatively more accurate than in cases where experiences are interpreted in a laboratory situation.

### **3.7.2.3 Validation of the research findings**

Research bias is regarded by Johnson and Christensen (2008:275) as one potential threat to the validity of qualitative research that the researcher has to keep in mind. Research bias means obtaining results that are consistent with what the researcher wants to find from selection observations and the selective reviewing of information. As suggested by Creswell (2008:195), validation of the findings of the study occurs throughout the various stages of data analysis.

### **3.7.3 TRIANGULATION**

Triangulation of different data sources of information is done by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes. Thus, information and conclusions are cross-checked through the use of multiple procedures or sources.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:331) assert that triangulation corroborate findings by using data collected from a variety of sources in order to confirm findings or interpretations of the findings. In this study, triangulation is used to confirm the extent to which independent data sources confirm or contradict the findings from the dependent data source. The study used different data sources; the study is based on the instructional leadership role of the principal as dependent data sources, HODs involved in the study are independent data sources who should

confirm or contradict findings made from principals. Conflicting findings from the different data sources is used to ensure whether the same pattern keeps on recurring. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:379), researchers use triangulation, as cross-validation among data sources, to find regularities in the data. In this study, multiple data sources are corroborated to confirm data obtained from principals with those obtained from HoDs.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011:151), triangulation enables the researcher to analyse data from more than one perspective. The use of multiple data sources increases both validity and reliability of the research outcomes. Triangulation reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. All data sources have strength and weaknesses. Triangulation helps to emphasise the strengths and minimise the weaknesses. Therefore, by using different data sources, the researcher covered the weaknesses of one data source with the strength of another. In this study the researcher triangulated the data from the principals' face-to-face interview with the data from face-to-face interview with HoDs and the analyses of data from official documents in order to facilitate the verification and validation of the findings. Hence, the data collected have been triangulated in the following manner:

- Comparing data from individual interviews with HoDs and data from individual interviews with principals;
- Comparing data from individual interviews with principals and data from individual interviews with principals from different schools;
- Comparing data from individual interviews with HoD'S and data from documents analysed; and
- Comparing data from individual interviews with principals and data from document analysis and observations.

#### 3.7.4 MEMBER CHECKING

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:331), member checking is the verification of research data by participants where the latter review transcripts of the data obtained and modify any information from the interview data for accuracy. Krathwohl (2009:346) concurs with the views of McMillan and Schumacher by pointing out that member checking is a procedure of having the research participants read the research report to determine whether it has portrayed them accurately.

In this study, the researcher gave participants an opportunity to read through the research transcriptions as well as the research report for any omissions and possible corrections. Ethical considerations follow hereunder in section 3.8.

### 3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Developments in the field of the social sciences have been accompanied by an increasing concern about the ethical aspects of behavioural research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:334). They warn that qualitative researchers in particular need to be sensitive to ethical principles because of their research topics, face-to-face interactive data collection, an emergent design and reciprocity with participants. According to Gomm (2008:365), “research ethics” refer to rules of morally good conduct for researchers.

In any research, ethical dilemmas are likely to emerge with regard to the collection of data and in the dissemination of findings (Merriam, 2002:29). The researcher is interested in collecting authentic, personal data that are accessed from participants regarding their personal world view. According to Creswell (2008:201), the researcher has an obligation and responsibility to protect and respect the rights, needs, values and desires of participants while collecting and reporting research

findings. Strategies such as triangulation, member checks, use of rich, thick description, coupled with obtaining participant consent following disclosure to participants regarding the purpose, process and nature of the study, accurate data collection and reporting findings, as well as the use of integrity in interpretation and drawing conclusions provide evidence that an ethical study was conducted. Therefore, the researcher in conducting this study took relevant precautionary measures to address the ethical issues that commonly arise in qualitative research. The study was designed to eliminate as much as possible risks to participants by disclosing the purpose of the study, seeking voluntary participants and assuring their confidentiality and anonymity. Written permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Provincial Department of Basic Education in Limpopo, District, schools and individual participants (See Appendix B, C).

The identification of participants and their schools was not made public. Instead, numbers and letters were used to refer to individual participants and their schools. The numbers were constructed in such a way that the true identity of the participants and their schools are not detectable.

The ethical issues considered in this study are discussed hereunder in section 3.8.1 to 3.8.5.

### 3.8.1 VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Voluntary participation means that participants are not compelled, coerced, or required to participate and that no one should be forced to participate in a research (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:118). In this study, the researcher ensured that participants are given free will to decide whether or not to participate by making sure that informed consent is achieved. Each participant was verbally informed of his or her right to decline participation in the study at any time and for any reason. The participants were, therefore, informed that they are free to terminate their



participation at any stage without any consequences. Therefore, in this study, research participants participate in a voluntary way, free from any coercion. Informed consent is dealt with in the next section 3.8.2.

### 3.8.2 INFORMED CONSENT

The principle of informed consent arises from the participants' right to freedom and self-determination. According to Anderson (2009:75), informed consent means informing the participants about the research study in a way that is clear to them. Informed consent was secured by visiting the participants at their respective schools to explain the purpose of the study. A letter from the Provincial Department of Education in Limpopo granting permission to conduct research in the Motupa Circuit schools was also used. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:350) assert that informed consent refers to the procedure by means of which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation. Individuals make their decision after being informed of the purpose of the study, procedures to be followed of involving them in the study, their right to ask questions regarding the study, the benefits of the study that will accrue to the participants. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:118), this aspect of ethical research is central to making sure that participants have the information they need to decide whether or not to participate in a study.

In this study, participants were given consent letters to sign and were informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research before the investigations began. In addition, they were made aware of what their participation in the research entails, and what risks, if any, are involved.

### 3.8.3 CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

Participants' right to privacy will be protected to ensure confidentiality. Confidentiality refers to the control of access to information and the guarantee that data will not be shared with unauthorised people (Krathwohl, 2009:215). Krathwohl further point out that confidentiality exist when only the researcher is aware of the participants' identities and has promised not to reveal their identities to others. Moreover, Creswell (2008:11-12) asserts that participants have the right to have their personal information kept strictly confidential. In addition, settings and participants will not be identifiable in print. Therefore, while the researcher knew the names of the participants, he would not divulge them. Instead, imaginary locations and disguised features of settings would be used in such a manner that they appeared similar to several possible sites.

Linked to this right of confidentiality, is the right to anonymity. Anonymity refers to keeping the identity of participants from being known (Anderson, 2009:74). Participants' identities were kept confidential and anonymous by assigning numbers to all the returned instruments used to collect data. Both the researcher and participants must have a clear understanding regarding the confidentiality of the results and findings of the study (Maree, 2007:299). All the information and responses by the participants during this study will be kept private and the results will be presented in an anonymous manner in order to protect the participants' identities. All audio-cassettes used during the study will be destroyed as soon as the data analysis was done and the study completed. Therefore, confidentiality and anonymity was ensured throughout the research process and after the completion of the study.

#### **3.8.4 ACCESS AND ACCEPTANCE**

The stage of access and acceptance in a study offers the best opportunity for the qualitative researcher to present his or her credentials as a serious investigator with respect to his study.

The researcher respected the individual participants' freedom to decline participation or to withdraw from the study at any time without reprisal. Gaining official permission to undertake this qualitative study was the first task before securing access and acceptance. In addition, participants were contacted personally by means of a letter written by the researcher (see Appendix J and K), explaining the purpose, the participants' role, and procedures to be followed throughout the study.

#### **3.8.5 TREATMENT OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

The treatment of research participants is regarded by Johnson and Christensen (2008:105) as the most important and fundamental issue the researcher must confront because research with humans has the potential for creating a great deal of physical and psychological harm. Bogdan and Biklen (2007:50) suggest that the researcher should inform participants of his interests as well as the reciprocal obligations between the two parties. In this research, the researcher tried to be sensitive and diligent when explaining himself and securing consent from the participants.

### **3.9 PILOT STUDY**

A qualitative pilot study was conducted in the form of pre-interviews with two principals and two HoDs. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:206), after the interview questions have been written, a pilot test is necessary as a check for

bias in the procedures, the interviewer and the questions. The aim of the pre-interviews was to assist in examining the interview questions, and to determine whether they were well phrased or formulated. During the pilot test, the procedure followed was identical to the one that was implemented in the study. The length of the pre-interviews enabled the researcher to know how to schedule the participants for interviews. The pilot test made the researcher aware of the duration of each interview.

### **3.10 CONCLUSION**

This chapter outlined the research design and methodology employed in the study. It further provided information on how the qualitative research approach was conducted, and how the interviews were conducted as the main data collection technique. The researcher is therefore, confident that the validity and reliability of the raw data collected could be guaranteed due to precautionary measures taken and described above. The rationale for employing qualitative interviews as data collection technique were outlined and that participants were able to yield data to be analysed and interpreted to address the research problem. The next chapter focuses on data analysis and interpretations.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter focused on the research methodology of the study and provided the descriptions of all the activities and procedures undertaken during the investigation. This chapter analyses and interprets data collected during the empirical study. Furthermore, data collected from biographical questionnaires, observations, written documents and individual interviews with respondents at the three selected schools are analysed and interpreted.

Firstly, data from biographical questionnaires are analysed, followed by data from written documents, observations and interviews. Participants' personal information are analysed and described; however, the researcher ensured that participants' characteristics and that of their schools do not in any way violate the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity given to the participants during the empirical study. Participants' own words or verbatim expressions are presented as no alterations are made to correct the language as quoted from the interview responses. This was done to ensure that the respondents' perceptions, opinions and views are clearly captured to make data analysis and interpretation much easier.

## 4.2 DATA ANALYSIS

### 4.2.1 BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF PRINCIPALS

PRINCIPAL	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B	SCHOOL C
Gender	Male	Female	Male
Age	52	53	47
Academic Qualification	B.Ed.(Hons)	BA	BA
Professional Qualification	PTC	PTC	HED
Management & Leadership Qualification	NONE	NONE	NONE
Years of Experience as a teacher	17	19	7
Years of Experience as principal	12	9	9
Nature of Appointment	PERMANENT	PERMANENT	PERMANENT
Trained as Instructional Leader	YES	YES	YES
Trained in CAPS implementation	YES	YES	YES

TABLE.4.1: Biographical details of principals from School A, B and C (See Appendix J).

The two principals from School A and C are males and the one from School B is a female. Their ages are between 47 and 53. The ages of two of the three principals is above 50 years and are in their old ages. The principal from School C is still in his middle age. The three principals are all permanently employed, as well as academically and professionally qualified with university degrees. However, they are without management and leadership qualifications. They have been trained as instructional leaders and also in the implementation of CAPS. The principal from School A is more experienced than the other two principals from School B and C respectively.

#### 4.2.2 BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF HODS

SCHOOL	A		B		C	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
HODs						
Gender	Male	Female	Female	Female	Male	Female
Age	54	48	51	44	50	56
Academic Qualification	BA	Matric	BA	BA(Hons)	Matric	BA
Professional Qualification	PTD	PTD	PTC	STD	STD	PTC
Management & Leadership Qualification	NONE	Diploma	NONE	B.Ed. (Hons)	B. Tech.	Diploma
Years of Experience as teacher	18	14	11	13	10	14
Years of Experience as HOD	7	7	7	5	7	19
Nature of Appointment	PERMANENT	PERMANENT	PERMANENT	PERMANENT	PERMANENT	PERMANENT
Trained in CAPS implementation	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

TABLE 4.2 Biographical details of HODs from School A, B and C (See Appendix K)

Of the six heads of department (HoDs) interviewed in this study, four are females and two are males. School A and C respectively comprise one female and one male; therefore, the two schools are gender balanced. It is only at School B that both HoDs are females. The six HoDs' ages range between 44 and 56 years. The six HODs are permanently employed, academically and professionally qualified. Four of them have management and leadership qualifications. They all have been trained in CAPS implementation. The HoD (6) from School C is more experienced than all the other HoDs interviewed.

### 4.3 DATA FROM OBSERVATIONS

Data from observations conducted at the three schools follow hereunder. The researcher made observations with a focus on the learners' enrolment, educators, the available teaching and learning resources as well as the schools' infrastructures. (See Appendix H) observation checklist.

Items/information observed/ requested	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B	SCHOOL C
Learner Enrolment	788	463	639
Number of educators	25	14	19
Deputy principal	1	0	1
Number of HODs	3	2	2
Number of classrooms	20	10	17
Number of vacancies	0	0	0
Educator- learner ratio	1:32	1:35	1:32
Administration block	YES	NO	NO
Toilets	YES	YES	Inadequate
Security fence	NO	NO	NO
Laboratory	YES	NO	NO
Library	NO	NO	NO
Computer centre	YES	NO	NO
Running water	YES	NO	YES
Electricity	YES	YES	YES
Sports fields	NO	NO	NO
Teaching and learning resources	YES	NO	NO



## TABLE: 4.3 Observed data from the three schools

Discussion of data collected from observations conducted at the three schools A, B and C follow hereunder in sections 4.3.1 to 4.3.3.

### 4.3.1 SCHOOL A

School A is a public primary for learners from grade R to 7, with an enrolment of 788 learners, 25 educators, one deputy principal and 3 HoDs. The educator learner ratio is 1: 32. There are no vacant posts.

This school's infrastructure is made up of twenty (20) classrooms and a specialised classroom used as a computer room, an administration block with the principal's office, deputy principal's office and a staff room. In the principal's office, there are visitors' chairs, tables, and a computer with a printer, a photocopier and a duplicating machine. In this office, there is a display of trophies and certificates achieved from various circuit, district, provincial and national events. The school is electrified and has running water from a borehole. Though the school has an administration block and a computer laboratory with computers and printers, the classrooms and the pit toilets are dilapidated and are no longer user friendly, with broken doors and smashed windows. The school is without a laboratory, library and a sports field.

Observations revealed that teaching and learning resources are available at this school. There were learners' readings books, charts, maps, calculators, abacuses and some of them are improvised from a variety of natural and recycled materials in the classrooms.

#### 4.3.2 SCHOOL B

School B is a public primary catering for learners from grade R to 7, with an enrolment of 463 and 14 educators. There are two HoDs and an educator to learner ratio of 1:35. The school does not have a deputy principal; however, the school is without vacant posts.

The school has ten (10) electrified classrooms. The principal uses one of the classrooms as a makeshift office. In the principal's office there is a laptop, a photocopier and a duplicating machine. There are no bulletin boards as the general school timetable, duty rooster and departmental circulars were pasted on walls and the steel cabinet. The duplicating machine and the photocopier are no longer in use as the school has run out of paper and toner. Educators were observed giving formal assessment tasks on chalkboards. It was observed that the school is still under-resourced in terms of infrastructure, as some of the classes were overcrowded. The school is without an administration block, laboratory, library, computer laboratory, running water and sports field. However, there are environmentally friendly modern pit toilets for learners and educators. The school's properties are not secured; it was observed that there were signs of burglary and vandalism as evidenced by the condition of the school fence and broken classroom windows.

There are inadequate teaching and learning resources. The shortage of LTSM is evident as learners were seen moving from one classroom to another to borrow reading books and other support materials, and it is difficult for both educators and learners to carry on without these essential teaching and learning resources.

#### 4.3.3 SCHOOL C

The school is a public primary and caters for learners with a learner enrolment of 639 from grade R to 7, 19 educators, one deputy principal and two HoDs. The school's educator - learner ratio is 1:32. There is no vacant post.

The school has seventeen (17) electrified classrooms. However, there are infrastructure challenges, as the school is without a computer laboratory, an administration block, a library and sports fields. The school's dilapidated pit toilets pose a serious health hazard, and these toilets are no longer user friendly. The principal uses a classroom as a makeshift office and shares this with the deputy principal and the administration clerk. In the principal's office, there is a computer, a photocopier and a duplicating machine for administrative purposes. The fence around the school had been vandalised and this poses a security threat to the school properties.

It was observed that there are shortages of teaching and learning resources as learners do not have textbooks, reading and workbooks in certain subjects. Educators were observed photocopying textbooks in the principal's office to be distributed to learners in the classrooms.

#### 4.3.4 CONCLUSION

After observing the three primary schools, the perception of the researcher was that at School A the principal was able to provide resources though not enough to ensure effective teaching and learning. The other two schools, that is, B and C had enormous challenges of resource shortages and the two principals were not doing enough to ensure that teaching and learning resources are provided.

The three schools have enough teaching staff as evidenced by an average educator-learner ratio of 1:35. Two of the three schools, A and C both have deputy principals and school B is without a deputy principal. However, there are no vacant posts at the three schools.

Observations revealed that the three schools have infrastructure challenges. The schools serviced rural communities and they were impacted upon by the same socio-economic factors, such as security threats of burglary, broken windows, fences vandalised and classrooms without doors. The inadequate teaching and learning resources cut across all these schools, hence teaching and learning is likely to be negatively affected as well as the principals' instructional leadership roles.

#### 4.4 DATA FROM DOCUMENTS ANALYSIS

At each of the three schools the researcher requested to examine written documents as listed in the checklist (See Appendix H). Hereunder follows Table 4.2 of all documents analyses conducted.

Documents	SCHOOL	EVIDENCE		COMMENTS
		YES	NO	
School Improvement Plan (SIP)	A	✓		Available and was seen
	B	✓		Available and was seen
	C	✓		Available and was seen
School Assessment Plan	A	✓		Available and was seen
	B	✓		Available and was seen

	<b>C</b>	✓		Available and was seen
<b>Classroom Observation tool / reports</b>	<b>A</b>		✓	No evidence of classroom observation tool/reports
	<b>B</b>		✓	No evidence of classroom observation tool/reports
	<b>C</b>		✓	No evidence of classroom observation tool/reports
<b>Staff Professional Development reports</b>	<b>A</b>		✓	No evidence of staff professional Development reports
	<b>B</b>	✓		Available and was seen
	<b>C</b>		✓	No evidence of Staff professional development reports
<b>Audit tool for Informal Assessments</b>	<b>A</b>		✓	No evidence of an audit tool for informal assessments
	<b>B</b>		✓	No evidence of an audit tool for informal assessments
	<b>C</b>	✓		Available and was seen
<b>Record of Moderated Formal assessment Tasks</b>	<b>A</b>		✓	No evidence of records of moderated formal assessments tasks
	<b>B</b>	✓		Available and was seen
	<b>C</b>		✓	No evidence of moderated formal assessment Task
<b>Curriculum Management plan</b>	<b>A</b>		✓	No evidence of curriculum plan
	<b>B</b>	✓		Available and seen
	<b>C</b>		✓	No evidence of Curriculum management plan
<b>Minutes of the SMT Structure</b>	<b>A</b>	✓		Available and was seen
	<b>B</b>	✓		Available and was seen

	<b>C</b>	✓		Available and was seen
<b>Minutes of staff</b>	<b>A</b>	✓		Available and was seen
	<b>B</b>	✓		Available and was seen
	<b>C</b>	✓		Available and was seen
	<b>C</b>	✓		Available and was seen
<b>School policies</b>	<b>A</b>	✓		Available and was seen
	<b>B</b>	✓		Available and was seen
	<b>C</b>	✓		Available and was seen
<b>IQMS implementation plan</b>	<b>A</b>	✓		Available and was seen
	<b>B</b>	✓		Available and was seen
	<b>C</b>	✓		Available and was seen

TABLE: 4.4 Documents analysed from the three schools.

Discussion of data from written documents examined at School A, B and C follows hereunder.

#### 4.4.1 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The developed school improvement plans for the three schools were available and observed. Challenges identified for improvement at the three schools are as follows:

The school improvement for School A included: the attendance of teaching periods by educators, late coming by both learners and educators, monitoring and control of learners' and educators' work, improving learners' writing, reading and counting skills; improving on learners' pass percentage in Mathematics (Numeracy) and the first additional language (Literacy), educators' professional development and improving the quality of teaching and learning.

In School B, the following challenges were identified for improvement, namely, improving learners' pass percentage in Mathematics (Numeracy) and First additional Language (Literacy), improve the development of lesson plans, extra-mural activities and conducting of class visits.

In School C, the following items for improvement were listed: the involvement of parents of learners in the education of their children, irregular control of learners' and educators' work, conducting of class visits and learners' poor performance in Mathematics (Numeracy) and Languages (Literacy).

The identified items earmarked for improvement at the three schools is an indication of the context of the principals' instructional leadership roles.

#### 4.4.2 SCHOOL ASSESSMENT PLAN

The assessment plans were available and examined at all the three schools. This attests that there were planned formal assessments for each term for all the subjects offered at the three schools in each grade.

#### 4.4.3 CLASS VISITS OBSERVATION TOOL

Class visit observation tool/reports were not available at the three schools. The absence of class visit observation tool attests that class visits are not conducted.

#### 4.4.4 STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

There was no evidence of staff professional development reports or planned staff professional development programmes at School A and C. The staff professional development reports were only available at School B. Evidence of staff professional development reports were only available at School B. Therefore, this

attests that the principal from School B is doing something to ensure that the staff is professionally developed.

#### 4.4.5 AUDIT TOOL FOR INFORMAL ASSESSMENT TASKS

There is no evidence of an administered audit tool to monitor and control the informal assessment tasks given to learners at the three schools. Therefore the quantity and quality of informal assessment tasks are not controlled.

#### 4.4.6 RECORDS OF MODERATED FORMAL ASSESSMENT TASKS

There was evidence of records of moderated formal assessment tasks at School A and B. At school C there was no evidence of records of moderated formal assessment tasks. The absence of records of moderated formal assessment tasks at school C, attests that formal assessment tasks are not moderated.

#### 4.4.7 CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT PLAN

The curriculum management plan was only available at School B, and there was no evidence of curriculum management plan at School A and C. Therefore, the two school principals do not conduct regular monitoring and control of the implementation of the curriculum.

#### 4.4.8 MINUTES OF SMT'S MEETINGS

Minutes of the SMT meetings at School A and B were available and observed. The minute book was not available at School C. Therefore, the researcher perceived that the SMT structure at School C might be dysfunctional as there is no evidence of the principal' regular interaction with the school management structure.



#### 4.4.9 MINUTES OF STAFF MEETINGS

Minutes of staff meetings at the three schools were available and observed. This is evidence that staff meetings are held at the three schools, and this attests that the school that curriculum related issues are discussed and communicated to members of staff and that decisions are taken collectively at formal organised meetings.

#### 4.4.10 SCHOOL POLICIES

Written school policies were available at the three schools; however, they have not been revisited for over a period of seven years. The problem of policy review cuts across all the three schools. Therefore, the available policies may not be relevant in addressing the current issues on CAPS.

#### 4.4.11 IQMS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The three schools had developed IQMS implementation plans. The plans were made available and examined. The plans seem to have been developed by one person for the three schools, though these schools have different contexts. The researcher perceived that the plans might have been copied from a common source. The planning was the same in all respect; given the implementation processes to be followed from term one up to the commencement of the summative evaluations by the educators' Development Support Groups (DSG's).

#### 4.4.12 CONCLUSION

From the analysed written documents, the researcher concluded that there are challenges with regard to the support, monitoring and control of curriculum implementation at the three schools. The common challenges that need to be

improved are the absence of curriculum management plan, regular class visits, and the review of school policies which forms the core duties of principals' instructional leadership role. The challenges identified from the written documents in the three schools impact on the principals' instructional leadership roles, and are therefore the real reasons the learners' state performance in the Motupa Circuit schools.

## **4.5 DATA FROM INTERVIEWS**

The following is a discussion of the analysis of data collected from the interviews with principals and HoDs (See Appendix G and H).

### **4.5.1 THE PERCEPTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS ON THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE OF PRINCIPALS**

The participants perceived key roles of principals as instructional leaders as managers of schools who are involved in the management of all school activities like finances, curriculum delivery, mentoring the SGB on policies and who should always take the leading role. The following are transcriptions of interviews with principals:

Principal (School A):

*“My key role as an instructional leader, number one, . . . I am a manager of the school and as a manager I make sure that I organise the school activities ...somewhere in October we make sure that we have plans for the following year and make sure we have measures in place for control and I always take the leading role. My other role is I mentor the SGB as far as the departmental (DBE) policies are concerned. I guide them on the uses of finances and make sure that the curriculum is delivered. This I ensure that I check on the work of my Deputy Principal who is always checking with HoDs time and again, and I am the Manager of finances, any transaction that had to go out as far as finances are concerned I had to be always there.”*

This shows that the participant had no idea of what instructional leadership entails. The views expressed are also shared by the other two principals, who also shared the views as expressed above. The other principal described the view that the key roles of an instructional leader is to manage educators, parents, learners and everything in the school such as infrastructure and the SGB.

Principal (School B)

*“As a school principal, my key roles as an instructional leader is to manage educators, parents and learners and to manage everything which is in the school such as infrastructure and to help the SGB to work according to policy.”*

The participants' responses on the key role of the principal as an instructional leader is shifted more on school governance rather than the instructional leadership role of the principal. From the responses, it became evident that there is a misconception of the idea of instructional leadership. The researcher concluded that this misconception arose from lack of knowledge as some of the participants are not furthering their studies in their field of work as evidenced from their biographical details.

The HoDs also shared the same views expressed by the two principals from School A and B. The two HoDs perceived the key role of an instructional leader as that of managers and administrators of schools rather than supervisors of teaching and learning.

HOD (4)

*“My principal manages the school; she coordinates all school activities and the general administration”*

HOD (3)

*“ . . . She is just a manager, nothing more, she is our leader.”*

The views expressed attest to the misconception of the role of the principal as an instructional leader. However, only few participants expressed the view that instructional leadership entails the principal's role in ensuring that delivery of the curriculum is effectively done and the observance of school policies.

For example, one HoD from School A pronounced:

*“My principal ensures that delivery of the curriculum is effective and that school policies are observed.”*

#### 4.5.2 PROVISION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCES

When responding to the question, participants gave different but related opinions. The principal from School C pronounced that the provision of teaching and learning resources is a challenge. As the principal liaises with the DBE in ensuring that books ordered for the school are supplied in accordance with the requisition made, as wrong books are often supplied.

Principal (School C)

*“Resource provision is a very serious challenge, I liaise with the Department of Education to ensure that resources ordered for the school are supplied according to the requisition made, as wrong books are often supplied.”*

The view expressed is that books are not delivered on time for the start of academic year, that is, early January when schools reopen. Learning and teaching start on the first day of reopening without the delivery of books ordered for the academic year. Some books are delivered late during the year and at times books

which were not ordered are delivered. As a result, this poses serious challenges of teaching and learning resources.

Resource provisioning is one of the principal's instructional leadership roles. However, those that the department cannot supply it remain the principal's responsibility to ensure that learners and teachers have access to resources, and the principal as an instructional leader should ensure that every classroom has teaching and learning resources.

In responding to the question the principal from School A expressed the following views:

Principal (School A)

*“The first thing I had to make sure that the department delivers the textbooks that are supposed to be delivered; if there is no delivery I make follow up so that textbooks are delivered. The same goes on with stationery. On textbooks that are needed by teachers which are not there, we make use of the norms and standards funds to purchase such text books, that can be of use to the school. Thank you.”*

The DBE as the custodian of public schooling must provide schools with the necessary LTSM. However, schools remain without these resources when it is expected that the delivery will be forthcoming. The views expressed by the principal from School A is also shared by the principal of School C on teaching and learning resources, and the views attest that the DBE sometimes fail to make deliveries of the TLSM. The principal had to make follow up for textbooks to be delivered.

The HoD from School C mentioned that principals are unable to purchase teaching and learning resources needed in school, because of insufficient funds which is a serious challenge, and that CAPS materials are in short supply.

HOD (6)

*“Lack of financial resources in our school is a serious problem, the principal cannot afford to buy teaching aids needed . . . books are not supplied in time and there are shortages of CAPS materials”*

The views expressed by the HoD attests to that the norms and standard funds were withheld by the department during the financial crisis experienced in the province. The province was still placed under section 100 administration and schools were not funded. Principals were unable to purchase teaching and learning resources as expected to supplement those that were delivered by the department. Therefore, the researcher concluded that there is inadequate teaching and learning resources in these schools.

#### 4.5.3 MONITORING AND SUPPORT OF CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN THE CLASSROOMS

In responding to the question, the principal from School A maintained that monitoring and support of curriculum implementation in the classrooms is the responsibility of HoDs, and that as principal he only ensures that resources are made available. The following are views expressed by the principal. Therefore, the principal does not conduct any monitoring of curriculum implementation in the classrooms.

Principal (School A)

*“Eh... class visits is the duty of HoDs and they go and observe educators and submit reports to the deputy principal. I make sure that resources are made available for teachers to use them so that teaching and learning in the classroom becomes a bit easier, and we make sure that curriculum implementation is done; through the HoDs I make sure that teachers follow the assessment frameworks. Thank you.”*

The views expressed attest that the principal does not conduct class visits as this is according to the principal the HoDs' duty. The HoD from School A is in support of the views expressed by the principal on monitoring and support of the curriculum. HoDs are the ones who monitor and support educators.

HoD (1)

*“The principal does not monitor curriculum implementation; HoDs are the ones who conduct class visits to give support to teachers.”*

The two HoDs from School B also shared the same views in support of the views of the principal and the HoD from School A as follows.

HoD (3)

*“Actually the principal was supposed to do class visit, but she does not even know what is happening in the classrooms; she is not concerned about what is going on in the classrooms.”*

HoD (4)

*“The principal basically rely on HoDs, because she takes it that all curriculum matters are for HoDs, she does it one's in a while, but most of the time the HoDs are the ones who monitor and support the teachers; we do class visits as the principal delegates us and we HoDs in turn report back to the principal and does not do any follow up on the findings.”*

The researcher concluded that principals do not conduct monitoring and support of curriculum implementation in the classrooms. This is confirmed by the absence of curriculum management plans at the two schools, that is, School A and C evidenced by the analysed written documents in (section, 4.4.7) as well as the absence of classroom observation tool in (section, 4.4.3). The analysed written documents at the three schools confirmed that class visit is not conducted. Therefore, curriculum implementation is not monitored, supported and controlled by school principals.

#### 4.5.4 STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The three school principals interviewed maintained that staff professional development programmes are conducted in schools through internal workshops, which are based on the identified development needs of educators.

The views expressed by the principal from School A point out that IQMS has been adopted to ensure staff professional development at this school.

Principal (school A)

*“On the issue of professional development of the staff, the Department of Basic Education came up with an instrument, Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), as a school we make sure that from the beginning of the year that all teachers are assessed and that they have their Personal Growth Plans (PGP’s), we assign our Development Support Team (DST), to identify areas that need development from the teachers’ performances, thereafter we make sure that workshops are conducted, to develop teachers professionally. We have subjects committees who also ensure that teachers are developed in the various areas of their subjects, and in line with CAPS policy documents. Thank you.”*

The views expressed by the principal from School A supported by the HoD from School B who shared the view that IQMS is employed for educator professional development and that workshops are conducted.

HOD (4)

*“Workshops are conducted at school level and outside organised by the department, there is also IQMS in the school and the principal is involved in educator development.”*



The views expressed by the principal and the HoD attest that the principal organises school based workshops and that IQMS is implemented to ensure that the staff is professionally developed. However, the examined written documents at the three schools were not in support of the views expressed. Documents confirmed that there was no evidence of staff professional development records and reports to confirm that staff professional development are conducted. In section 4.4.4 above, analysed documents indicate that there was no evidence of staff professional development records or reports of educators' personal growth plan (PGP) as evidence of development programmes. Therefore, the researcher concluded that staff professional development is still a challenge.

#### 4.5.5 QUALITY ASSURANCE OF LEARNERS' FORMAL ASSESSMENTS TASKS

In responding to the question, the principal from School A maintained that quality assurance of learners' formal assessments tasks is the role assigned to HoDs. The principal echoed these views as follows:

*“Quality assurance is the job of HoDs because they are the ones who are dealing with teachers directly, I make sure that assessment policies are followed and further check reports submitted to me by the deputy principal who also check the work of the HoDs and HoD check on the work of educators”*

The views expressed by the principal from School A attests that he does not quality assure learners' formal assessment tasks. However, the principal from School B does not share the same views as expressed by the principal from School A. The principal from School B moderates and quality assures learners' formal assessments tasks in order to ensure that questions set for learners meet the required standard, level and grade. The principal from School C said:

*“As principal I ensure that quality learners’ assessment tasks are given to learners, and teachers are encouraged to follow assessment frameworks, as principal I also moderate the assessments”*

The principal from School B is in support of the views expressed by the principal from School C. The principal from School C stated that he ensures that educators give learners more written and quality work. Remedial classes are organised for learners with special educational needs. However, the analysis of written official documents revealed that there was no evidence of moderated formal assessment tasks already given. At School A and C, records of moderated formal assessment tasks were not available; therefore, moderated formal assessment tasks were only available at School B.

#### 4.5.6 IMPROVING LEARNERS’ MATHEMATICS (NUMERACY) AND LANGUAGE (LITERACY) PERFORMANCES

There were mixed perceptions as the principal from School A expressed the view that as a school they ensure that learners’ performances improve and that the foundation for learning campaign (FFLC) is implemented as a turnaround strategy. However, HoDs from the same School A were not in support of their principal’s views.

Principal (school A)

*“We are following the recommendations of the Foundation for Learning Campaign (FFLC), . . . the thirty minutes (30 min.) that learners must read every day, and learners must also read for enjoyment and whatever they shall have read about at home they need to report to teachers in class during storytelling, during morning assembly learners from different grades read the scriptures so as to make sure that learners are able to read. In numeracy, we make sure that learner every first ten minutes of the numeracy period they do mental mathematics. And . . . we also*

*give them speed tests to ensure that they get familiar with mathematics. Thank you.”*

In responding to the question the two HoDs interviewed at School A were not in support of the views expressed by the principal that the recommendations of the (FFLC) are being implemented to improve learners’ performance in Mathematics (Numeracy) and Languages (Literacy). HoDs expressed their views as follows:

HoD (1)

*“The principal is a busy person, though something is being done to improve learners’ performance, HoDs are the ones who are doing it for the principal.”*

HoD (2)

*“The principal is very much involved in various circuit committees and is always out on meetings and does not have time to ensure that reading, writing and counting is improved as the HoDs must ensure that this is done and later report to him.”*

The principal of School B was in support of the views expressed by the principal from School A, regarding improving learners’ performance in reading, writing and counting. The principal also maintained that the recommendations of the FFLC are being implemented to ensure that there is an improvement in the learners’ performance.

Principal (school B)

*“... as principal I make sure that teachers follow the Foundation for Learning Campaign (FFLC) to improve learners’ performances in Numeracy and Literacy, teachers give learners more written, and reading . . . and counting exercise work and those learners who lack behind are given remedial teaching.”*

The principal’s views attest that schools are implementing the recommendations of the FFLC in order to improve the learners’ performance in Numeracy and Literacy. The HoD from School B was in support of these views, pronounced that:

HoD (3)

*“We follow the Foundation for Learning Campaign, and learners do reading and counting in the mornings and there are school based competitions for reading and counting”.*

The implementation of the (FFLC) demands that there should be enough teaching and learning resources at school, and that the programme of implementation should be monitored and supported on a daily basis. From the analysis of written documents in section, 4.4.7, there is no evidence of curriculum management plan and school principals do not monitor and support the implementation of the curriculum in the classrooms. HoDs maintain that principals are out on circuit management meeting and are also involved in circuit committee structures which take most of their time instead of being at school and conducting class visits and monitoring the implementation of (FFLC). The challenge of teaching and learning resources also makes it difficult for principals to implement the recommendations of the FFLC to improve learners' performances in Mathematics (Numeracy) and Languages (Literacy).

Literature review in section 2.3 presented recommendations made to school principals in an effort to support the (FFLC), principals should ensure that:

- every classroom has the basic teaching and learning resources to enable teachers to teach effectively.
- every teacher in the Foundation and Intermediate Phase must set aside reading time (at least 30 minutes every day) on additional reading for all learners.
- every teacher must do regular assessments to monitor and track learners' progress.
- every teacher must take initiative to ensure positive change amongst his or her learners.

- every principal needs to guide, monitor and provide leadership to teachers so that they have the critical skills to build the required learner competencies (DBE, 2010).

The views expressed by the HoDs are that these minimum expectations were not met by principals in their effort to support the FFLC, and the latter was not effectively implemented. The teaching and learning resources to enable teachers to teach effectively were not provided for. There was no monitoring and support of the FFLC. Therefore, the recommendations of the FFLC were not implemented in order to improve learners' performance in Mathematics (Numeracy) and Languages (Literacy).

#### 4.5.7 THE SUPPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION (DBE)

The responses from interviews with school principals concur that the DBE provides the much needed support to school principals as instructional leaders. All the three school principals share the view that DBE invites school principals to workshops and school management support meetings once in every term. The three school principals expressed their views as follows:

Principal (School A)

*“The department takes us to workshops especially on the implementation of CAPS, and the Circuit Manager also invites us to management meetings once every term to empower us as principals on key issues pertaining to school management and other school related matters.”*

Principal (School B)

*“The Department of Basic Education . . . supports me as principal, and the Circuit manager visits our school once per term, and*

*management meetings are organised to support principals once every term.”*

Principal (School C)

*“The Department of Basic Education’s officials do visit the school to give support on matters of school management and leadership, and the Circuit Manager also organises circuit management meetings with principals once every term.”*

The principals’ responses attest that the support provided by the department through management meetings by the Circuit Manager once every school term does address the challenges principals face as instructional leaders. However, the status quo in these schools regarding the implementation of the curriculum in order to improve learners’ performance remains a challenge. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the support provided by the department does not address challenges facing the instructional leadership roles of principals in these schools. The support must come as a relieve to the challenges these principals are faced with in terms of the provision of teaching and learning resources, infrastructure, delivery of textbooks and workbooks, the norms and standard funds to mention a few of these challenges. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the support that the department provides to principals’ instructional leadership role leaves much to be desired. There is a dire need for basic school infrastructure such as libraries, laboratories, computer labs, classrooms, toilets and running water. The DBE should ensure that schools are well resourced for principals to be effective instructional leaders.

#### 4.5.8 CONTEXTUAL FACTORS THAT IMPACT ON THE PRINCIPALS’ INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLES

Principals expressed the view that there are a number of contextual factors that impact on their roles as instructional leaders. The principal from School A

mentioned the norms and standard for school funding and lack of involvement by parents of learners in the education of their children.

Principal (School A)

*“ As you know we are working under the Department of Education in the Limpopo Province, and from 2011, our department was put under administration, and then we had the Norms and Standard Funds cut from all school allocation, and this cut actually impacted negatively on curriculum delivery because we were unable to do some of the things that we planned in order that curriculum delivery should be a bit smooth. Beside the cut of funds, as we are working in rural schools, we are having problems of parents not supporting their children’s education, you give learners a homework they come back the following day with the homework not done. You call the parent, the parent will just tell you, I am busy I cannot come to school so these are but a few contextual factors that impact negatively on my role as a principal. Thank you.”*

The views attest that the challenge of school funding led to principals’ inability to purchase teaching and learning resources needed to supplement those that were delivered by the department as well as other school consumables. The challenge of funding emanated after the provincial government was placed under administration. This had a negative impact on the principals’ instructional leadership roles. Schools had no funds for daily running costs. Parents of learners are unable to support the school as most of them are illiterate, hence cannot read or write. This is the challenge facing most rural schools as parents are away from their homes due to work commitments and children are left on their own with no adult to take care of them.

The HoD from School A shared the same views expressed by the principal from School A. The HoD revealed that there was no way in which principals can turn around the prevailing situation and improve their instructional leadership roles without the necessary teaching and learning resources. The HoD further

mentioned that all the challenges facing school principals involves finances as schools were without funds. The HoD maintained that the challenge of late delivery of learner teacher support materials (LTSM). The following are the views expressed by the HOD from School A.

HOD (1)

*“School infrastructure is the main contextual factor, and it will take long to be solved, as it involves finances, yet schools do not get the Norms and Standards Funding as initially agreed. The Department of Basic Education in Limpopo Province delivered LTSM late in the year, and that there is no way in which principals can turn around the prevailing situation and improve their instructional leadership roles without the necessary teaching and learning resources.”*

The principal from School B also shared the same views as expressed by the principal and HoD from School A on lack of resources, the non-delivery of textbooks, and lack of parental involvement in school meetings. The following views were expressed by the principal from School B.

Principal (School B)

*“Contextual factor number one is infrastructure; we do not have an administration block, library, laboratory and a Computer Centre for learners to do extra reading, for conducting science experiments, and it is time that our learners should be computer literate. Parents of learners do not support the school as they do not attend meetings organised to discuss learners’ learning challenges. We have a problem of textbooks delivery as Grade 3 does not have HL (Sepedi) workbooks, Every time the teacher goes to class; she had to do photocopies for 65 learners.”*

The views expressed by the principal from School B were supported by the views expressed by the HoD from the same school. They mentioned lack of support from parents of learners, whose illiteracy contributes towards their non-involvement in the education of their children, and as such cannot assist learners with school work and they are always away from home and come back end of the month. Hence



children are left on their own and this further poses disciplinary challenges. The following views were expressed by the HOD:

HoD (4)

*“Lack of furniture, late coming by learners, lack of resources to implement the curriculum, parents do not support their children as most parents are illiterate and the area is too rural, and the community is a problem as these parents do not attend meetings, they work in the farms and they stay there and only come back end of the months.”*

The principal from School C shared the same views and maintained that there are challenges of poor attendance by parents of learners to organised SGB meetings and the challenge of school resources and infrastructure.

Principal (School C)

*“Parents of learners’ poor attendance at meetings organised by the School Governing Body, a lack of physical resources such as toilets, which are not enough for our learners and the poor state of classrooms, these classes, are very old and dilapidated and shortage of textbooks in certain subjects”*

The researcher concluded that principals are faced with enormous challenges which impacted on their instructional leadership roles. These contextual factors are the basic necessities of ensuring that there is effective teaching and learning in schools without which schools can be deemed dysfunctional. These contextual factors are the delay or non-delivery of the LTSM; the non-allocation of the norms and standard funding to schools.

Data interpretations and findings of the study follow hereunder in section 4.6.

## **4.6 DATA INTERPRETATION**

The findings extracted from the study on the instructional leadership role of the principal in the Motupa Circuit, Limpopo are interpreted hereunder as follows.

### **4.6.1 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLES OF PRINCIPALS**

Regarding instructional leadership role of principals, majority of participants were not conversant with what instructional leadership entails. Participants from School A and B seem to have no idea of what instructional leadership role is about. From their responses it became evident that there are misconceptions. Some of the participants still equate instructional leadership with the generalised bureaucratic management and administrative roles of school principals as opposed to curriculum implementation and delivery. However, the principal from School C was able to describe instructional leadership more accurately. The focus of instructional leadership is more on teaching and learning and the creation of conditions for learners' excellent performance. It was discussed in the literature review in section, 2.4 that instructional leadership role of school principals would lead to an enhancement of quality teaching and learning for quality learners' results (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2007:249).

The findings from the study indicate that there was no meaningful contribution worth noting obtained from participants from School A and B due to lack of understanding of the concept. Misconception of roles may lead to role confusion. Therefore, it is significant that principals as instructional leaders should acknowledge their roles and be acquainted with what their roles entail so that they should direct their energy to what is their core roles and responsibilities as instructional leaders.

#### 4.6.2 PROVISION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCES

Observations conducted were consistent with the views expressed by participants when interviewed. The observations conducted at School B and C as well as the interviews of participants at the two schools revealed that there is lack of teaching and learning resources. The study's literature review in (section, 2.3) points out that principals should make every effort to ensure that every classroom has the basic teaching and learning resources to enable teachers to teach effectively. However, the study's findings were contrary to this statement from the literature review. The principal from School C revealed that the provision of resources is a challenge as the department supply wrong books. Observations at School B and C revealed that the two schools were mostly affected by lack of teaching and learning resources. At School C, educators were observed photocopying pages from textbooks for learners without textbooks. Photocopiers and duplicating machines were out of order, the school had run out of papers and toner and educators had to give formal assessment tasks on chalkboards instead of providing each learner with a question paper for a formal assessment at School B. The delivery of textbooks by the department poses serious problems as books are delivered late in the year and even wrong deliveries are done. However, the principal from School B expressed the view that she makes follow-up with the department until the appropriate books are delivered.

The researcher concluded that there is inadequate teaching and learning resources at these schools.

#### 4.6.3 MONITORING AND SUPPORT OF CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN THE CLASSROOMS

Interviews and documents examined revealed that principals neglected their instructional leadership roles of monitoring and supporting curriculum

implementation in the classrooms. In section, 2.4.3 of the literature review, Cunningham and Cordeiro (2005:188) see monitoring and support in the context of the class visit, to observe teachers' work, give motivation and exercise influence. Therefore, principals should conduct class visits in order to give support to educators. Principals should develop monitoring tools to record findings in order to make recommendations for improvement during class visits. The findings from the examined written documents revealed that there was no evidence of classroom observation tools at the three schools. This attests that principals do not conduct class visits. Interviews with the principal and the HoD from School A were in support of the written documents examined at the three schools. The principal of School A maintained that monitoring and support of curriculum implementation through class visits is the duty of HoDs, the HoD also shared the same views that they (HODs) are the ones who conduct class visit. The two HoDs from School B were also in support of the views of the principal from School A and that of the HoD.

The researcher concluded that the three school principals do not monitor and support curriculum implementation in the classrooms. Therefore, class visit is not conducted to monitor and support curriculum implementation.

#### 4.6.4 STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The participants expressed the view that school-based workshops are conducted for staff professional development. The views expressed attest that the principal organises school-based workshops and that IQMS is implemented to ensure that the staff is professionally developed. However, the examined written documents at the three schools were not in support of the views expressed. The analysis of written documents revealed that there was no evidence of staff professional development records and reports to confirm that staff professional development

are conducted. Therefore, the researcher concluded that staff professional developments are not conducted.

#### 4.6.5 QUALITY ASSURANCE OF LEARNERS' FORMAL ASSESSMENTS TASKS

The analysis of written official documents revealed the absence of moderated formal assessments tasks at School A and C, and moderated formal assessments tasks were only available and seen at School B. The school principal from School C expressed the view that he conducts quality assurance of learners' formal assessment tasks. However, these views were not consistent with the findings made through written documents analysed. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the two principals from School A and C do not conduct quality assurance of formal assessments tasks.

#### 4.6.6 IMPROVING LEARNERS' PERFORMANCES IN MATHEMATICS (NUMERACY) AND LANGUAGES (LITERACY)

Interview responses revealed mixed perceptions on monitoring and support to improve learners' performances in reading, writing and counting. The principal from School A maintained that as a school they are following the recommendation of the FFLC to improve learners' performances. The recommendations are that principals should make every effort to ensure that:

- every classroom has the basic teaching and learning resources to enable teachers to teach effectively.
- every teacher in the Foundation and Intermediate phase must set aside reading time (at least 30 minutes every day) on additional reading for all learners.

- every teacher must do regular assessments to monitor and track learner progress.
- every teacher must take initiative to ensure positive change amongst his or her learners.
- every principal need to guide, monitor and provide leadership to teachers so that they have the critical skills to build the required learner competencies (DBE, 2010).

However, HoDs from the same school were not in support of these views. They maintained that the principal is always busy and out of school as he is involved in many circuit structures, and attend meetings of the Motupa Circuit awards committee, Breakthrough with English and other community structure committees. The views of the principal from School A were shared and supported by the principal of School B and the two HoDs from the same school. However, written documents examined at the three schools revealed that there were no evidence of monitoring tools for learners' reading, writing and counting. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the three school principals are not doing enough to ensure that learners' performances improve.

#### 4.6.7 SUPPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

Observations conducted at the three schools revealed that there are infrastructure challenges and insufficient teaching and learning resources. At School C it was observed that classrooms and toilets were dilapidated. The administration block was only available at School A; the other two schools were without administration blocks and instead used a classroom as makeshift administration block. All the three schools are without laboratories, libraries and sports fields. The interviews conducted with participants were in support of the observations at the three schools.

The view that schools are having infrastructure challenges was expressed by the principal from School B who was supported by the HoDs. The views expressed by participants attest that the DBE does not do enough to support schools with infrastructure. The challenge of (LTSM) was also pointed out that delivery of learner teacher support materials is a challenge at these schools. Books are either delivered late in the year or are completely not delivered, and learners and teachers do without the necessary teaching and learning materials. However, credit must be given where credit is due in that the DBE does support school principals in their roles as instructional leaders.

The principal from School B expressed the view that the DBE invites them to CAPS workshops. The Circuit Manager also invites principals at management meetings once every term regarding issues of school management and leadership. However, principals as instructional leaders fail to implement the plan of action. Therefore, the DBE cannot be blamed for their failure in executing their instructional leadership roles, as workshops and support meetings are held once every term to ensure that principals are fully supported in their roles.

#### 4.6.8 CONTEXTUAL FACTORS THAT IMPACT ON THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLES OF PRINCIPALS

The findings of the study revealed a number of environmental settings existing in these schools that impact on the instructional leadership roles of principals. These include lack of parental involvement and concern, inadequate teaching and learning resources.

##### **4.6.8.1 Lack of parental involvement and concern**

Interviews revealed that parents of learners are either not involved or are minimally involved in school matters. As mentioned in section, 2.6 of the literature review,

King who cited in Van der Bank (2006: 118-121) asserts that the significant roles of the principal as an instructional leader is to work with parents, school boards, and other interested groups to share and interpret achievement results, areas that need improvement and plans for improvement efforts. During individual interviews with principals it was revealed that parents of learners do not assist their children with homework, and do not attend meetings organised by the SGB. This challenge seems to cut across all the three schools.

The views expressed by the three principals attested that indeed parents of learners are not involved in the education of their children. The principal of School B maintained that parents do not support the school and neither do they attend meetings organised to discuss learners' challenges. The principal of School A shared the same view and also maintained that learners do not do their homework; hence, this attests the parents' lack of support and concern about schooling. The principal of School C and the HoD from School B were in support of this notion. The researcher concluded that principals do not get the necessary support needed from parents of learners in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

#### **4.6.8.2 Inadequate teaching and learning resources**

Interviews with participants and observations conducted at the three schools confirmed that there is lack of teaching and learning resources in these schools. The principal of School B and C and their HoDs maintained that the challenge of shortages textbooks, stationery and workbooks impact on teaching and learning. Therefore, impact also on the instructional leadership role of school principals.

Observations revealed that there is a crisis of lack of teaching and learning resources. Resources such as abacus, dictionaries and science equipments were only available at School A. However, these resources were not enough to ensure effective teaching and learning. The other two schools had serious challenges of



the provision of teaching and learning resources. Most importantly, teaching and learning resources are indispensable in ensuring effective teaching and learning to improve learners' performances. Principals are resource persons in providing teaching and learning resources they are in a way promoting the school climate which is expected to be as conducive as possible for effective teaching and learning. The provision of resources depends on the school principals. It is the principal's core responsibilities as an instructional leader to ensure that educators are provided with the resources they need. Instructional leadership is associated with the provision of teaching and learning resources. However, the inability of principals to provide resources impact on their instructional leadership role.

Principals maintained that they were unable to provide resources because of the cut in the norms and standards funding to schools. The insufficient teaching and learning resources at these schools cannot be excused because of the cut in the norms and standard funds. The majority of principals still fail to implement the school budget as the norms and standard funds are allocated annually to these schools.

#### **4.6.8.3 Lack of support and monitoring of curriculum implementation in the classrooms**

Findings from interviews with HoDs attest that principals do not monitor and support curriculum implementation in the classrooms. Interviews as well as document analysed confirmed that principals do not conduct class visit. Documents analysed revealed that there was no evidence of administered classroom observation tools or reports; the absence of records of administered tools for quality assurance of learners' formal assessments tasks; and the absence of administered monitoring tools to improve learners' performance scores in Mathematic (Numeracy) and Languages (Literacy) . Principals as instructional leaders need to quality assure learners' formal assessments tasks before they are

administered to learners to uphold the quality and standards prescribed in the assessments frameworks. Documents analysis revealed the absence of curriculum management plans at some of these schools. This further confirms the absence of support and monitoring of curriculum implementation by school principals.

#### **4.6.8.4 Inadequate support from the Department of Basic Education**

Observations conducted at the three schools revealed challenges of infrastructure and the teaching and learning resources. At School C it was observed that there are inadequate and dilapidated toilets. The administration block was only available at School A, while School B and C used a classroom as makeshift administration block. The three schools are without laboratories, libraries and sports fields. The views expressed during interviews with participants were in support of the observations.

The principal of School B was supported by the HoD's regarding the challenge of infrastructure. The views expressed by participants during the individual interviews attest that the DBE does not do enough to support school principals. Though the views expressed point to the department's failure to ensure that effective teaching and learning is realized in schools, credit must be given for work well done by the department in ensuring that school principals are supported in their roles as instructional leaders. The principal from School B expressed the views that they get support from the department. Principals have been trained as instructional leaders and the implementation of CAPS, and that regular workshops and support meetings are held once per term. However, principals as instructional leaders fail to implement the plan of action. Therefore, the DBE cannot be blamed for the failure of principals in executing their instructional leadership roles, as workshops and support meetings are held once in every term to ensure that principals are fully supported in their roles.

## **4.7 CONCLUSION**

The chapter focused on the analysis and interpretation of data from biographical details of participants, observations, written documents and interviews with participants.

The process followed during the analysis and interpretation comprised unitising of data, identification of categories and the discussion of emerging patterns. From the emerging patterns, the researcher derived findings which were later analysed and discussed. The analysis of data from different data sources and instruments were triangulated to corroborate and contrast data which emerged in order to achieve the study's main objective.

The chapter presented the findings of the qualitative study from the analysed and interpreted data. The study also identified contextual factors that impact on the principals' instructional leadership roles in the Motupa Circuit. It was also evident from the volume of data presented, that an in-depth description of the phenomenon under study was conducted.

The next and final chapter of the study provides summary of the findings, recommendations, limitations of the study and conclusions.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused mainly on the analysis and interpretation of data collected during the qualitative study. This chapter provides an overview of the study, summary of findings, and further draws conclusions from the findings. Conclusions drawn from the findings will provide answers to the research question:

*What is the instructional leadership role of primary school principals in the Motupa Circuit?*

The conclusion drawn will further provide answers to the following research sub-questions as mentioned in section 1.2.2.3.2 of Chapter 1:

- *What is instructional leadership?*
- *What are the contextual factors that impact on the instructional leadership roles of primary school principals in the Motupa Circuit?*
- *What is the significance of the instructional leadership role of principals?*
- *How the findings of the study contribute to and strengthen the instructional leadership role of principals?*

The answers to the mentioned research and sub-questions are presented in the summary of findings, followed by the recommendations. The chapter will also provide limitations of the study and suggestions for further study on the instructional leadership role of school principals.

## **5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

Chapter 1 introduced the study by giving the general orientation. The aim and objectives of the study were clearly dealt with in this chapter. The statement of the problem, which led researcher to under-take this study, was also spelled out. Furthermore, the chapter reflected on the significance of the study in terms of contributing positively towards instructional leadership roles of principals.

Chapter 2 dealt with the literature review relating to contemporary debate on instructional leadership roles of principals.

Chapter 3 discussed the research methodology and design of the study. The research population and the research sample were also dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter 4 focused on analysis and interpretation of the collected data.

In chapter 5 the researcher gives findings as well as recommendations.

## **5.3. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

Based on the literature review and data collected and analysed in chapter 4, the researcher concluded that the following emerged as the findings of the study:

### **5.3.1 WHAT ARE THE CONTEXTUAL FACTORS THAT IMPACT ON THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE MOTUPA CIRCUIT?**

This qualitative study identified a number of contextual factors that impact on the instructional leadership roles of primary school principals in the Motupa Circuit. The contextual factors encompass misconceptions of their instructional leadership roles, lack of parental involvement and concern, lack of support and monitoring of curriculum implementation in the classrooms, insufficient teaching and learning

resources, lack of staff professional development programmes and the inadequate support from the Department of Basic Education.

### 5.3.2 MISCONCEPTIONS OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLES

The participants had some misconceptions regarding what instructional leadership entails. The majority of participants equate instructional leadership with the general management and administration role of the school. However, some were conversant with what the concept actually entails. It is important for school principals to be familiar with their core roles and responsibilities as instructional leaders to avoid any form of role confusions. There is confusion amongst principals as revealed by this qualitative study. Principals turn to delegate much of their instructional leadership roles to Heads of Departments, as one principal maintained that his role is to manage SGB and school finances as part of the instructional leadership roles. This led principals to lose focus and commitment on ensuring that there is effective teaching and learning in schools as the main focus of instructional leadership. Therefore, the promotion of effective teaching and learning is the principal's central concern. These findings are congruent with the literature review in section (2.3) that some of the contributory factors to the underperforming schools are, lack of instructional leadership skills by principals, and that school managers do not understand their roles and responsibilities.

### 5.3.3 LACK OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND CONCERN

Findings in this study revealed that parental involvement, support and concern are one of the contextual factors that impact on the principals' instructional leadership roles. Parents of learners are regarded as one of the most important stakeholders in education. Therefore, teaching and learning cannot be effective without parental involvement and concern. Principals and Heads of Departments interviewed expressed the view that lack of parental involvement in the activities of schools

impact on the instructional leadership roles of school principals. Learners do not do homework given at school and as a result, this leads to disciplinary problems. When parents are requested to come to school regarding their children's disciplinary and learning problems parents are reluctant to come and also end up not responding to these requests. Furthermore, parents do not attend meetings either organised by the principal or the School Governing Body. Principals use parents' meetings as the only mode to interact with parents regarding school matters and learners' school work and other related matters. Most parents are unavailable, particularly those who work in the farms. They stay at the farms and only come back home once a month. Illiteracy was cited as one of the reasons for the lack of involvement of parents in school activities as they have no interest in school matters.

#### 5.3.4 LACK OF SUPPORT AND MONITORING OF CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

The study findings do not resonate with the literature review, as principals do not monitor and support curriculum implementation in the classrooms. Interview responses by participants confirmed that principals do not conduct class visits. Documents analysed revealed that there was no evidence of administered classroom observation tools or reports, the absence of records of administered tools for quality assurance of learners' formal assessments tasks and the absence of administered monitoring tools to improve learners' performance scores in Mathematic (Numeracy) and Languages (Literacy). Most significantly, principals as instructional leaders need to quality assure learners' formal assessments tasks before they are administered to learners in keeping with quality and standards prescribed in the assessments frameworks. Documents analysis revealed the absence of curriculum management plans at some of these schools. This further confirms the absence of support and monitoring of curriculum implementation by school principals. The researcher concluded that the lack of support and

monitoring of curriculum implementation impact on the principals instructional leadership roles.

#### 5.3.5 INADEQUATE TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCES

The findings from observations revealed that there is a crisis of lack of teaching and learning resources. Resources such as abacus, dictionaries and science equipments were only available at School A. However, these resources were not enough to ensure effective teaching and learning. The other two schools had serious challenges of the provision of teaching and learning resources. Teaching and learning resources are indispensable in ensuring effective teaching and learning to improve learners' performances. Principals are resource persons in providing teaching and learning resources they are in a way promoting the school climate which is expected to be as conducive as possible for effective teaching and learning. The provision of resources depends on the school principals. It is the principal's core responsibilities as an instructional leader to ensure that educators are provided with the resources they need. Instructional leadership is associated with the provision of teaching and learning resources. However, the inability of principals to provide resources impact on their instructional leadership role.

Principals maintained that they were unable to provide resources because of the cut in the norms and standards funding to schools. The insufficient teaching and learning resources at these schools cannot be made an excuse because of the cut in the norms and standard funds. In fact, majority of principals still fail to implement the school budget as the norms and standard funds are allocated annually to these schools.



### 5.3.6 LACK OF STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Participants maintained that IQMS was adopted as an instrument for staff professional development. However, document analysis revealed the absence of evidence of staff professional development records and reports of the development activities. IQMS's staff professional development reports are reflected on individual educators' personal growth plan (PGP's). Hence, the PGP's were not available at the other schools as evidence of staff professional development conducted either at school, circuit or district level.

### 5.3.7 INADEQUATE SUPPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

The DBE as the custodian of public ordinary schools should provide the much needed support to school principals as instructional leaders aimed at the promotion of efficient and effective teaching and learning for quality education in all South African schools.

The findings from the study revealed that there are shortages of the LTSM in these schools. LTSM are delivered to schools at the end of every year for the next academic year; however, it was revealed that schools remained without books for months from the beginning of the new academic year. Hence this had an impact on the role of school principals as instructional leaders. Schools experience shortages of basic school infrastructure facilities like classrooms, as the existing classrooms are dilapidated. This is demonstrated by lack of administration block, toilets, water, libraries, laboratories, computer laboratories, kitchen for preparing meals (NSNP), sports fields and school hall. The challenge of NNSSF was also raised where participants revealed that there was a cut in the school's norms and standard funding, and schools remained for months without funds and there are demands for daily running costs, and teachers are unable to attend workshops.

The researcher concluded that these challenges impact on the instructional leadership roles of school principals.

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- For principals to perform their instructional leadership tasks effectively, they need to acknowledge that at the heart of their leadership role is a fundamental responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the curriculum, the enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning, as well as raising the levels of learner achievement.
- Principals should take into consideration parents' needs and abilities when deciding about parents' participation in school affairs and design appropriate strategies to ensure that parents become involved in school affairs.
- Principals are expected to have in-depth knowledge of the curriculum in order to guide teachers through the implementation process.
- The Department of Basic Education should provide continuous capacity building to principals as instructional leaders.
- School principals should involve the staff in developing curriculum management plan and class observation monitoring tools for implementation.
- Parents of learners should be encouraged to attend school meetings organised with a purpose of reporting on learners' school work, progress and challenges, and principals should make parents aware of what the

schools expect from them in assisting schools to improve the education of their children.

- Principals need an in-depth training on curriculum content and assessment requirements (CAPS) to be able to support teachers effectively, as not all principals are equally conversant with the curriculum (CAPS) especially in schools where principals do little or no classroom teaching themselves even though they have been trained. Efforts should be directed at ensuring that principals teach as directed by policy, and the IQMS.
- Principals should subject the staff to professional development programmes at least once in a term. The staff professional development can be conducted by the principal or the staff development team (SDT), as according to the IQMS all schools are expected to have a staff development team. The purpose of staff professional development should be to minimise teachers' professional weaknesses as identified during IQMS summative evaluations in order to ensure continuous teachers' professional development.

## **5.5 LIMITATIONS FOR THE STUDY**

The researcher acknowledged limitations of this study with reference to the sampling strategy that resulted in the choice of the three schools, which were also chosen due to their proximity to the researcher. Only a few respondents were purposefully chosen and that some school principals and HoDs were chosen by virtue of the positions they held. Generalising the findings is also yet another problem as the findings do not apply to all schools. The researcher clearly understands that the selected research methodology seeks to understand the perceptions and experiences of individuals within a particular context. The

researcher therefore, holds that the findings can only be applicable within the schools that form part of this study.

The scheduled data collection at the schools also presented particular challenges. On the day that the researcher was due to collect data at the first selected school, some of the interviewees were reluctant to take part, as they associated the individual interviews with an inspection of some kind, especially as some of the questions beg for answers that require them to expose how things are done in their school. But after having assured them through ethical considerations and that the interviews were for the research purposes of my study and that it had nothing to do with inspection, they agreed to cooperate.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

The aim of the study was to investigate the instructional leadership role of primary school principals in the Motupa Circuit by identifying the contextual factors that impact on their instructional leadership. Findings from the qualitative study were able to identify the contextual factors that impact on the principals' instructional leadership roles in the Motupa Circuit, Limpopo. The study identified a number of contextual factors, which include but are not limited to: lack staff professional development; insufficient learning resources; lack of support and monitoring of curriculum implementation in the classrooms; lack of parental involvement and concern; inadequate support from the Department of Basic Education and misconceptions by the instructional leadership roles. These contextual factors need to be dealt with as a matter of urgency in reversing the status quo on the instructional leadership roles of school principals in the Motupa Circuit, Limpopo. It has been highlighted in the literature review what the concept "instructional leadership" entails. The significance of the instructional leadership roles of school principals was also identified in the literature review. Findings from the literature review were able to contribute to and strengthen principals' instructional leadership

roles by providing ways on how principals could develop their curriculum and instructional roles to enhance their instructional leadership roles in schools.

It can, therefore, be concluded that the identified contextual factors impacted on the instructional leadership roles of primary school principals in the Motupa Circuit, Limpopo. This study's literature review, findings and recommendations will contribute to and strengthen the instructional leadership role of principals.

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## APPENDIX A

Proof of registration

0855 M1RST  
MOHALE A B MR  
P O BOX 4458  
GA-KGAPANE  
0838

STUDENT NUMBER: 0597-135-7

ENQUIRIES NAME: POSTGRADUATE QUALIFICATION

ENQUIRIES TEL: (012) 441-5702

DATE: 2014-01-22

Dear Student

I wish to inform you that your registration has been accepted for the academic year indicated below. Kindly activate your Unisa mylife (<https://myunisa.ac.za/portal>) account for future communication purposes and access to research resources. Please check the information below and kindly inform the Master's and doctoral section on [mandd@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mandd@unisa.ac.za) on any omissions or errors.

DEGREE: MED (EDUC MANAGEMENT) (98405)

TITLE: The role of the principal as an instructional leader: a case study of three schools in the Motupa circuit, Limpopo.

SUPERVISOR: Prof PM SEBATE

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2014

TYPE: DISSERTATION

SUBJECTS REGISTERED: DFEDU95 M ED - EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

A statement of account will be sent to you shortly. If you intend submitting your dissertation/thesis for examination, complete form DSAR20 (Notice of Intention to Submit) before 30 September. If this deadline is not met, you need to re-register and submit your intention for submission by 15 April and submit your dissertation by 15 June. Your supervisor's written consent for submission must accompany your notice of intention to submit.

Yours faithfully,

Prof M Mosimege  
Registrar



## APPENDIX B

Request for permission to the Provincial DBE to conduct the study

STUDENT NO: 05971357  
CELL : 073 233 7197  
E-MAIL : [mohaleassan@yahoo.com](mailto:mohaleassan@yahoo.com)  
: [05971357@unisa.ac.za](mailto:05971357@unisa.ac.za)

P O BOX 4458  
Ga-Kgapane  
0838  
06 December 2013

The Head of the Provincial DBE  
Limpopo Provincial Department of Education  
Private Bag X9489  
Polokwane  
0700

Dear Sir/Madam

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE MOTUPA CIRCUIT SCHOOLS**

I hereby wish to request for permission to conduct research in the Motupa circuit schools. I am a master's degree student at the university of South Africa, under the supervision of Prof. P.M. Sebate contacts: 012 429 8220 and email address: [sebatpm@unisa.ac.ac.za](mailto:sebatpm@unisa.ac.ac.za).

My research topic is: *The role of the principal as an instructional leader: a case study of three schools in the Motupa circuit, Limpopo.*

The main purpose of the study is to understand the perceptions and meanings held by the participants about the instructional leadership roles of primary school principals in the Motupa circuit, Limpopo. It is therefore anticipated that the findings and recommendations made in this study will contribute to and strengthen the instructional leadership roles of principals. The study also comprises the following objectives:

- To describe instructional leadership.
- To investigate and identify the contextual factors that impact on the instructional leadership roles of principals in the Motupa Circuit.
- To describe and identify the significance of the instructional leadership role of principals;
- To determine how the findings of this study can contribute to and strengthen the instructional leadership role of the principals.

Participants in this study are the principal and two HODs at each of the three schools selected. The study will make use of individual interviews, observations and documents analysis as research instruments. Should permission be granted strict research ethics will be adhered to.

Your immediate attention to this matter will always be held in high esteem.

Yours truly

.....  
Mohale A.B (Researcher)

## APPENDIX C



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Enquiries: Dr. Makola MC, Tel No: 015 290 9448. E-mail: [MakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za](mailto:MakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za)

P.O. BOX 4458

GA-KGAPANE

0838

MOHALE A.B (MR.)

**RE: Request for permission to Conduct Research**

1. The above bears reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct a research has been approved- **TITLE: THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER: A CASE STUDY OF THREE SCHOOLS IN THE MOTUPA CIRCUIT- LIMPOPO PROVINCE**
3. The following conditions should be considered
  - 3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.
  - 3.2 Arrangements should be made with both the Circuit Offices and the schools concerned.
  - 3.3 The conduct of research should not anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.
  - 3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the forth term.
  - 3.5 During the study, the research ethics should be practiced, in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).
  - 3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.
4. Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.

Page 1 of 2

Cnr. 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700  
Tel: 015 290 7600, Fax: 015 297 6920/4220/4494

**The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!**

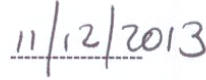
5. The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.



Dederen K.O

Acting Head of Department



Date

LIMPOPO PROVINCE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
2013-12-11
H.O.D.'S OFFICE
PRIVATE BAG X9169 POLOKWANE 0700

## APPENDIX D

Request for permission to the Tzaneen District Senior Manager

STUDENT NO : 05971357  
CELL : 073 233 7197  
E-MAIL : [mohaleassan@yahoo.com](mailto:mohaleassan@yahoo.com)  
: [05971357@unisa.ac.za](mailto:05971357@unisa.ac.za)

P O BOX 4458  
Ga-Kgapane  
0838  
24 February 2014

The District Senior Manager  
Tzaneen District  
Tzaneen  
0850

Sir/Madam

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE MOTUPA CIRCUIT SCHOOLS**

I hereby wish to request for permission to conduct research in the Motupa circuit schools. I am a registered masters' degree student with the University of South Africa and I am supposed to start collecting research data as soon as permission is granted.

My research topic is: *The role of the principal as an instructional leader: a case study of three schools in the Motupa circuit, Limpopo.*

More information regarding the study can be obtained from my supervisor: Prof. P.M. Sebate contacts: 012 429 8220 email address: [sebatpm@unisa.ac.za](mailto:sebatpm@unisa.ac.za)

The main purpose of the study is to understand the perceptions and meanings held by the participants about the instructional leadership roles of primary school principals in the Motupa circuit, Limpopo. It is therefore anticipated that the findings and recommendations made in this study will contribute to and strengthen the instructional leadership roles of principals. The study also comprises the following objectives:

- To describe instructional leadership.
- To investigate and identify the contextual factors that impact on the instructional leadership roles of principals in the Motupa Circuit.
- To describe and identify the significance of the instructional leadership role of principals;
- To determine how the findings of this study can contribute to and strengthen the instructional leadership role of the principals.

Participants in this study are the principal and two HODs at each of the three schools selected. The study will make use of individual interviews, observations and documents analysis as research instruments. Should permission be granted strict research ethics will be adhered to.

Your immediate attention to this matter will always be held in high esteem.  
Yours truly

.....  
Mohale A.B (Researcher)

## APPENDIX E



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TZANEEN DISTRICT

Ref: 81327854  
Enq: Raphadu M.D  
Tel: 015 306 6800  
Date: 2014.02.27

To: MR MOHALE A.B

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE MOTUPA CIRCUIT SCHOOLS.

1. Kindly be informed that permission has been granted by the Department to you to conduct a research within the schools in Motupa Circuit.
2. **TITLE OF THE RESEARCH: THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER: A CASE STUDY OF THREE SCHOOLS IN THE MOTUPA CIRCUIT-LIMPOPO PROVINCE.**
3. Please take note of the conditions as laid down at paragraph three (3) of the Departmental approval letter dated the 11<sup>th</sup> -12-2013.
4. The department wishes you success in your research and the final product of the research should be shared with the Department to enhance our Principals.

  
DISTRICT SENIOR MANAGER

28/02/2014  
DATE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,  
TZANEEN DISTRICT, Private Bag X 4032 TZANEEN, 0850  
TEL: 015 306 6800 FAX: 015 306 6800

*The heartland of Southern Africa – development is about people*

## APPENDIX F

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS

1. What is your role as an instructional leader?
2. How do you ensure that teaching and learning resources are made available?
3. How do you monitor and support curriculum implementation in the classrooms?
4. What are you doing as principal to ensure that the staff is professionally developed?
5. How do you ensure that quality learner assessments tasks are given?
6. How do you ensure learners' Numeracy and Literacy performance scores improves?
7. What kind of support does the Department of Basic Education provides to improve your effectiveness as an instructional leader?
8. What are the contextual factors that impact negatively on your role as principal?

## **APPENDIX G**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HODs**

1. What is your principal's role as an instructional leader in the school?
2. How does the principal ensure that teaching and learning resources are made available?
3. How does the principal monitor and support curriculum implementation in the classrooms?
4. What strategies does the principal use to ensure that the staff is professionally developed?
5. How does the principal ensure that learners' performances in reading, writing and counting improve?
6. What are the contextual factors that impact on the principal's role as an instructional leader?

## APPENDIX H

### DOCUMENT ANALYSIS CHECKLIST

Documents		Available	
		YES	NO
1.	School Improvement plan		
2.	School Assessment plan		
3.	Classroom observation tool/report		
4.	Staff professional development reports		
5.	Audit tool for informal Assessment		
6.	Record of moderated formal assessments		
7.	Curriculum management / Instructional plan		
8.	Minutes of SMT structure		
9.	Minutes of Staff		
10.	School policies		
11.	IQMS implementation plan		



## APPENDIX I

### OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

1. Learner Enrolment
2. Number of educators' staff
3. Deputy Principal's post
4. Number of HODs
5. Number of classrooms
6. Number of vacant posts
7. Educator to learner ratio
8. Availability of the following:
  - 8.1 Administration block
  - 8.2 Toilets
  - 8.3 Security fence
  - 8.4 Laboratory
  - 8.5 Library
  - 8.6 Computer centre
  - 8.7 Running water
  - 8.8 Electricity
  - 8.9 Sports fields
  - 8.10 Teaching and learning resources

## APPENDIX J

### BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRINCIPALS

NB:

- Provide your personal details as honestly as possible
  - Your responses will be used for research purposes only
  - The information provided will be treated anonymously and confidentially
- .....

1. Gender: (Make a cross in the appropriate box)

MALE		FEMALE	
------	--	--------	--

2. Age: .....

3. Highest academic qualifications:.....

4. Highest professional qualifications.....

5. Highest management and leadership qualifications.....

6. Years of experience as a teacher:.....

7. Years of experience as principal.....

8. Nature of appointment in the present post (Make a cross in the appropriate box)

PERMANENT		ACTING	
-----------	--	--------	--

9. Trained as an instructional leader (Make a cross in the appropriate box)

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

10. Trained in CAPS implementation (Make a cross in the appropriate)

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

## APPENDIX K

### BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HODs

NB:

- Provide your personal details as honestly as possible
- Your responses will be used for research purposes only
- The information provided will be treated anonymously and confidentially

.....  
1. Gender: (Make a cross in the appropriate box)

MALE		FEMALE	
------	--	--------	--

2. Age: .....
3. Highest academic qualifications:.....
4. Highest professional qualifications...
5. Highest management and leadership qualifications.....
6. Years of experience as a teacher.....
7. Years of experience as HOD.....
8. Nature of appointment in the present post (Make a cross in the appropriate box)

PERMANENT		ACTING	
-----------	--	--------	--

9. Trained as an instructional leader (Make a cross in the appropriate box)

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

10. Trained in CAPS implementation (Make a cross in the appropriate)

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

## APPENDIX L

### LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR PRINCIPALS

Researcher : Mohale A.B  
Cell : 073 233 719  
E-mail : [mohaleassan@yahoo.com](mailto:mohaleassan@yahoo.com)

P O BOX 4458  
Ga-Kgapane  
0838  
17 February 2014

The Principal  
ZXG School

.....  
Dear Sir/Madam

#### RE: CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN AN INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

I hereby wish to request for your consent to take part in an individual interview. I am a master's student conducting research entitled: ***The role of the principal as an instructional leader: a case study of three schools in the Motupa circuit, Limpopo.***

The purpose of this study is to understand the perceptions and meanings held by the participants about the instructional leadership role of primary school principals in the Motupa circuit, given the state of learners' poor performance. The study comprises the following objectives:

- To describe instructional leadership.
- To investigate and identify the contextual factors that impact on the instructional leadership roles of principals in the Motupa circuit.
- To describe and identify the significance of the instructional leadership role of principals.
- To determine how the findings of the study can contribute to and strengthen the instructional leadership roles of principals.

I would like to know whether you would be willing to share your perception, experiences and knowledge through individual interviews on your instructional leadership role. The interview process will take 45 to 60 minutes of your time. With your consent, I will tape record the interview session, since it will enable me to capture all the information forwarded by participants. Your responses will only be used for the research purposes only, and that the research will be treated unanimously and confidentially. Your participation in the study is voluntary and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any reprisal. The audio-recorded and transcribed data will be kept safe for five years from the approval and publication of the study results, and then discarded with thereafter.

Yours truly

.....  
Mohale A.B (Researcher)

## CONSENT FORM

I .....agree that:

- I understand the information of the consent form for this research project.
- The nature and purpose of the study has been explained to me.
- I understand that this part of the study involves different individual interviews that may take about 45 to 60 minutes.
- I understand that there are no specific risks involved in participating in this study.
- I understand that the researcher will maintain my identity confidential and that any information I forward to the researcher will only be used for the purposes of the research.
- I agree that the research data will be kept for five years, and will then be discarded with thereafter.
- I agree to participate in this study and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any effect.
- I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

<b>Signature of participant</b>	<b>Date</b>
---------------------------------	-------------

## APPENDIX M

### LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR HODs

Researcher : Mohale A.B  
Cell : 073 233 7197  
E-mail : [mohaleassan@yahoo.com](mailto:mohaleassan@yahoo.com)

P O BOX 4458  
Ga-Kgapane  
0838  
17 February 2014

The Principal  
ZXG School  
.....

Dear Sir/Madam

#### RE: CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN AN INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

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Yours truly

.....  
Mohale A.B (Researcher)

## CONSENT FORM

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- I understand that this part of the study involves different individual interviews that may take about 45 to 60 minutes.
- I understand that there are no specific risks involved in participating in this study.
- I understand that the researcher will maintain my identity confidential and that any information I forward to the researcher will only be used for the purposes of the research.
- I agree that the research data will be kept for five years, and will then be discarded with thereafter.
- I agree to participate in this study and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any effect.
- I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Signature of participant	Date

## APPENDIX N

### EXAMPLE OF A TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW WITH THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

**Researcher: What is your role as an instructional leader?**

**Principal:**

*“My key role as an instructional leader, number one . . . I am a manager of the school and as a manager I make sure that I organise the school activities ...somewhere in October we make sure that we have plans for the following year and make sure we have measures in place for control and I always take the leading role. My other role is I mentor the SGB as far as the departmental (DBE) policies are concerned. I guide them on the uses of finances and make sure that the curriculum is delivered. This I ensure that I check on the work of my Deputy Principal who is always checking with HoDs time and again, and I am the Manager of finances, any transaction that had to go out as far as finances are concerned I had to be always there.”*

**Researcher: How do you ensure that teaching and learning resources are made available?**

**Principal:**

*“The first thing I had to make sure that the department delivers the textbooks that are supposed to be delivered; if there is no delivery I make follow up so that textbooks are delivered. The same goes on with stationery. On textbooks that are needed by teachers which are not there, we make use of the norms and standards funds to purchase such text books, that can be of use to the school.*

*Thank you.”*



**Researcher: So you do not have challenges regarding the delivery of the LTSM from the Department?**

**Principal:**

*“That one is still a challenge as there is always a delay on the delivery of LTSM.”*

**Researcher: So, how do you deal with this challenge?**

**Principal:**

*“Eh . . . when there are no deliveries I make follow up through our circuit office.”*

**Researcher: How do you monitor and support curriculum implementation in the classrooms?**

**Principal:**

*“Eh... class visits is the duty of HoDs and they go and observe educators and submit reports to the deputy principal. I make sure that resources are made available for teachers to use them so that teaching and learning in the classroom becomes a bit easier, and we make sure that curriculum implementation is done; through the HoDs I make sure that teachers follow the assessment frameworks. Thank you.”*

**Researcher: What are you doing as principal to ensure that the staff is professionally developed?**

**Principal:**

*On the issue of professional development of the staff, the Department of Basic Education came up with an instrument, Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), as a school we make sure that from the beginning of the year that all teachers are assessed and that they have their Personal Growth Plans (PGP's), we assign our Development Support Team (DST), to identify areas that need development from the teachers' performances, thereafter we make sure that workshops are conducted, to develop teachers professionally. We have subjects committees who also ensure that teachers are developed in the various areas of their subjects, and in line with CAPS policy documents. Thank you."*

**Researcher: How do you ensure that quality learners' formal assessment tasks are given?**

**Principal:**

*"Quality assurance is the job of HoDs because they are the ones who are dealing with teachers directly, I make sure that assessment policies are followed and further check reports submitted to me by the deputy principal who also check the work of the HoDs and HoDs check on the work of educators"*

**Researcher: How do you ensure that learners' Numeracy and Literacy performances scores improves?**

**Principal:**

*"We are following the recommendations of the Foundation for Learning Campaign (FFLC), . . . the thirty minutes (30 min.) that learners must read every day, and learners must also read for enjoyment and whatever they shall have read about at home they need to report to teachers in class during storytelling, during morning assembly learners from different grades read the scriptures so as to make sure that learners are able to read. In numeracy, we make sure that learner every first ten minutes of the numeracy period they do mental*

*mathematics. And . . . we also give them speed tests to ensure that they get familiar with mathematics.*

*Thank you.”*

**Researcher: What kind of support does the Department of Basic Education provide to improve your effectiveness as principal?**

**Principal:**

*“The department takes us to workshops especially on the implementation of CAPS, and the Circuit Manager also invites us to management meetings once every term to empower us as principals on key issues pertaining to school management and other school related matters.”*

**Researcher: What are the contextual factors that impact on your role as principal?**

**Principal:**

*“As you know we are working under the Department of Education in the Limpopo Province, and from 2011, our department was put under administration, and then we had the Norms and Standard Funds cut from all school allocation, and this cut actually impacted negatively on curriculum delivery because we were unable to do some of the things that we planned in order that curriculum delivery should be a bit smooth. Beside the cut of funds, as we are working in rural schools, we are having problems of parents not supporting their children’s education, you give learners a homework they come back the following day with the homework not done. You call the parent, the parent will just tell you, I am busy I cannot come to school so these are but a few contextual factors that impact negatively on my role as a principal. Thank you.”*

**Researcher: “So, are the parents of learners supportive?**

**Principal:**

*Yes, that is another challenge, because parents who are working cannot attend meetings when called to do so, we also have child headed families where there is no guardian or an adult to attend to the educational needs of such learners. Our learners' parents generally do not attend meetings."*

## APPENDIX O

### EXAMPLE OF A TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW WITH AN HOD

**Researcher:** What is your principal's role as an instructional leader in the school?

**HOD:**

*"The principal is involved in the general management of the school, he leads all the teams in the school, interact with all stakeholders including parents, learners and Departmental reps and officials, he ensures that the school vision and mission are achieved, and he also ensures that the Department's policies are carried out by all members of the staff."*

**Researcher:** How does the principal ensure that teaching and learning resources are made available?

**HOD:**

*"The principal get lists from all educators on their requisitions and these are submitted by HODs after consultation with educators involved, and uses the National Norms and Standards for school funding to purchase, as well as money from donations, in case of the supply from the Department which in most cases are delayed, the principal informs the circuit about such delays."*

**Researcher:** Do you think the school has enough teaching and learning resources?

**HOD:**

*"I cannot say that they are enough because the curriculum has changed and now we have CAPS, I can say more or less 96% of the LTSM are available and only more or less 4% is still outstanding"*

**Researcher: How does your principal monitor and support curriculum implementation in the classrooms?**

**HOD:**

*“As a school manager he plans and allocates learning areas to educators according to their specializations, he also ensures that the timetable is in place, and teachers attend periods and teach according to the prescribed syllabus, he also do regular class visits and controls lesson plans, check learners’ workbooks and teachers’ files.*”

**Researcher: On class visit, does the principal have a tool to use during class visits?**

**HOD:**

*“Yes, eh . . . a tool is available from the Department for CAPS, as a school we have developed our own tool and the principal uses the one agreed upon by the staff.”*

**Researcher: What strategies do your principal use to ensure that the staff is professionally developed?**

**HOD:**

*“Eh . . . the principal organizes school-based workshops and also encourage educators to attend circuit workshops as well as other workshops organized by the Department. Through IQMS the principal also do class visits and give educators feedback on a regular basis.”*

**Researcher: So, do you want to say that there is staff professional development workshops conducted, and if that is the case is there evidence or reports on workshops already conducted?**

**HOD:**

*“Yes school-based workshops are conducted, but reports are not kept.”*

**Researcher: How does the principal ensure that learners’ reading, writing and counting skills improve?**

**HOD:**

*“The principal assists educators by purchasing the required materials and also liaise with other school principals to find out how progress is implemented in their schools, ensures that the school enters competitions in the Foundation for Learning Campaign, mental mathematics is also done and periods for mental mathematics are honoured daily for the first 30 minutes to improve learners’ performances.”*

**Researcher: Are learners made to read during functions to parents so as to ensure that reading skills improve?**

**HOD:**

*“Yes, there is a timetable for learners to read during assembly from Monday to Friday for all the grades to read.”*

**Researcher: How is the writing skills improved?**

**HOD:**

*“Workbooks are used on a daily basis to ensure that learners improve their writing skills, learners write in their workbooks, and teachers also use the chalkboard to write, learners copy down whatever appears on the chalkboard so as to improve writing skill.”*

**Researcher: What are the contextual factors that impact on your principal's role of improving learners' performances?**

**HOD:**

*"The first contextual factor is about the learners' parents, as you can judge y mere looking that our school is situated in a rural place, and the parents are not educated so when you call them to meetings, they do not attend, they will first ask whether there will be food served at the meeting, and if there is no food the attendance is likely to be poor. The other factor is the National Norms and Standard for school funding from the Department allocated to schools based on learners' enrolment, the enrolment of our school is low to such an extent that we do not get enough funds for our school. The human resource, our school start from grade R to 7 and we are only allocated only 12 educators, as you can see each educator teaches close to five (5) learning areas, so in other words I . . . can say that we are understaffed."*

**Researcher: So, do you want to say that teachers are overloaded with work?**

**HOD:**

*"Yes teachers are overloaded with work, see myself as an HOD I am offering five learning areas."*

**Researcher: So, you do not have enough time for office work and to carry out some of your assigned professional responsibilities as an HOD?**

**HOD:**

*"Yes, indeed I work after hours to ensure that I complete some of my duties."*

**Researcher: So what is the school's teacher-learner ratio?**

**HOD:**

*"I can say roughly 1:70 or more."*



**Researcher: Do you want to say that classrooms are overcrowded?**

**HOD:**

*“Yes, more especially the foundation phase classes as these classes have more than sixty to seventy nine learners in each class, but in grades 6 and 7 numbers are normal with less than fifty in each class.”*

## APPENDIX P

### EDITING AND PROOFREADING CERTIFICATE

7542 Galangal Street

Lotus Gardens

Pretoria

0008

10 November 2014

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter serves to confirm that I have edited and proof-read Mr A.B. Mohale's dissertation entitled: **"THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER: A CASE STUDY OF THREE SCHOOLS IN THE MOTUPA CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO."**

I found his work easy and enjoyable to read. Much of my editing basically dealt with obstructionist technical aspects of language which could have otherwise compromised smooth reading as well as the sense of the information being conveyed. I also formatted the dissertation. I hope that the work will be found to be of an acceptable standard. I am a member of Professional Editors Group and also a lecturer in the Department of English at the University of South Africa.

Thank you.

Hereunder are my particulars:



Jack Chokwe (Mr)

Department of English (Unisa)

Contact numbers: 072 214 5489 / 012 429 6232

[jmb@execulivemail.co.za](mailto:jmb@execulivemail.co.za)

Professional  
**EDITORS**  
Group