

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' INSTRUCTIONAL
LEADERSHIP ROLE AND THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN
SWAZILAND PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

By

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4. Above all my profound gratitude goes to the Almighty God, who gave me strength to achieve this great goal.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all who believed in me even when I was losing focus and especially to my wonderful children Siphesihle, Thembelihle and Sibonokuhle Khoza. Many thanks for their inspiration.

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DECLARATION

I declare that **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE AND THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN SWAZILAND PRIMARY SCHOOLS** is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



21-11-2012

(Mrs. J.F. Khoza)



Research Ethics Clearance Certificate

This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by

JF Khoza (44514875)

for a M Ed study entitled

**The relationship between the principal's instructional leadership role
and the academic performance of pupils in Swaziland primary schools**

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa
College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two
years from the date of issue.

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the relationship between the school principal's instructional leadership role and the academic performance of pupils in Swaziland primary schools. A qualitative investigation was conducted using individual and focus group interviewing. This was supplemented by a study of official documents on instructional leadership at each research site and the observation of the prevailing culture of teaching and learning traits at each school. A research sample of eight school principals and forty teachers was purposefully drawn from eight well-performing primary schools in the Southern Hhohho region of Swaziland. The findings of the study confirmed that the school principal's instructional leadership role serves as a pillar for the development and sustainment of a sound culture of teaching and learning in order to ensure that learners achieve optimally. Based on the perceptions of school principal and teacher participants, strategies were developed for effective instructional leadership so as to ensure optimal learner performance.

KEY CONCEPTS

The following are key concepts that were used in the study:

Instructional leadership role, culture of teaching and learning, academic performance

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

OVC	Orphaned and Vulnerable Children
HREO	Hhohho Regional Education Officer
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
SPC	Swaziland Primary Certificate
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The increased demand for education has resulted in large pupil enrolments worldwide. This occurred on account of the introduction of education for all and the provision of free primary education linked to the inclusion of all pupils despite their emotional, physical and cognitive challenges. All of these arrangements resulted in primary school principals today facing more challenges than in the past (UNESCO, 1996:17). The roles of the school principal are multiple and complex, all of which are aimed at enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. Nwangwu (1984:92) and Webb (2002:69) point out that in the past school principals were part of the teaching staff, but today they are faced with two major responsibilities: one to manage the school as an organisation and the other to be an instructional leader where they have to ensure that teaching and learning take place effectively.

Parents and pupils are also more likely to choose a school whose academic performance is on an acceptable level. There is a conviction that school principals can and should make a difference to the academic standards of schools (Christie, 2006:13). For excellent academic achievement to be attained, educationists have identified strong instructional leadership as the cornerstone. For instance, Glanz (2006:92) points out that unless school principals focused on their role as instructional leaders, they would not be successful in achieving high academic standards in their schools. It is argued that effective school principals are those who, among other things, articulate a vision that includes clear goals for pupils' learning, communicate high expectations for achievement, and encourage and nurture a positive climate conducive for teaching and learning (Graczewski, Knudson & Holtman, 2009:72). In support of this idea of instructional leadership as a crucial component of school success, Kruger (2003a:11) confirms the direct relationship between the instructional leadership role of the school principal and the success of the school's academic outcomes. However Nwangwu (1984:993) and Hopkins (2003:59) argue that isolating instructional leadership from management and leadership in general is purely for convenience of discussion, as instructional leadership is part of the whole management function. In support of

Nwangwu's and Hopkins' exposition, Van Deventer (2003:66) cited activities such as planning, problem solving, decision making, policy making, organising, coordinating, leading, and control of school events as important managerial tasks of the school principals which they perform alongside their instructional leadership role.

By considering the multiple responsibilities of the school principal, it is clear that if these roles are not harmonised, problems may arise. One of the possible problems that may arise relates to conflict due to confusion which may erupt among staff, or staff and the school principal, or among staff and pupils (Van Houtte, 2005:72). These problems may impact negatively on the culture of teaching and learning and may affect the academic performance of the pupils negatively.

With this study the relationship between the schools principal's instructional leadership role, the culture of teaching and learning and the academic performance of pupils in some primary schools in Swaziland is investigated. Primary Schools in Swaziland, like those in all other African states such as Botswana, Nigeria, South Africa and Zambia, to mention but a few, have to cope with many internal and external pressures relating to a developing society context (UNESCO, 2000:33). They need, however, to stay focused on the major goal of maintaining a high academic standard (Beebe, 1993:134; UNESCO, 2000:33). Amidst the many challenges affecting the quality of education in schools are political pressures, socio-economic challenges and the lack of adequate resources (UNESCO, 1996:12). For instance, political forces demand that basic education be made compulsory for all children between the ages of seven and fifteen and that primary education be fully financed by the government (The Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland, 2005:13). While the quest for free primary education is understood, it remains a challenge for the governments of a developing society to upgrade the infrastructure to accommodate all the pupils, provide learning materials and hire adequate teaching staff (Shabangu, 2010:3).

At the beginning of 2010, the Government of Swaziland started to introduce free primary education. This is envisaged to occur gradually by implementing free education only in grade one and two in the first year and then extend the free provision yearly class by class, aiming to reach

grade seven by 2015 (Minister of Education, 2010:2). This immediately resulted in overcrowded classrooms as large numbers of pupils, who could not go to school previously due to financial constraints, flooded the schools. This was in response to the ruling on free education according to chapter three, subsection 6 of the Constitution of Swaziland which states that every Swazi child shall within three years of the implementation of the constitution have the right to free basic education in public schools. This implies free education provision for all primary school learners (The Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland, 2005:13). These pupils could not be turned away even though the facilities were inadequate. This resulted in intensified shortages of teaching staff and learning material which impacted negatively on the morale of teachers. The teaching corps experienced the expectations of the Ministry of Education of Swaziland as unrealistic, namely that teachers should cope with teaching overcrowded classes effectively. Teacher sentiments are inspired by inadequate remuneration in the face of challenging conditions such as overcrowded demand and insufficient recourses (Seyfarth, 2001:141). The impact of these challenging conditions on teacher morale is not only physical, but also emotional thus increasing absenteeism amongst teachers, inconsistent engagement and a lack of interest in their teaching obligations. In spite of all this turmoil, school principals with their teaching staff are expected to work hard and ensure that effective teaching and learning take place and that pupils academically perform optimally.

Socio-economic constraints impacting on the school environment in Swaziland include the poverty scourge in many areas which directly affect pupils' learning as some come to school without having eaten and therefore fail to perform as expected (Coombe, 2000:146). The HIV pandemic is aggravating socio-economic problems as it has led to increased numbers of pupils without caregivers which further impacts negatively on effective learning. Teachers are also often directly or indirectly affected by the HIV pandemic and as a result do not perform at their best, impacting negatively on effective teaching (Dlamini, 2010:2). These socio-economic problems are challenging to the school principals who not only have to ensure that teaching and learning take place, but at the same time have to consider the welfare of both the teachers and pupils. In the past it was easy for school principals in Swaziland to solicit help from the corporate world to improve the infrastructure and purchase required learning materials. Due to the impact of the world recession that is also experienced locally, companies are currently working with limited

budgets and therefore are often unable to assist as generously as in the past (Swazi Observer, 2010:17).

This research is aimed at establishing how school principals as instructional leaders deal with all the external challenges and remain committed to ensuring that a positive culture of teaching and learning is developed and that academic performance is not compromised. The research questions with aligned research aims that will steer the investigation are discussed next.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

As was said in paragraph 1.1, the popular demand for education and the introduction of free primary education has caused a sharp increase of enrolment in the primary schools in Swaziland. While these pose serious capacity problems, the ministry of education of Swaziland is challenged financially as the government budget does not adequately provide for substantial learner increases. Providing adequate space for all pupils, accompanied by sufficient furniture and teaching/learning material as well as enough appropriately qualified teachers would require the government to triple the present share of the ministry of Education (Calitz, Funglestand & Lillejord, 2002:148). These problems are exacerbated by the influence of the HIV pandemic on teachers and pupils which, coupled with teachers' low remuneration, impacts negatively on the culture of teaching and learning causing challenges to sustain the academic performance of schools.

The question following from this scenario pertains to the influence of instructional leadership on a sound culture of teaching and learning in the face of many constraints from the external environment so as to ensure effective teaching and learning and optimal academic performance. The study's main focus is therefore on the relationship between the instructional leadership role of the school principal, the culture of teaching and learning and the academic performance of pupils in Swaziland primary schools.

The main question of the study is as follows:

- What is the influence of the instructional leadership role of the school principal on the culture of teaching and learning and the academic performance of pupils?

The following sub-problems emanate from the main research problem:

- What does the instructional leadership role of the school principals entail?
- How can effective instructional leadership impact on the culture of teaching and learning prevailing in a school?
- What factors in the school impede the sound culture of teaching and learning?
- What strategies can school principals utilise in their instructional leadership activities to enhance the high academic performance of pupils?

1.3 RESEARCH AIMS

This study is aimed at determining how school principals can effectively manage the instructional programme in their schools in such a way that they create a positive culture of teaching and learning and enhance the academic performance of pupils. The aims of the study therefore include to

- determine what the instructional leadership role of the school principal entails.
- investigate the ways in which effective instructional leadership impact on the culture of teaching and learning in a school.
- determine the school factors that impede a sound culture of teaching and learning.
- develop instructional leadership strategies for school principals that are focused on the enhancement of pupils' academic performance.

1.4 BACKGROUND TO STUDY

In order to have formulated the main research question with related research sub-questions, a preliminary literature study was conducted from which the research questions naturally flowed. The preliminary literature study is subsequently treated.

1.4.1 The nature of instructional leadership and academic performance

The expected outcomes of effective teaching and learning include excellence in academic performance of learners. Learners' academic performance is however also contingent on instructional leadership and in that regard Van Niekerk (2007:4) emphasises that a key factor influencing school effectiveness and learner achievement is the nature and quality of the leadership and management provided by the management, particularly the school principal. In addition, Kruger (2003b:245) maintains that in the midst of the multitude of the school principal's tasks, the main responsibility remains that of ensuring that effective teaching and learning take place. This special responsibility of the school principal of enhancing the school's teaching and learning activities refers to the school principal's instructional leadership role (Kruger, 2003b:245).

Several authors advocate that instructional leadership is the primary responsibility of the school principal and that school principals play a pivotal role in the improvement of pupil's learning by helping teachers develop and use sound classroom teaching methods and assessment strategies that will strengthen instruction and learning (Stiggins & Duke, 2008:285; Williamson & Blackburn, 2009:62). Instructional leadership can therefore be said to be the same as learning-centred leadership. Some of the instructional leadership functions of the school principal espoused by Kruger (2003b:246) are as follows:

- Framing school aims
- Communicating school aims
- Coordinating the curriculum
- Supervising and evaluating instruction

- Monitoring learner progress
- Protecting instruction time
- Maintaining high visibility
- Providing incentives for educators
- Promoting professional development
- Providing incentives for learners

From the above functions of the school principal it is evident that the school principal should first and foremost have a clear vision for the school, communicate it well and coordinate the curriculum of the school. School principals should ensure that instruction is supervised and evaluated through appropriate tools and that learners' progress is monitored, while attention is paid to the proper use of instruction time. School principals should make an effort to be visibly present at the school to encourage a sustained focus on teaching and learning. As motivation is effective in directing behaviour, school principals should provide incentives for educators and promote their professional development. School principals should also provide incentives for learners (Mwamwenda, 1995:524; Van Houtte, 2005:74). Closely related to effective instructional leadership are qualities associated with instructional leadership success.

1.4.2 Qualities of an effective instructional leader

Nwangwu (1984:95) succinctly interprets the role of the school principal as one that relates to an onerous full-time call and for which people are required that are healthy, intelligent, tactful and resourceful. Healthy within this context does not only entail a physiological state, albeit the importance of the physiological health for good performance. Healthy in this context also points to an effective school principal being characterised by aptitude and a healthy attitude pertaining to a stable and enduring predisposition to behave and react in a certain way towards persons, objects, institutions and issues (Mwamwenda, 1995:509). Aptitude, on the other hand, refers to a specific ability and capacity which, within the school context and relating to instructional leadership, pertains to managerial competence to ensure that teaching and learning are realised effectively. A major characteristic relating to the aptitude of an effective instructional leader is that of perceiving and reacting positively towards educators, pupils, the entire school community

and situations that arise (Seyfarth, 2001:86). Further, instructional leaders should be capable of handling, dealing and living up to the expectations of their post.

Intelligence in this regard refers to the school principals' knowledge and implementation of the curriculum and optimally employing their managerial leadership in creating a sound culture of teaching and learning. As an effective instructional leader, a school principal can be expected to have a sound knowledge of curricula and their implementation, and to optimally employ managerial leadership skills in creating a sound school culture, school climate and school conditions (Mwamwenda, 1995:223; Nwangwu, 1984:95; Williamson & Blackburn, 2009:61). When school principals engage in managing and coordinating the curriculum, the major aim should be to improve the quality of the results obtained by learners (Dhlamini, 2008:46)

A tactful instructional leader should ensure that teaching and learning focus on outcomes, and that the pupil is at the centre of the learning. Caution should also be taken that assessment is skilfully incorporated into the learning process. Above all, a high level of skill is required to strike a balance between school principals' managerial role which is to foster the effectiveness of the primary school as a place where young children learn, and the instructional leadership role of school principals in which they are participants and facilitators of teaching and learning (Nwangwu, 1984:93; Calitz et al., 2002:23).

Resourceful means skilled at solving problems and making decisions independently. It requires that the instructional leader manages educators' and pupils' activities by identifying their separate needs and providing the necessary resources. Required resources pertain to the broad spectrum of resource provisioning to include didactical, support service related and physical resources to ensure that the desired outcomes pertaining to optimal academic performance by learners are reached (Van Deventer, 2003:74).

A number of factors within the school impede the culture of teaching and learning. Some of these factors will be discussed below.

1.4.3 Factors in the school that impede a sound culture of teaching and learning

West-Burnham (1992:98) points out that no quality programme operates without appropriate leadership. In this regard quality and high performance stand in direct relationship to the quality of leadership. Dhlamini (2008:44) concurs that school principals in their instructional leadership tasks are essential to the high academic performance of learners. Foran (1990:9) interprets this as class visits and helping educators who experience curriculum interpretation and implementation problems that hinder the academic performance of the learners in their classes.

As much as the mentioned factors pertaining to the school's instructional leadership role are perceived to enhance the culture of teaching and learning and the academic performance of pupils, studies reflect that, no matter how eager school principals are to fulfil their instructional leadership role, they are likely to be confronted with stumbling blocks. One such a stumbling block pertains to conflict which may hinder the school culture of teaching and learning and further impact negatively on the academic performance of pupils (Van der Merwe, 2003:26). Relating to behaviour or disagreement among parties that are intended to obstruct the achievement of some other persons, Van der Merwe (2003:26) says conflict may either be functional or dysfunctional. Functional conflict is characterised by the desire to ensure that different possibilities are properly considered. The results of functional conflict are as follows (Van der Merwe, 2003:26):

- Production of better ideas
- Pressure to search for new approaches
- Foregrounding and resolution of long-standing problems
- Clarification of individual views
- Stimulating of interest and creativity
- Opportunity for people to test their capacities

Dysfunctional conflict on the other hand is dangerous and disruptive and it is often stimulated by selfish personal desires and interest. It results in bitterness and fails to stimulate positive solutions (Seyfarth, 2001:264; Van der Merwe, 2003:27). Dysfunctional conflict tends to be

confrontational and in many instances impedes the achievement of organisational aims. Some outcomes of negative conflict include (Van der Merwe, 2003:27):

- Some people feel defeated and demeaned which leads to withdrawal and less effective functioning, which in turn leads to decreasing productivity.
- The distance between people increase owing to the development of a climate of mistrust and suspicion.
- Individuals and groups concentrate on their narrow interests and existing differences worsen.
- Feelings of bitterness and hostility increase and resistance rather than team work develops.
- Stress builds up among individuals and increase in employee turnover is experienced.

With regard to school principals' instructional leadership task, dysfunctional conflict should be discouraged or dealt with as soon as possible to prevent the organisation from falling apart in the sense of learners not delivering optimal academic performances. Functional conflict on the other hand should be seen as important and positive for growth and decision making (Van der Merwe, 2003:27).

With regard to pertinent factors that perpetuate the poor culture of teaching and learning in schools, Christie (1998:293) identified three factors, namely poor physical conditions and large shortages in resource provisioning, poor management and administrative skills amongst managers, and poor relationships between school principals, educators and parents. These factors hinder the development of a sound culture of teaching and learning and thus impact negatively on optimal pupil achievement. It is clear that school principals need to be skilful and diligent in their instructional leadership roles and they should be sensitive to discern any force that may end up disrupting and defeating the progress of the school in enhancing pupil's academic achievement.

1.4.4 The impact of effective instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning

It is agreed that school principals are the single most influential individuals in creating a positive school culture and healthy climate (Calitz et al., 2002:11; Graczewski et al., 2009:72; Van Houtte, 2005:77). Major factors which enhance the culture of teaching and learning in a school include the following (Kruger, 2003:5): a positive school climate, sound classroom environments, sound home-school relations, effective leadership, constructive management and administration, neat buildings and facilities, the availability of resources, high professional standards among educators, healthy relationships between role players, order and discipline, effective instructional leadership, and a shared sense of purpose.

Effective instructional leadership impacts positively on the culture of teaching and learning when school principals, due to the fact that they are knowledgeable about curriculum and instruction matters, intervene directly with teachers in taking decisions related to instruction improvement. When school principals are involved in curriculum coordination and instruction it is usually accompanied by high expectations for teachers and pupils and close supervision of instruction, coordination of the school's curriculum and close monitoring of pupils' progress (Hallinger, 1992:37; Seyfarth, 2001:4).

The school principal's engagement with the teachers and other staff members to ensure that every pupil has a vigorous experience of the curriculum instruction creates a sense of importance for everyone involved (William & Blackburn, 2009:60). In addition Stiggins and Duke (2008:285) maintain that instructional leaders play a pivotal role in the improvement of the pupils' learning by helping teachers develop and using sound classroom assessments to strengthen instruction and learning. However, according to Reitzug, West and Angel (2008:694) and Walthstrom and Louis (2008:458) there is a need to define exactly how school principals function as instructional leaders, and what the instructional outcomes are towards which they strive. These authors are of the opinion that it is hard to explain how instructional leadership is experienced and instructionally enacted upon by teachers.

In order to promote best teaching practices, effective school principals continually engage teachers in instructional dialogue and reflective practices so that they are optimally equipped to improve the academic performance of all their learners. Glanz (2006:72) argues that there are varied instructional strategies to improve learner achievement. An instructional leadership strategy, which Glanz (2006:72) describes as the PCOWBIRDS strategy pertains to the following:

- P-Plans are integral to instructional success and the school principal as an instructional leader should help a teacher develop appropriate and meaningful instructional activities and learning experiences.
- C-Conferencing with teachers, either formally or informally, in order to share ideas and to develop alternative instructional strategies is an essential supervisory responsibility of the school principal. As an instructional leader in these conferences the principal should focus on improved teaching and learning.
- O-Observation by the school principals and offering of their expertise both formally and informally regarding teachers' classroom interactions.
- W-Workshops conducted or organised by school principals for teachers on relevant instructional topics such as cooperative learning, alternative teaching strategies, and multiple intelligences.
- B-Bulletins presenting all kinds of teaching-related information such as articles in scientific journals, writings in popular magazines, reports in newspapers, and newsletters can be disseminated to interest teachers.
- I-Inter-visitations facilitated by school principals by rearranging teaching schedules so that teachers might observe one another and then share common instructional strategies or discuss common problems.
- R-Resources in the form of instructional materials and technologies to enhance instructional provisioning should be made available by the facilitative capabilities of the school principal as instructional leader.
- D-Demonstration of lessons to teachers arranged by the school principal, when appropriate, enhances supervisory credibility among teachers and provides instructional support.

- Staff development is very important and school principals can aid instructional improvement by providing staff development that is purposeful and articulated, participatory and collaborative, knowledge-based, ongoing, developmental, and analytic and reflective.

Adopting the PCOWBIRDS strategy will ensure that school principals create a positive culture of teaching and learning which in turn will contribute to high academic performance by the learners of their schools.

It is apparent that instructional leadership does have an impact on the culture of teaching and learning and that school principals should practice their instructional leadership role diligently for their pupils to deliver high academic performances. In order to achieve this, instructional leaders must possess qualities pertaining to a healthy attitude and applicable aptitude, appropriate intelligence and emotionally related tactfulness. Effective instructional leaders must also be resourceful and equipped with technical competences to fulfil their primary role of managing and facilitating the instructional programme in terms of effective teaching and successful learning. It is clear that good instructional leadership results in pupils performing optimally academically and to achieve these, school principals can use a variety of strategies to enhance the culture of teaching and learning in their schools.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to find answers to the postulated research questions pertaining to the influence of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning and optimal academic achievement by learners, both a literature study and an empirical investigation was conducted.

1.5.1 Literature review

The literature study served as a basis for conducting a context-specific empirical investigation. By determining the value of instructional leadership for a sound culture of teaching and learning and improved academic achievement, the literature study revealed what is already known on

school principals' instructional leadership responsibilities and the influence thereof on the school's culture of teaching and learning.

1.5.2 Empirical research

The empirical investigation based on the literature study was conducted in order to extend the researcher's knowledge of the phenomenon of study.

1.5.2.1 Research approach

The qualitative research approach was selected as the most applicable approach to employ in collecting relevant data to answer the research questions satisfactorily. Qualitative research is rooted in phenomenology, which sees social reality as unique (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh & Sorensen 2006:25). In qualitative research, the researcher attempts to understand human behaviour by focusing on the meanings of the specific events that are studied. Different people may interpret the same event differently and the researcher has the responsibility to synthesise and analyse the data in such a way that the participants' responses are understood (Morrison, 2002:19). In qualitative research, research precedes theory in that first an investigation is made to find out the opinions of the participants and then a conclusion is drawn based on what transpired to be common ground.

The major advantages of qualitative research are that it enables the researcher to attain a deep understanding of the studied phenomenon as the researcher does not only rely on what people do or say, but also on how they think and feel (Vaughn, Schumn & Sinagub, 1996:15). Qualitative research seeks to understand a phenomenon by focusing on the total picture rather than breaking it down into variables. The goal is a holistic picture and in-depth understanding, rather than a numeric analysis of data (Ary et al., 2006:31). With this study the researcher investigated what the participants understood about the relationship between the instructional leadership role of the school principal, the culture of teaching and learning and the academic performance of pupils in schools. With this research the researcher was not only exposed to the way the participants thought, but did also experience participants' attitudes and feelings about the topic.

1.5.2.2 Research population and research sample

Swaziland is basically divided into four administrative regions, namely Hhohho, in the northern part, Manzini, covering the central and western part, Shiselweni in the south and Lubombo in the eastern part of the country. In qualitative research, time and cost should be considered when choosing research sites (Strydom & Delpont, 2011:391). Based on convenience, the research participants were drawn purposefully from the schools in the Hhohho region. Schools that were selected were those that were information-rich based on the yardsticks of performance both academically and in extramural activities, the availability of facilities such as adequate school buildings, a library and a well-developed playground, and the school's general reputation with regard to pupils' behaviour.

Eight primary schools were purposefully selected as research sites from the Hhohho region. The school principals of the eight schools were selected as participants. From each school, and with the assistance of the school principals, five teachers were purposefully selected. The indicators for selecting the participating teachers pertained to the years they have been part of the school and the school principals' evaluation of the teaching competencies of the selected teachers. The researcher required that participating teachers should have at least five years teaching experience in that school to be familiar with the culture and leadership of the school and which should also be a sufficient period of time to have influenced the academic performance of pupils at their schools. The total number of participants taking part in the empirical investigation was 48, namely eight school principals and 40 teachers.

1.5.2.3 Data collection

Data collection is a very important step in conducting research whereby researchers carefully employ instruments that are anticipated to successfully generate the required data from which an increased body of knowledge may be generated. Bearing in mind that with qualitative research the researcher does not collect and describe data in a neutral and detached manner, but in an involved and creative manner for the sake of a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of study,

researchers should collect data using appropriate methods capable of generating a rich body of knowledge (Holloway, 1997:142; Tshubwana, 2007:13). For this research on the influence of the school principal's instructional leadership role on learners' academic performance, interviewing, observation and the consultation of relevant documents were perceived to be the most appropriate instruments for collecting data so as to answer the research questions sufficiently.

(a) Interviews

In this research two types of interviews were used to collect data. These were individual interviews and focus group interviews. In line with Ary et al. (2006:480), both these interviews contributed to a gathering of data on participants' opinions, beliefs and feelings about the instructional leadership role of the school principal, the culture of teaching and learning and the impact thereof on the academic performance of the pupils. The interviews that were semi-structured by nature employed probing and open-ended questions based on an interview schedule which served as reference to ensure that all relevant aspects were dealt with in each interview.

Advantages of interviews pertain to the fact that they supply volumes of in-depth data very quickly. Interviews provide insight into the participants' perspectives, their interpretations of the meanings of events in which they took part and information on unanticipated issues. Interviews also allow for immediate follow-up questions and clarification on participants' responses. However, interviews may be frustrating when participants refuse to share information or when they provide false information (Seyfarth, 2001:53). Interviews also require considerable time to conduct and to transcribe whereas data analyses demand substantial skill from the researcher to achieve rich data through competent integration of emerging themes and categories (Ary et al., 2006:480). With this study on instructional leadership and learner performance individual interviews were conducted with the eight school principals of the eight research sites. Eight focus group interviews, one per research site, were conducted with the group of five teachers purposefully selected from each of the eight selected primary schools.

(b) Observation

Observation is one of the basic methods for obtaining data in qualitative research. In qualitative research, observation is done to complete description of behaviour in a specific natural setting (Ary et al., 2006:474; Calitz et al., 2002:249). With this research, observation was done as the researcher entered sites to get preliminary insight into the culture of teaching and learning. Each research site's expression of culture as the third level of school culture observation, i.e. behaviour of group members; physical and social environment; traditions, symbols and rituals and teaching practice (Kruger & Steinman, 2003:21), was observed. This included each research site's physical space and layout, technological output, the overt behaviour of stakeholders at each research site and observable practices including rituals, ceremonies, mottos and approaches to teaching practices. The researcher also observed the attitude of educators as well as the climate that exists in the participating schools. The school's climate can be detected in the way things are done which reflects the values, beliefs and shared understanding of schools' personnel, learners, parents and others involved in the school community (Kruger & Steinman, 2003:17). In line with Ary et al. (2006:474), the stance of the observer in this research was that of complete observer as the researcher observed the behaviour of the participants in the different school settings without them knowing that they are being observed.

(c) The study of relevant documents

In qualitative research written documents are examined to gain an understanding of the phenomenon under study. In this study, documents such as the schemes of work of the teacher corps at the different research sites, the records of teaching and assessment progress, and the keeping of daily preparation books were analysed to investigate the level of teachers' comprehensive preparation for their lessons. It was also determined if the information in the preparation books was consistent with the plans in the schemes of work. Lastly, records of learners' performance were looked at as these indicated the effectiveness of assessment in the school.

1.5.2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis demands intensive input from the researcher in the form of breaking down massive amounts of collected data in order to examine, analyse and search for significant patterns, all for the sake of discovering what is important (Ary et al., 2006:490). In this study, data analyses were done concurrently with data collection through an interactive and dynamic process. The researcher continuously attempted to comprehend the nature of the school principals' instructional leadership role, the culture of teaching and learning and the impact thereof on the pupils' academic performance. Ary et al. (2006:490) suggest the constructive analysing of qualitative data by means of the three key stages of familiarisation and organisation, coding and recording, and summarising and interpreting. This approach suggested by Ary et al. (2006:490) was followed with this study.

1.5.2.5 Trustworthiness and transferability

Trustworthiness refers to dependability as opposed to validity in quantitative research. Trustworthiness is of crucial importance in qualitative research because no tight controls are used to enhance reliability (Ary et al., 2006:509). As the extent to which variation can be explained, trustworthiness can be arranged by means of various strategies. Of the most common strategies are keeping of an audit trail with clear details of how the study was carried out, replication logic and stepwise replication, code-recording, interpreter comparisons, and triangulation to investigate dependability. With this study trustworthiness was arranged by applying all of these strategies.

In qualitative research validity interpreted as transferability refers to the extent to which data relate to commonly accepted meanings of a particular concept (Babbie, 1995:133; Tshubwana, 2007:86). In other words the description of events should accurately capture effective instrument use, data collection, findings reached and explanations of what was claimed. For instance, transferability in this study should have revealed whether or not there was a significant relationship between the school principal's instructional leadership role, the culture of teaching and learning and the pupils' academic performances (Mason, 1996: 27; Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:420). Transferability therefore should have marked whether the researcher observed, identified and interpreted what in the first place was claimed to be observed, identified and interpreted.

The major question that internal validity answers is whether the results of the study are authentic. For this cause on instructional leadership, triangulation ensured internal validity as the researcher continuously used different methodologies to gather information and interpret it from different points of view (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995:106; Tshubwana, 2007:87). In this study the researcher achieved internal validity through individual interviews, focus group interviews, observation and the study of documents at the specific research sites. With all interviews the researcher asked pertinent questions, not just to arrange for generalisation, but to form a unique interpretation or understanding of events concerning a particular concept. In this regard Creswell (1994:158) and Tshubwana (2007:87) claim that an external and internal moderator should evaluate the validity of the findings to ensure authenticity of the results.

Another test of judging the trustworthiness of a study is reliability. From a quantitative perspective, reliability refers to objectivity and the assurance that if another investigator follows exactly the same procedure as described by an earlier investigator, the latter will arrive at the same findings and conclusions (Schurink et al. 2011:420). From a qualitative perspective, reliability calls for accuracy of the research methods in terms of data collection and analysis. With this study reliability was arranged for by taking the transcribed tapes with responses from the participants to them to confirm their statements.

1.5.2.6 Ethical considerations

To gain access to sites, letters were written to the Hhohho Regional Education Officer (REO) to request permission to conduct the study at the determined schools. Letters were also sent to the participating schools to request permission to conduct the study. The schools were assured of confidentiality of data collected and that their names will not be publicised (Huysamen, 1994:134; Strydom, 2011:129). They were also informed that participation was voluntary and that they had a right to withdraw from the study at any time when they felt uncomfortable. They were also assured that information gathered would in no way affect their lives as their names would not be recorded against their responses and that data would be used strictly for the purpose of research and nothing more. Participants had the privilege to access the results of the study and

as readers they were able to confirm that what the researcher said had happened was true (Gay, 1992:85; Strydom, 2011:128).

1.5 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The most important concepts related to this research and which needed to be clarified and explained were as follows:

1.6.1 Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership was defined as the school principal's role in providing direction, resources and support to teachers and pupils for the improvement of teaching and learning in the school (Mbatha, 2004:23). Instructional leadership was seen as one of the many managerial tasks of the school principal which involved the school principal's immersion in the actual teaching and learning programme of the school (Budhal, 2004:3). Instructional leadership also entailed the school principals' engagement with the teachers and other staff members to ensure that every pupil had a high quality rigorous academic experience (Williamson & Blackburn, 2009:60). And although Flath (1989:19) argued that there was no succinct definition of instructional leadership or specific guidelines as to what an instructional leader does, for the purpose of this study, the clarifications discussed in this paragraph were all considered as pertaining to the school principal's management of teaching and learning.

1.6.2 Academic Performance

Academic performance basically referred to how well pupils perform in their school work, namely the curricular programme. Hornsby (2000:5) interpreted the term academic as relating to curricular activities that involved reading rather than practical or technical skills whereas Ornstein and Hunkins (2004:43) defined academic areas as the areas in which the emphasis is on cognitive achievement, and rigorous grading, testing, and discipline. Academic excellence could then be achieved by reaching higher standards for attaining outcomes and meeting graduation

requirements. Performance as the act or process of performing tasks or an action pertained the actual steps or strategies taken to reach a goal (Hornsby, 2000:865; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004:120). Academic performance therefore referred to how well pupils performed in their academic work and this performance was usually graded through the use of standard tests and agreed upon standards for passing.

1.6.3 Culture of teaching and learning

According to the interpretation of Kruger and Steinman (2003:25) school culture was understood as the historically transmitted pattern of meaning in the specific school. This meaning-making included the norms, values, beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, traditions and myths as understood, albeit to varying degrees, by the members of the school community. Steyn (2002:102) added to this by pointing out that the culture of teaching and learning referred to the attitude educators and learners had towards learning and teaching, as well as their spirit of dedication and commitment to their schools in general.

1.7 PROGRAMME OF STUDY

The study was divided into the following six chapters:

Chapter one: Chapter one comprised a general orientation of the research. This included the introduction to the research and reflection on the background to and the motivation of the study. The statement of the study, the aims and objectives of the research and an explanation of the design are matters that were addressed in this chapter.

Chapter two: Chapter two was devoted to a literature review on the nature of the instructional leadership role of the school principal and the effect thereof on learners' academic performance. The qualities of an effective instructional leader, factors within the school that impede a sound culture of teaching and learning and the impact of effective instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning were also dealt with in chapter two.

Chapter three: Chapter three was devoted to a literature review on academic performance. With this chapter factors that encourage academic performance were looked at and activities within the school that motivate a sound culture of teaching and learning were discussed.

Chapter four: This chapter dealt with the design of the study, the research approach used, the research methods applied and the nature and magnitude of the research population and sample size as arranged with the specific sampling procedure. The instruments for collecting data as well as the data analysis procedure were described. The research ethics to be considered and measures of ensuring trustworthiness of the research were also accounted for.

Chapter five: The research results of the empirical investigation were dealt with in chapter five.

Chapter six: This chapter contained the findings and recommendations of the study. Suggestions for further research were included in this chapter.

1.8 CONCLUSION

In this orientation chapter it was introduced that the instructional leadership role of the school principal is a crucial function of school management that school principals have to pay attention to if they are to develop and sustain a sound culture of teaching and learning, capable of enhancing optimal academic performance of pupils in their schools. In the next chapter, the nature of the school principal's instructional leadership role, the development and maintenance of a sound culture of teaching and learning, as well as factors within the school that would stimulate optimal academic performance of pupils are addressed.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE: A LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The school principal's instructional leadership role is one of the many roles a school principal is entrusted with, but has the greatest influence on the school's excellence in terms of academic achievement (Keefe & Jenkins, 1991:viii). As asserted in par.1.4.1, the instructional leader should be accountable for creating and communicating a clear vision, coordinating the curriculum of the school and supervising the instructional programme, selecting and monitoring appropriate evaluation tools and securely guarding proper use of instructional time (Van Houtte, 2005:71).

The ultimate test of the school principal's effectiveness lies in pupils' academic achievements and this is most challenging for school principals (DuFour, 1999:15; Mbatha, 2004:20). Consensus prevails that the difference between a successful school and an unsuccessful one is the dynamism and effectiveness of the school's leadership (Charlton, 1993:29; Muijs & Harris, 2003:441). Linked to the effective management and administration of the school principal, is the effective and meaningful teaching by educators and the effective learning by learners which all contribute to the creation of a culture of teaching and learning (Opare & Dramanu, 1999:197).

In this chapter the focus is on a literature review of the nature of the school principal's instructional leadership role. Ways in which effective instructional leadership impacts on the culture of teaching and learning in a school, and the relationship between effective instructional leadership, the culture of teaching and learning and the influence thereof on pupils' academic performance will all be described.

2.2 THE NATURE OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE

The school principal's role as instructional leader has a major influence on the academic results of a school (Kruger, 2003b:246). It is however important to analyse instructional leadership in all its nuances so as to be able to determine the exact influence of instructional leadership on optimal learning. With regard to what instructional leadership is and how it is practiced, two points of view prevail with regard to the school principal's encompassing task as chief executive of the school (Kruger, 2003b:246). One point of view emphasises the school principal's managerial duties such as communicating, dealing with reports, dealing with school organizational matters, administering school attendance, procuring school stock and equipment, administering school finances, serving as control centre for operation of physical facilities, and implementing public relations (Kruger, 2003b:224). The second point of view puts more emphasis on the instructional leadership duties of the school principal such as defining the school's mission, managing the curriculum and instruction, supervising teaching, monitoring pupil progress and promoting a positive instructional climate (Kruger, 1995:432; McEwan 2003:20; Kellough, 2008:50).

Separating these roles however is like putting them in two offices, executed by two different people which is not feasible because the school principal is accountable for both task descriptions with the help of others. And depending on school principals' willingness and ability to delegate some responsibilities to their subordinates, instructional leadership is most effectively exercised through school principals' managerial tasks in which they engage on a daily basis (Donmoyer & Wagstaff, 1990:20; Kellough, 2008:14). This exposition of the numerous tasks of school principals should lead them to appreciate the diverse nature of their tasks and channel their focus on achieving one common goal, namely the development and sustainment of a good culture of teaching and learning in the presence of high teacher morale and for the sake of optimal learning and high academic performances.

For the purpose of this study, the term instructional leadership is best defined by Haughey and MacEllwain (1993:103) who view instructional leadership as all actions by which the school principal empowers the educators to enhance commitment to pupils learning, to spend the major

part of their school day improving their instructional programmes and to create opportunities for teacher growth. It is the school principal's instructional leadership role per excellence to provide direction, resources and support to teachers and pupils for the improvement of teaching and learning in a school (Bartell, 1990:121; Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2006:330).

Instructional leadership can be described as a set of practices by which school principals facilitate the academic achievements in their schools' classrooms. This set of actions pertains to the following (Mbatha, 2004:22):

- Regularly observing teaching and providing feedback
- Monitoring pupil academic progress by reviewing test 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 pupils
- Communicating to teachers their responsibility for pupil achievement
- Working with teachers to build a coordinated instructional programme at school

More recent studies see the instructional leadership role as one that involves traditional tasks such as setting clear goals, allocating resources to instruction, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans and evaluating teachers (Good, 2008:2). A case is made that school principals can exercise instructional leadership by facilitating teachers' learning through collegiality, which provides a model for teachers not to necessarily look for answers from an instructional leader, but to consider their own capacities within a school environment arranged around teacher collaboration (Hoerr, 2007:84). All of these emphasise that instructional leadership is part of the total managerial functioning of the school principal in terms of setting clear goals, managing the provision and allocation of resources, providing direction and support, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, and conducting staff appraisal. Instructional leadership also involves the school principal's hands-on participation in the actual teaching, while encouraging and facilitating teacher growth and professionalism for optimal learner development.

Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008:27) espoused seven claims that support the necessity of effective school leadership in order to ensure optimal pupil learning. They claim school leadership to be the second most important aspect, apart from classroom teaching, to have a positive influence on pupils' learning. The majority of successful leaders share some basic leadership practices which are evident in the way in which they apply these basic leadership practices to demonstrate responsiveness to, rather than dictation by, the contexts in which they work. Furthermore, Leithwood et al. (2008:27) claim that school leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions. With regard to patterns of distribution, some leadership traits are more effective than others and a small handful of personal traits such as compassion, transparency and morality explain a high proportion of the success in leadership effectiveness (Leithwood et al., 2008:27).

Although the concept of instructional leadership is comprehensive including both leadership and managerial roles, the emphasis with this study is to focus on what is important for instructional leaders to ensure academic success at their schools. In this regard ten managerial roles which school principals fulfil are relevant to the realization of eventual successful teaching and learning (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2006:179; Kellough, 2008:29; Van Deventer, 2003:68). School principals' interpersonal roles pertain to them acting as ceremonial heads of their schools by receiving visitors, signing documents and giving speeches. As leaders, school principals direct the instructional programme, motivate all stakeholders and correct actions where needed in order to achieve optimal success (Young, 2004:46). The interpersonal relationships of the school principal relate to ensuring a balance between task- and people-orientated approaches and managing power constructively. As liaison officers, school principals network with individuals and groups in and out of the school environment on behalf of their schools (McEwan, 2003:67). The informational roles of school principals include being representatives to provide their teaching staff, pupils and parents with all relevant information regarding learner development and academic achievement. It also pertains to being monitors that sift formal and informal information, determine the reliability of information and evaluate and distribute official information in their schools (Kruger, 2003b:226). With regard to school principals' decision-making roles, they are maintainers of order in that they manage different aspects such as conflict,

change, the discipline of pupils and staff, and all crises situations. As negotiators school principals negotiate internally with teachers and learners, externally with parents and the wider community, and on meso- and macro level with government officials. School principals' entrepreneurial roles have become crucially relevant in recent times due to challenges of survival within a competitive environment which also pertains to being on par with learners' academic achievements. In this regard, school principals manage ongoing improvements in their schools, they ensure that time for teaching and learning is managed appropriately and they give direction with regard to priorities at their schools. As allocators of resources, school principals decide on subjects to be provided, grade levels of provisioning, venue allocations and extramural offerings and grants for offerings (Cunningham, 2006:330; McEwan, 2003:34).

With cognisance of these managerial roles of school principals and to summarise their major responsibilities with regard to managing of the instructional programme, Van Deventer (2003:70) concludes that these responsibilities relate to providing direction; offering inspiration; building teamwork; leading by example; gaining acceptance; empowering others; being an organisational architect; showing an awareness of the specific working contexts; demonstrating values to guide relationships; and acting as a socialite architect. In relation to this, Kellough (2008:40) defined the four primary tasks of instructional leadership as direct assistance to teachers, arranging group and staff development for improved teaching, managing correct implementation of the curriculum, and arranging for continuous action research for improved excellence. According to Kellough (2008:41) and McEwan (2003:32) the interaction of these tasks unites teachers with school goals for optimal school performance.

In relation to the school principal's position as head teacher, Reitzug, West and Angel (2008:695) and Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006:277) emphasise the facilitation of teachers' thinking about practice and their discursive, collaborative and critical study of classroom interaction in order to achieve optimal outcomes in a just and democratic world. For schools to be effective, the school principals as head teachers must be close to where the learning takes place. They should retain their energy and enthusiasm for absolute and sustained standards for achievement and they should arrange for the establishment of systems that allow time to think and act strategically and innovatively with regard to improved teaching and learning (Prinsloo, 2003:203). They should

use a confident and assured style of leadership and have passion for order and thoroughness so as to organise a team that focuses on function rather than status. And most importantly, they should be concerned with the forging of strong, professional relationships and teaching tasks that are focused on pupils' optimal learning.

2.3 THE IMPACT OF EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ON THE CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

As espoused by scholars, the major agenda for schools consists of imparting knowledge and skills and inculcating appropriate habits, attitudes and skills, which can generally be referred to as building character (Gold, Evans, Earley, Halpin & Collarbone, 2003:128; Houtte, 2004:75; Kruger, 2003:17). The culture of the school is a product of the values, morals and codes of behaviour adopted by the school (Williams, 1995:3; Kruger, 2003:25). The climate of a school arises from its professional commitment towards the school and its profession, and the willingness to strive to expend its efforts in pursuit of developing professional skills and excellence in practice. These behaviours emanate when teachers are empowered by a sense of control over their own destinies and a sense that their work is recognized by the school, which is confirmed by positive staff appraisal actions, motivation and providing constructive feedback (Gold et al., 2003:129; Williams, 1995:18). These factors are all-important to teachers who are familiar with the body of knowledge about enhancing learning outcomes for pupils. These factors are equally important to school principals for the development of a school culture that promotes excellence in teaching through appropriate staff development and staff management. What teachers need is to be supported by their supervisors to develop a sense of vocation characterised by commitment to excellence in professional practice, and a sense of job satisfaction that comes from adequate professional preparation, the availability of support and advice, and the ability to develop pride in achievement (Flamini, 2010:385; Gold et al., 2003:129).

The following table represents a description of the management of an organisation's climate and culture for the sake of positive morale.

Table 1.1 Managing organisational climate and culture

Culture	Values Morals Codes
Climate	Trust Commitment Effort/Striving Control over own destiny Recognition of worth
For the Individual	Sense of Vocation Job Satisfaction

Williams (1995:18)

From the table it is clear that every school needs to develop a clear culture that makes it a unique entity with special values, morals and codes that all stakeholders understand and uphold. These values enable an atmosphere whereby all members of the school trust each other, and are committed and strive together to achieve the goals of the school. In such an atmosphere both teachers and pupils have a sense of control over their destinies and each group has high expectations of the other and value each other's contribution towards the achievement of the school goals. The above table also shows that when the culture is understood and the appropriate climate exists, individuals feel an inner drive to do their work and find great satisfaction in doing it, and such characteristics enhance teaching and learning (Barnes, Camburn, Sanders, & Sebastian, 2010:241).

School principals who pay attention to their roles as instructional leaders are critical about the quality of teaching and learning in their schools. They encourage the pursuit of a shared sense of vision which results in a clear understanding of purpose and a commitment to excellence and professionalism. They encourage a sense of empowerment amongst their staff and a feeling of being valued by significant others such as peers, pupils, parents and supervisors (Kilian & Kilian, 2011:68). Effective instructional leaders direct operational skills of the organisation through

communication, planning and motivation and they are focused on collaborative achievement of the curriculum goals within the parameters of state and system prerequisites. Managing the curriculum involves the coordination of human and other resources, with as main aims the quality of learning and pupils' academic achievements (Curran et al., 1995:57; Kilian & Kilian, 2011:68)

A positive culture of teaching and learning presupposes a positive climate within the school. The tone, ethos and atmosphere prevailing in the school are largely dependent on the direction and support of the school principal (Martensson, Roxa & Olsson, 2011:52). Such an atmosphere influences all aspects of curriculum planning and implementing. Curran et al. (1995:73), Kilian and Kilian, (2010:70) and Martensson et al. (2011:63) maintain that poor schools are remarkably improved by sound school principalship, whereas good schools deteriorate rapidly under poor principalship. This confirms that the school principal is pivotal to school excellence and any effort of the school community to create productive schooling.

Some important principles basic to the creation of a climate and culture of teaching and learning that enhances instructional productiveness include the following (Curran et al., 1995:74; Kilian & Kilian, 2010:70):

- Participative decision making
- All staff members being encouraged to assume appropriate leadership roles
- Public recognition of staff for both organisational and educational achievements
- Staff being encouraged to work cooperatively to encourage both confidence and competence
- Realistic time demands on teachers involved in the wider school organisation in balance with a consideration of their teaching task as their primary task
- The provision of as many curriculum and professional resources as possible within the school's specific context

Curran et al. (1995:141), as supported by (Kilian & Kilian, 2010:70), advanced that the specific school will have either a limiting or an enhancing influence on what pupils and teachers are able

to achieve. Factors that usually determine the achievement of the school are as follows (Curran et al., 1995:141; Kilian & Kilian, 2010:70):

- The use of time and structure
- The use of space, equipment, and facilities
- The availability of subject resources
- Procedures for selecting new materials
- Money for didactic materials and equipment
- The quality and extent of the library
- The availability of resources for the professional development of teachers

Another important area to consider in enhancing a positive school culture so as to ensure the generation of acceptable academic performance is the school principal's role in communication. Johnston (1995:141) and Steyn and Van Niekerk (2003:64) emphasise the school principal's major role in providing both an effective communication model and also mechanisms or structures for communication in the school. In this regard, principles for school principals include the following (Johnston, 1995:141; Steyn and Van Niekerk (2003:83) :

- Communicate effectively on a one-to-one basis with staff members, pupils, parents, colleagues from other schools, and personnel from regional and central offices.
- Work effectively with small decision making committees, both as leaders and as members of those groups.
- Establish and monitor the progress of small informally arranged groups as these groups often provide the basis for future school policies, programmes and initiatives.
- Establish structures that allow for rapid and accurate communication within and outside the school. Such structures include communication with regard to reporting back opportunities for small formal tasks groups, updating of committee members and committee purposes, progress with regard to teaching and learning, and easy access to school and system policy statements and documents.
- Ensure that the image of the school communicated to parents and the community correlates with what was intended.

- Communicate effectively with all large groups of stakeholders, including the pupils of the school, so that the vision and direction of the school is clearly articulated, understood and shared by those within and outside the school.

What is important to note with regard to communication and school principals' roles as instructional leaders is the fact that although they are expected to spend considerable time evaluating the effectiveness of a curriculum, a program or the structure of the school timetable, school principals could be less likely to change or further develop the communication patterns and processes of their schools for dealing with these matters (Johnston, 1995:141; Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2003:83). This should be addressed however because of the extensive amount of time spent communicating with staff, pupils, administrators and parents and the impact which this communication can have on the instructional programme.

Another area of instructional leadership that school principals need to pay attention to is conflict management. Not all conflict is disruptive, but when left unattended, it may eventually cause unnecessary strife and impact negatively on school performance (Lovelace, 2001:1). Conflict should be seen as natural. The potential for conflict is increased as a result of contemporary management practices and structures that emphasise factors such as coordination of multiple projects; greater self management and autonomy in specialised work groups at schools; increased delegation and responsibility allocated to individual stakeholders; reduced supervision, however, with a retaining of central control (Lovelace, 2001:1; Massey, 2007:13). Participatory decision making makes conflict unavoidable.

Conflict can have positive effects, such as conflict between individuals and between and within groups which can stimulate creativity, innovation and change (Lovelace, 2001:1; Massey, 2007:13). Conflict is a mechanism that often challenges us to examine the way we do things, to find more effective ways of achieving goals, or to set goals constructively. Conflict can also have negative effects if allowed to fester unresolved, or to escalate to an unmanageable level. As a consequence, and with consideration of the importance of ensuring that the instructional programme functions optimally, the skills of conflict management and conflict avoidance are vital for instructional leaders to ensure school effectiveness in terms of academic achievement.

Skills such as effective listening, providing feedback on time, setting realistic goals, and persuasion for the sake of improved teaching and learning, all play a major role in effective conflict management. The competent display of these skills reduce the possibility of false perceptions of others' actions, unclear meanings and the distortion of information likely to cause conflict, with a negative impact on all school functioning including instructional provisioning.

2.4 STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TO ENHANCE HIGH ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AT THEIR SCHOOLS

The school principal as instructional leader must be capable of offering, and be willing to offer effective, tactful and normally unobtrusive leadership to all those who need it. Major responsibilities pertaining to effective leadership for smooth running of the instructional programme relate to ensuring the following (Kruger, 2003:11; Ward, 2004:2):

- The official rules and regulations are observed and applied concerning education, health, hygiene, and cleanliness in the school.
- The functioning of the school is directed towards alignment with the national education policy.
- The principal and staff of the school are sufficient in number and adequate in quality and competencies to carry out the curriculum of the school.
- School principals themselves or one of their members of staff stimulate a lively and dynamic attitude in the teachers by providing a definite and ongoing programme of in-service training.
- The teachers have the best possible buildings, furniture and equipment, and didactical material to execute their teaching duties properly.
- School principals are alert to change in their societies and to the developing needs important to promote new types of provisioning so that the national education system may adjust itself to the changing needs of the external environment.
- School principals remember that leadership springs from service and they therefore secure the co-operation and respect of all stakeholders making stakeholders realise their

school principals are doing their utmost best to supply in, and support their needs and to help teachers specifically to solve their professional problems.

- As it is often necessary to improvise due to the dynamism of current times, school principals themselves are resourceful entrepreneurs who make the most effective use of funds available for the moment.
- School principals are capable of being public relations officers interpreting national aims for their schools' internal and external environments and for the public in general; they are also capable of explaining the needs, difficulties and aspirations of the school to councils and committees and to the general public; school principals are also prepared to refute ill-informed criticism.
- All appointments within the educational service of school principals' localities are fairly made and all selection methods for bursaries and scholarships to their schools are free from any form of unfairness or favouritism. For school principals focused on managing the instructional programme for optimal learning, equality of opportunity in education is a reality.

Achieving academic success does not revolve around one person and therefore successful school principals should bear in mind that their strategies are open to the wider school community by partnering with all stakeholders. This may include scheduling board meetings that incorporate staff and achievement recognition programmes such as open house and speech and prize-giving days where teachers display the work of the pupils for parents to observe and where the school awards pupils for excellent performance for both academic and extramural achievements (Ward, 2004:3).

School principals can also meet with their teaching staff in a more relaxed atmosphere conducive for sharing the school vision and priorities, to discuss challenges, successes, and needs and clarify questions (Ward, 2004:4). Such meetings are important in directing whole departments to open a way of soliciting help among staff and also from district staff who can provide in-service courses for teachers aimed at improving the area of concern (Ward, 2004:4).

Effective school principals cautiously investigate the needs of their staff with regard to their teaching abilities and do all that is possible to support them. One way of finding out teacher needs is the use of staff appraisal. Staff appraisal is regarded as a key component of the larger process of performance management which constitutes a continual cyclical process of determining performance expectations, supporting performance, reviewing and appraising performance and managing performance standards (Steyn, 2003:249). Staff development programmes have been identified as having a positive impact on pupils' academic achievement efforts (Ward, 2004:95).

2.5 FACTORS THAT IMPEDE A SOUND CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING AT A SCHOOL

School factors that impede the culture of teaching and learning are innumerable. The factors more often addressed in literature as factors influencing the culture of teaching and learning prevailing at a school, are the following (Bush, 2008:5):

- The principal's leadership style
- Conflict management
- Decision making
- Communication
- Change management
- Rules and regulations
- Resource management
- Standards of evaluation
- Staff recruitment, mentoring, retention and professional development

In the following paragraphs, the factors considered to have the most significant influence on the effectiveness with which the instructional programme is managed for the sake of optimal learner development, are discussed.

2.5.1 The school principal's leadership style

It has been suggested that effective leaders are healthy, intelligent, tactful and resourceful. Leaders are furthermore characterised by their use of different leadership styles and their ability to choose the right leadership style to fit the specific situation. The leadership style that is adopted by a leader can have a positive or negative influence on the effectiveness with which an aim is achieved, performances are executed, staff development is conducted, and job satisfaction is experienced in a school, all of which impact on the instructional programme and academic achievement (Prinsloo, 2003:141). The most commonly known leadership styles are laissez-faire, autocratic, democratic and situational (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002:23).

The laissez-faire leadership style characterized by a passive leadership with poor decision-making skills and poor communication results in little attention paid to policy-making with the consequence of poor discipline which impacts on academic achievement. This leadership style is also characterised by over-delegation of responsibilities and authority with no accountability attached. As there is little or no control with this style, performance in the school is often very poor (Goleman et al., 2002:23; Prinsloo, 2003:143).

Although characterised by the presence of teamwork to some extent, with the autocratic leadership style the leader makes all the decisions and uses one-way communication with rigid policy application and a strong disciplinary character. Pre-dominantly task-oriented with little regard for good human relations, fear is what very often drives staff and pupils to perform which impacts negatively on creativity as an important aspect of academic achievement. Due to a usually tense atmosphere at school, job satisfaction is hampered by high staff turnover (Prinsloo, 2003:144; Bush, 2008:7). This negatively affects the culture of teaching and learning and related academic achievement in that continuity with teachers teaching the same learners in consecutive years is difficult to maintain.

The democratic leadership style is characterised by constructive teamwork, thorough consultation with stakeholders, and decentralization of planning, organisation and control (Prinsloo, 2003:144). Due to effective two-way communication between staff, pupils and parents and the functional involvement of parents in the decision-making process, good human relations are

maintained with staff experiencing high levels of job satisfaction and with the prevalence of two-way communication among stakeholders (Bush, 2008:7). An atmosphere prevails in which staff and pupils can develop to their full with low levels of staff turnover which results in continuity and consistency that positively influences academic achievements.

From these three leadership styles emerge the situational style of leadership whereby the leader realises the strengths and weaknesses of each of the three types of leadership styles and alternates from one leadership style to another as the situation dictates (Bush, 2008:15). The leadership abilities and choices of school principals employing situational leadership strategies are in general influenced by three factors. Forces within themselves include school principals' personalities, their backgrounds, and their knowledge and experience with regard to the teaching profession. School principals as situational leaders are also influenced by forces within their subordinates such as the personality of each member of staff, and staffs' expectations, willpower and capacity to be involved in the teaching and learning effort for optimal learner achievement. School principals as situational leaders are also significantly influenced by forces within the external environment and situations regularly occurring in such contextual functioning. In general leadership styles are all influenced by time constraints, the complexity of the specific problem, the availability of relevant resources, and the expectations and requirements of the education authorities with the state's relevant legislation and provincial education ordinances (Morrison, 2002:19).

It is thus clear that the effectiveness of leaders who employ a situational leadership style depends on the fit between their brilliance of choosing the appropriate leadership style for the specific task to be executed, with cognisance of their level of authority, and the nature of the specific group that they are leading. There is therefore no fixed personality-based trait for effective leadership and management. School principals who employ a situational leadership style therefore continuously and instantly modify or change their leadership style to cope with changes in their staff's readiness and with cognisance of the maturity and professional development of each individual member of staff (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2006:155; Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson, 1996:38).

In conclusion and despite the descriptions of all the possible leadership styles engendering a culture of teaching and learning conducive to positive academic achievement, there is not a single leadership style promoted as a model for fitting all contexts and all situations. This theory-gap as the Gordian Knot of educational administration demands sustained research so as to construct different and better theories that predict the effects of leadership-style practice more explicitly (English, 2002:1). In conclusion it is evident that the school principal's leadership style is a significant internal factor influencing the culture of teaching and learning at a school which in turn impacts on the level of academic performance achieved at the specific school.

2.5.2 Conflict Management

The basis of conflict is the incompatibility of aims that results in opposing behaviours and disagreements among parties with the developing of goals that are in opposition (Flanagan & Finger, 1992:42; Van der Merwe, 2003:26). In general conflict represents behaviour that obstructs the achievements of some other person's aims. However, not all conflict is bad as alluded to in paragraph 1.4.3 and conflict can therefore be functional or dysfunctional.

- **Functional Conflict**

Functional conflict represents a sense of an honest difference of opinion that results from the availability of two or more alternative courses of action (Van Der Merwe, 2003:26). Functional conflict helps to ensure that different possibilities are properly considered, and further possible courses of action generated from discussions of the already existing alternatives. It is constructive to use functional conflict as an opportunity to further investigate earlier decisions and build upon them without necessarily having to abolish everything. Functional conflict produces better ideas and pressurises stakeholders to solicit new approaches which enables further investigation of prior decision-taking so as to stimulate creativity and growth among participants (Van Der Merwe, 2003:26). It is evident that functional conflict is conducive to a positive culture of teaching and learning in which all stakeholders feel strongly about optimal learner development as manifested in good academic achievement.

- **Dysfunctional Conflict**

As opposed to functional conflict, dysfunctional conflict is dangerous and disruptive in that it seeks to pursue personal glory to the expense of others in the organisation (Burke & Krey, 2006:130). It is usually driven by bitterness and desire to satisfy the self. Dysfunctional conflict includes all confrontation and interaction between groups that harm the organisation and prevent the achievement of organisational aims (Van der Merwe, 2003:27). With reference to the pursuing of academic achievement based on a positive culture of teaching and learning, dysfunctional conflict often results in people feeling defeated and demeaned which then leads to withdrawal and a decline in general productivity. Trust is broken and a tense feeling of mistrust sets in resulting in hostility, bitterness and resistance. Dysfunctional conflict within the school environment is capable of destroying the school to its roots affecting pupils' academic performance significantly (Mbatha, 2004:57).

Accountability resides with the position of school principals as chief executives of their schools to identify the potential influence of the kind of conflict prevailing at their schools so as to deal with dysfunctional conflict effectively before it gets out of proportion. As conflict is unavoidable due to the fact that concerned and dedicated teachers feel strongly about their pursuit of excellence of teaching (Van der Merwe, 2003:34), school principals should take constructive steps for dealing with conflict effectively. The following represents six steps to apply in conflict resolution (Van der Merwe, 2003:34):

- Step1: Identify and define the conflict and allow both parties to state their view of the problem clearly.
- Step 2: Request suggestions for possible solutions by encouraging both parties to suggest various possible solutions and guide them to focus on future actions to be taken rather than dwelling on past mistakes.
- Step 3: Evaluate each suggestion in a joint analysis and evaluation by parties, eliminating the suggestions which the two parties do not agree on and emphasising the importance of sincerity and honesty from both parties and all members.

- Step 4: Select the best possible solution by weighing up all possible solutions in order to choose the most acceptable one. Of importance is that parties must agree on the execution of the decision selected.
- Step 5: Implement the chosen solution by awaiting inputs from both parties on the way in terms of who, what, where, how and when to implement the selected solution. Both parties are also assigned to take part in developing a schedule for follow-up sessions where they both review the successes of the chosen solution.
- Step 6: With regard to aftercare, both parties agree on how to maintain the chosen solution for as long as anticipated to be fit for the specific circumstances with the option of discarding the applicable solution if and when evaluated as not functional any longer.

In conclusion with regard to a school's academic performance and with reference to effective conflict resolution that relates to choosing an appropriate leadership style for specific situation, Kruse (2009:1) states the following:

- Effective problem solving is at the core of all great leadership actions
- School improvement can be thought of as a continuous and everlasting problem-solving process
- Hard work is not sufficient, working smart is important
- Problem solving and decision making are actions mutually applied and are equally important to execute effectively

2.5.3 Decision Making

The instructional leadership role of the school principal involves major decision-making actions as school principals find themselves faced with a demand to decide on matters concerning appropriate curriculum implementation, functional task allocation, constructive discipline of both pupils and staff, and beneficial decision-making on controlling efforts (Kruse, 2009:1). Decision making as process includes the considering of alternative solutions to a problem so as to choose the best alternative after considering the consequences, advantages and disadvantages of each alternative (Mbatha, 2004:56; Schreuder, Du Toit, Roesch & Shah, 1993:70; Smit & Cronje,

1998:140; Van Deventer, 2003:95). All decisions taken at school have a significant influence on all stakeholders and the future of the school (Van Deventer, 2003:95). It is therefore of paramount importance that all staff members develop sound problem-solving and decision-making skills. Of most crucial significance is school principals' competence in decision making and problem solving. Their effectiveness as leaders of the instructional programme, as is manifested in the academic achievements of learners, is in general an indication of the quality of school principals' decision-making excellence. Decision making is either reactive, namely applied after the realisation that a problem exists, or it is proactive in an anticipation of a need that is going to arise. Decision making is contingent on the character of the school principal and it can be a difficult task which only mature persons would risk their reputation for to ensure that progress and optimal learning is arranged at school (Van Deventer, 2003:97).

With reference to managing the instructional programme four types of decision making apply to the solving of problems in order to ensure that academic performances are on standard (Kruse, 2009:66; Van Deventer, 2003:97). Programmed or routine decisions are usually made in accordance with some custom, rule, procedure or policy and everyone knows and expects a particular procedure to be implemented. If such procedures are not implemented, bias and partiality is implied which gives rise to dissatisfaction among staff. Unprogrammed or creative decisions usually deal with exceptional and unpredictable problems which need distinctive insight from the school principal as information is usually not easily available. Such problems may include strife between a certain teacher and pupils where it is difficult to determine the cause of the tension when either of the parties are not reliable sources. Spontaneous decisions are based on intuition only, rather than a systematic analysis of facts so as to engage with a choice of alternatives. With spontaneous decision-making past experience play a major role, however, basing decisions on past experience may pose problems when these decisions do not yield the expected results. It is therefore important to study the present situation well before implementing past strategies. Participative decision making has distinct advantages such as that educators feel satisfied by the fact that they have a say in matters that concern them. The involvement of educators in decisions that concern them remarkably reduces the chances of conflict which easily occurs when decisions are made in an authoritarian fashion.

2.5.4 Communication

Communication pertains to the transfer of information, thoughts and feelings from one person to another by any means of message conveying (Schreuder et al., 1993:45). Communication also pertains to an information-flow process which should be kept as open as possible to serve as the mechanism by which the school's mission, values and objectives are made clearly known to all associated with it (Armstrong, 1998:13; Davidoff & Lazarus, 1997:96). Kruse (2009:85) strongly believes that effective communication relies on a leader's ability to clearly articulate goals and objectives and to do so in a manner that engages, rather than distances, others.

Every day the school principal communicates with a variety of people including educators, parents, pupils and community members. Each recipient hears the message conveyed in the context which is important to the specific recipient. In general educators are concerned about messages relating to teaching and learning, curriculum and instruction, and the work required of them, while pupils care about what is expected of them and how they perform against benchmarks determined for them (Kruse, 2009:88). In this regard Mbatha (2004:55) claims that communication is the life-blood vessels within the school environment because it is through communication that management functions such as motivation, discipline, problem solving and conflict handling are implemented. School principals should therefore attain various skills of effective communication if they are to get their aims achieved for both educators and pupils and attain acceptable results for their schools.

2.5.5 Staff recruitment, mentoring, retention and professional development

Instructional leadership includes all actions by school principals to empower educators to enhance their commitment to pupil learning, to spend the major part of their day improving the instructional programme with their teaching, and to expand their opportunities for professional growth (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2006:283). Important aspects which school principals need to attend to for ensuring a positive culture of teaching and learning, which is conducive to learners achieving on standard, relate to recruiting competent staff, mentoring staff for outstanding

performance, retention of good educators, and facilitating the relevant and continuous professional development of teachers.

(a) Staff recruitment

For school principals to achieve the goals set for their schools, Masitsa (2005:214) is of the opinion that the most important pursuit is to make sure that they get the most competent and dedicated educators for their school. Dedicated educators who always act in the best interest of the learner are the most likely to improve learners' academic results with minimum supervision, if at all, needed from their authorities.

The effort to successfully match human resource demands with human resource supply is one of the most important efforts educational leaders engage in. They have to develop ways to attract qualified people to apply for open positions within their schools. Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006:283) claim that the single most important factor in attracting qualified candidates is the reputation and the image of the school with its surrounding community. This means that teachers put a high premium on the reputation and working conditions within school environments, and the working climate prevalent at the school where they seek possible employment. Factors influencing a teacher recruitment plan in general include affirmative action legislation, equal employment policies, professional negotiations, salary and fringe benefits, school system policy, employment continuity, employee relations, staff development, the availability of opportunity, and the work itself (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2006:283). Failure to recruit the right staff implies a negative impact on the academic performance of pupils in the school. Recruitment of the right staff is however not an end in itself and school principals need to manage the correct placement of recruits and their effective mentoring to help them adjust to the school culture and climate for optimal task performance.

(b) Mentoring

Mentoring is an important area of instructional leadership support for novice educators as it allows them to learn from those leaders and knowledge authorities they admire, those who have a

history of being successful (Cawood & Gibbon, 1990:9; Kellough, 2008:41). Institutions assign mentors, sometimes referred to as critical friends, in whom newly appointed educators can confide and with whom they can talk about their work. Kellough (2008:41) describes a mentor as someone who has been in the profession for an adequate number of years to have fought battles for the sake of teaching excellence and who can help mentees develop the self-efficacy they will need in order to assume the responsibility necessary to achieve their personal goals in the profession as well as the goals of the school. The role of the school principal as an instructional leader is therefore to facilitate such relationships by being a unique amalgam of an ombudsperson, a reference librarian, and even a genie-in-a-bottle, constantly helping members of staff to find solutions for challenging instructional problems (McEwan, 2001:33). By regularly brainstorming with teachers and bouncing ideas around in both structured meetings and brief encounters, school principals assist teachers with their teaching obligations. School principals also accommodate newly appointed teachers by welcoming new ideas and encouraging them to pursue well-thought-through alternative techniques without fear of failure. In their management of mentoring, school principals consistently attempt to match teachers appropriately so that they may share common problems and solutions so that all teachers could be equipped with competencies to get the job done (McEwan, 2001:34; Kruse, 2009:116). School principals also enhance mentoring by helping teachers to reflect on their own teaching and empowering them to reach out for personal solutions. In relation to mentoring in the teaching profession for the sake of sustained academic achievements by learners, effective instructional leaders listen actively and empathise with and value teachers' concerns by putting aside their own work while attending to teachers' valid requests so as to provide prompt feedback (McEwan, 2001:34).

Once the newly-recruited educators have adjusted to the new school environment, the school principal, as instructional leader pursues continuity by ensuring that the educators do not leave the school because of dissatisfaction.

(c) Retention

The right members of staff should be retained and school principals therefore ensure that their schools' organisational health does not reflect negligence or a mediocre mind set which will

result in competent staff searching for greener pastures (Burke & Krey, 2006:169). The following conditions are important in supporting the school's mission and assisting in retaining quality staff (Kellough, 2008:48; Van der Merwe, 2011:115):

- The first impression of a school is a lasting impression, and there is only one opportunity to make a first impression. The impression that people have of a school is largely determined by what they see when they approach and enter the building. Keeping a school site neat, clean, and safe is non-negotiable and especially so with regard to healthy public relations and with sub-consciously motivating learners to pursue academic achievements.
- Ensure that staff knows that they have access to the school principal as the chief executive of the school and the instructional programme and to crucial members of the administrative staff.
- Ensure that new teachers are given the best and comprehensive support possible and that they are not exposed to an unacceptable sink-or-swim situation.
- Ensure that teachers have sufficient shared planning time with colleagues.
- Ensure that there is a reasonable limitation to out-of-classroom duties for teachers.
- Declassify the classified by establishing friendly working relationships with the cooks, custodians, secretaries, security personnel, drivers, and other crucial stakeholders who comprise the school community.
- Establish a collaborative working climate in which teachers and pupils share the responsibility for determining the appropriate use of time and facilities.
- As instructional leader, obtain any ongoing professional development needed for oneself and for the teaching staff, especially in the areas of assessment and evaluation in a performance-based system.
- Provide teachers with reliable assistance with regard to didactic resources and the use of these classroom aids.
- Show recognition of learners, staff, community members, and board members for the good work they do, making recognition part of the culture of the school.
- Ensure that teachers have reasonable teaching loads and class sizes. Maintain class sizes as low as possible so that teachers can get to know and work with individual pupils.

Teachers, and most especially novice teachers, should not be assigned to teach outside their area of academic expertise or have too much preparation.

- Apart from safety and being well maintained the school site should be as well equipped as possible.
- To most effectively help individual pupils to achieve quality learning, there may need to be some modification of the key variables of time, grouping, and instructional strategies. Key instructional strategies, regardless of grade level, include authentic learning (i.e. learning by doing), individualising (personalising) the instruction, integrating the subjects of the curriculum, and the establishment of smaller, more personalised learning communities.
- Work continuously with the school management team to constantly develop the school's improvement plan, adjusting the plan each year on the basis of pupil performance data.
- On a participative decision-making basis, work constantly with staff in deciding how available finances can be most effectively spent for the improvement of pupils' academic achievement.

It is evident that school principals' instructional leadership role is crucially important to ensure that their schools retain qualified and competent teachers in order to develop and sustain a positive culture of teaching and learning for the sake of acceptable academic achievement by learners. A vibrant staff development programme is crucial for ensuring that competent staff is kept abreast of important changes in the teaching fraternity.

(d) Staff development

School principals as instructional leaders have the responsibility of developing and sustaining the professionalism of their schools' educator corps (Bondesio, Beckmann, Oosthuizen, Prinsloo & Van Wyk, 1995:153; Mbatha, 2004:68). Professionalism entails persons' skills, care, experience and knowledge as shown in the execution of tasks in the field of their profession (Higgleton, Seaton, Labuschagne & Sanderson, 2006:766; Mbatha, 2004:68). Professionalism is evident in the practice of specific skills based on a defined body of knowledge and in accordance with recognised standards of behaviour (Higgleton et al., 2006). A school is a professional institution

and educators are expected at all times to display the best intention towards their pupils, their colleagues, the community, and the teaching profession in general. The sense of responsibility and accountability for teaching and learning should be cultivated among teachers so that they at all times commit themselves to pursuing the well being of their learners, their school and their school's surrounding environment. (Armstrong, 1998:96; Mbatha, 2004:68; Musaazi, 1993:263). It is therefore school principals' most important responsibility to support the professional development of their teachers by focussing on the following aspects (Bondesio et al., 1995:155; Musaazi, 1993:264; Fullan, 2001:5):

- Set a positive example to teachers in teaching-related activities
- Engage teachers in ongoing professional development through relevant and constructive seminars and workshops
- Acknowledge teachers for good work done
- Remind teachers regularly that their conduct influences the attitudes of the pupils and the public towards the teaching profession and education in general
- Encourage team-teaching so that sound human relations are promoted and an improved teaching service is provided due to a team effort of combined competency excellence

Ensure that all teachers are in possession of their school's teacher's code of conduct document by focussing on the following (Webb, 2005:83):

- encourage teachers to continue improving their qualifications through self-study so that they remain abreast of the latest developments in their subjects and education in general
- remind educators to guard against negative statements about colleagues in public
- emphasise the importance of other partners in education, such as education department officials, teacher unions, the private sector, and parents

2.6 CONCLUSION

The school principal's instructional leadership role impacts on the culture of teaching and learning prevailing in the school which, in turn impacts on the academic outcomes of the pupils in the school. It is therefore evident that the role of the school principals as instructional leaders is crucially important for learners' academic success and that school principals should be under the impression of the 'how' and 'what' of their instructional leadership task in order to consciously and effectively set about this task. In this regard, the literature on instructional leadership revealed that authors agree on the importance of effectively practising instructional leadership in order to attain an acceptable level of pupil academic performance.

CHAPTER 3

ACHIEVING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOLS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The instructional leadership role of the school principal has been identified as an important factor in developing and maintaining a sustained culture of teaching and learning in a school. Furthermore, a consensus prevails that without a sound culture of teaching and learning a school may not reach its set goals especially that of ensuring that its pupils perform optimally in their academic work. Academic performance refers to the individual pupil's ability to attain high academic scores when graded using rigorous tests and examinations to the extent that they meet graduation requirements (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004:43).

This chapter explores the concept of academic performance, its measurements, and its significance on the pupils' performance, its impact on the pupils' future learning, the reputation of the school and the effects academic performance has on significant others.

3.2 THE CONCEPT OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

In chapter one paragraph 1.6.2 academic performance was defined as the extent to which pupils perform in their academic work, a performance usually graded through the use of standardised tests and agreed-upon standards of passing. Academic performance refers to how pupils deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2006:218; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004:43).

Academic performance represents the ability to analyse, integrate and remember facts and being able to communicate your knowledge verbally or in written form (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2006:218). In an educational institution success is measured by academic performance, or how well a pupil meets standards set out by the local government and the institution itself. As career competition in the labour market grows at an increasing pace, the importance of pupils doing well in school has become non-negotiable (<http://olam.ed.asu.edu/epaa>).

Although education is not the only road to success in the working world, much effort is made to identify, evaluate, track and encourage the progress of pupils in schools (Rayment, 2006:43). Parents care about their child's academic performance because they believe good academic results will provide access to good higher education institutions or to more career choices and job security. Schools that pursue good academic achievements are also influenced by concerns about the school's reputation and the possibility of monetary support from government in the form of subsidies that are linked to learner outcomes as an indication of the overall performance of the school (Burke & Krey, 2006:270). State and provincial departments of education are charged with improving schools, and so devise methods of measuring success in order to create plans for improvement.

The measurement of academic performance has remained the only suitable mechanism for determining learner and school success. In previous times academic performance was measured and based on what people heard about the school as was communicated by teacher's observations that made up the bulk of the assessment (Mwamwenda, 2005:449). Numerous methods of determining how well a pupil is performing is a fairly recent invention in that grading systems came into existence in America in the late Victorian period (Mwamwenda, 2005:449). Initially these systems of grading were criticised due to high subjectivity in that different teachers valued different aspects of learning more highly than others. And although some standardisation was achieved in order to make the system fairer, the problem of subjectivity continues (Broadfoot, 1995:9). In recent times ways of assessment have been extended to incorporate differentiation of ability, aptitude and interest in a process to determine academic performance more accurately. This process of exploration of alternative methods of measuring performance is however ongoing.

3.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF MEASURING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The tracking of academic performance fulfils a number of purposes. Areas of achievement and failure in a pupil's academic career need to be evaluated in order to foster improvement and make full use of the learning process (Torrance, 1995:45). Results of academic performance provide a framework for benchmarking how different pupils fare in different countries, with different

education systems, and in different schools and serve as a constant standard to which all pupils are held. Performance results also allow pupils to be ranked and sorted on a scale that is numerically obvious minimising complaints by holding teachers and the school accountable for pupils' achievement at school (Rayment, 2006:34).

Parents consider seriously the academic performance of their children as they go through the different levels in education (Brunello & Rocco, 2008:1866). This is basically because the results obtained by the pupils determine to a great extent the next school in which they will further their education. When pupils fail to meet the standard requirement in securing a place in the school of their choice, parents find themselves compelled to enroll their children in private schools which may charge exorbitant fees in terms of tuition (Brunello & Rocco, 2008:1867; Cameron & Taber, 2004:136). Parents go all this way in order to ensure that their children attain a fair high school exit certificate to give them a chance to enrol in institutions of higher education (McMillan, 2004:1881). Studies show that parents put their hope in the academic performance of their children as a means of maximising their family's welfare in the economy (Figlio & Lucas, (1999:1823; Cameron & Taber, 2004:137; Brunello & Rocco, 2008:1868).

The competition for clients between public schools and private schools serves as a motivation for public schools to ensure that they produce optimal results all the time (Brunello & Rocco, 2008:1868). Private schools can offer a wide variety of extracurricular activities and excellent service to their clients as their schools have the opportunity of charging positive fees for services they offer. Public schools, however, often find themselves challenged in terms of offerings as compared to private schools, and therefore boost their standards in terms of the benchmarks set for admitting pupils, which places them in an advantageous position to attract the best pupils (Swazi Observer, 2011:3).

Another factor that sustains the public school in the competition for customers is that if the public school in the first place is capable of attracting the best pupils, it can then place a demand on them to contribute their time, ability and effort in education which often yields high academic performance (Brunello & Rocco, 2008:1667). Successful schools will boast of a combination of

curriculum choice, tests and grading standards and in turn promote individual effort and self-selection of pupils by ability.

3.4 SOME FEATURES OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Academic performance in schools is evaluated in a number of ways. For regular grading, pupils demonstrate their knowledge by written and oral tests, performing presentations, turning in homework assignments and participating in class activities and discussions (Hoy & Miskel, 2005:63; Rayment, 2006:109). Teachers evaluate and present learners' achievements in the form of percentages or letters with an A usually representing 80% to 100%, a B representing 70 to 79%, a C representing 60 to 69% and so on. In many instances grading by means of percentages and/or a letter is accompanied by side notes to describe how well a pupil has done, namely excellent, very good, good, fair, and weak. Within all education systems pupils are evaluated by their performance in standardised tests geared towards specific ages and based on a set of achievements pupils in each age group are expected to meet. The standards held by different schools often differ and these differences indicate the kind of performance pupils in the school are to attain. For instance in some schools a certain level of competency would be rated as 60% whereas in another school within a different environment the same level of competency will only be rated as a 50% achievement (Carr & Harris, 2009:113)

In measuring academic performance it is important to know that although subjectivity with the evaluation of academic achievement has lessened in recent years, it may not be possible to fully remove subjectivity from evaluation methods. Standardised academic performance evaluation favours pupils that respond best to traditional teaching methods and who excel in reading, mathematics and written tests. Within a knowledge-based society, these skills are par excellence indicative of academic worth. The tests are focused on rewarding learners for their visual competencies with not enough capacity built into the system to accommodate learners' kinaesthetic and auditory abilities. The standardised tests do not accommodate pupils with learning disabilities in that all pupils are required to complete the tests in the same manner and in the same time period. Evaluation from classroom teachers, although giving the most detailed

information, may still retain bias if individual learners' differences and learning styles are not taken into account (Boyle & Fisher, 2007:105; Torrance, 1995:120).

To enhance academic performance by maintaining a culture of teaching and learning, school principals as instructional leaders should ensure that their schools develop and sustain the facilitating of a learning community. This they should do by complying with the following (Rayment, 2006:40; Torrance, 1995:148):

- All pupils should reach the benchmarked standards of achievement without exceptions and excuses.
- The same standards should apply to all pupils.
- Take the contribution of pupils' performance as the only criterion for judging the merit of any educational activity.
- Let all assessment systems, curriculum implementation, the entire instructional program, the professional development program, and the accountability system be linked at every level to the academic standards for pupil achievement.
- Acknowledge that good instruction is important, but that good instruction is not enough. Each pupil needs to know that teachers care about them and that their success is achievable and important and contingent on their own inputs.
- School principals with their staff must ensure that their schools are environments that provide a high performance and customer-friendly workplace.
- Teaching staff must be provided with the freedom, training, and motivation to make informed decisions as capable employees who are then held accountable for the results of their work.

With the underlying assumption that all pupils can learn and increase their academic achievement, the school principal as instructional leader responsible for ensuring a culture of teaching and learning, must arrange for a focus on the following six critical school reform outcomes (Kruse, 2009:11; McEwan, 2003: 46; Ward, 2004:38):

- Improve pupil achievement in the core subjects

- Align teaching and learning with pupil performance
- Link professional development for all staff to the goals for pupils' outcomes
- Provide safe, clean and secure school facilities
- Forge stronger linkage with parents, families and the community
- Increase management effectiveness, efficiency and accountability constantly

3.5 MEASURES FOR ENSURING A SCHOOL-WIDE FOCUS ON SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Aligning of the goals of the school principal as leader of the instructional programme and goals of the teachers, namely effective teaching for the sake of successful learning, procedures should be in place to ascertain the extent of reaching of these goals. This is achieved through a systematic way of grading the progress. The school principal should insist on the pursuing and achieving of these results and all stakeholders should be involved in achieving these results (McEwan, 2003:23). There should be a way, mutually decided on, of continuously monitoring the progress in the pupils' learning (Glickman, 1993:50). The following methods of collecting and using the collected data to manage and encourage school improvement are suggested (Broadfoot, 1995:33; McEwan, 2003:23; Holcomb, 1999:64):

- Use test results, grade reports, attendance records, and other relevant information to spot potential problems promptly. These are useful for spotting a pupil's learning problem without having to wait until the pupil's academic success is at stake.
- Ask the following questions to ascertain the relevancy of collected data, namely what do the data reveal; what else need to be known; what good news is there that can serve as motivation for sustained pursuit; what needs for school improvement arose from the data.
- Regardless who teaches a specific course and grade level or what methodologies are used, the outcomes must be consistent. Facilitate the development of common final examinations in core courses or curriculum-based assessment in reading, writing, and mathematics at the elementary school level. These assessments will give teachers a

focus, result in better test construction, and enable the instructional leader to monitor the consistency of curriculum implementation.

- Share summaries of individual pupil performance with all members of staff in order to arrange for mutual assistance in developing action alternatives. Each and every member of staff is responsible for all the pupils throughout their schooling journey and teachers should therefore interact freely with other members of staff concerning pupils' progress. School principals as instructional leaders should eliminate a possible closed-door attitude assumed by teachers who might not feel a responsibility for what happens in other classrooms.
- Target low and underachieving pupils for a collaborated team effort to improve their achievement. Make the target pupils the responsibility of all members of staff. Arrange for a problem-solving, pupil study team responsible for developing innovative instructional strategies to help these underachieving pupils. Arrange for the offering of extra help in the form of extra lessons for these pupils so as to increase their opportunities for success.
- Collect trend data to evaluate progress made with pupil's academic achievement over several years. Use spreadsheets and develop a database with the assistance of administrative staff in order to ensure that multiple measures of student achievement are readily available.
- Collect data from other sources in addition to pupil achievement so as to ascertain what all the factors are that contribute to improved academic achievement. Use the level of staff development participation, staff attendance records, parental involvement in Parent-Teacher Associations, the number of school volunteers and the attendance at parent-school-activities.
- Survey the teaching staff, the external community of the school, and the student body with regard to their perceptions about the school's effectiveness in terms of arranging for an environment conducive to academic achievement.
- Communicate pupil progress to parents through published documents, parents' conferences, narratives and portfolios that provide a holistic picture of pupil strengths and weaknesses.

- Match learner assessment to standardised benchmarks and calibrate school assessment with district and state-level assessment to minimise the amount of time spent on testing.
- Disaggregate different categories of data to determine if all pupils have an equal chance of achieving academic success.
- Update pupils' records in a timely fashion so that all the individual members of staff who work with pupils have the relevant information on the pupils readily available.
- Use less traditional methods of gathering data, such as flow charts, histograms, scatter grams and force-field analyses in order to effectively and efficiently analyse the results and arrange for appropriate remediation.

School principals with their staff's continuous focus on results and what pupils are achieving academically is central to school improvement (Schmoker, 1999:3). With the following paragraph the focus will be on some measures used to ensure that there is progress in teaching and learning in Swaziland primary schools and the monitoring of pupil academic performance by the class teachers and the school principals as instructional leaders.

3.6 THE MANAGEMENT OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SWAZILAND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The school principal as the executive manager of the school is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school as well as its overall policy, within the framework laid down by Government (Mabila, 1998:1; Kruger, 2003:8). The school principal is thus responsible for all aspects of school administration and for the welfare and supervision of all personnel, including teachers, pupils, and ancillary staff. The Ministry of Education in Swaziland states the importance of school principals practising their technical skills by prescribing that school principals lead the instructional programme by example in that they should teach classes and have an official teaching load on the timetable (DoE, 1978:28; Webb, 2005:71). The rationale for this prescription is three fold in that it ensures that (DoE, 1978:28):

- the teachers are led by example.

- school principals are familiar with the teaching conditions at their schools due to personally experiencing these conditions.
- school principals as instructional leaders and executive managers of their schools, over a period of time; gain a close knowledge of the pupils in their care.

School principals are also responsible for the supervision and control of the work of the teachers and pupils in their schools. In order for school principals to do their work effectively it is expected that they attend conscientiously to matters which are related to the planning of the instructional programme, the recording of academic progress and achievement as is done by teachers, and the quantity and quality of written and practical work done by the pupils. These tasks may directly be delegated to heads of departments in collaboration with senior teachers, but the school principal remains ultimately accountable for ensuring that the work is carried out properly. The following official documents must be regularly checked by the Swaziland school principals to monitor the instructional programme in terms of progress with teaching and learning:

3.6.1 Schemes of work

The schemes of work include teachers' plans of operation (Section 4(g) of the official Scheme Book) which must always be available on the school premises for inspection by the school principal or the Ministry officials (Department of Education, 2000:1; Mabila, 1978:2). There accordingly all schemes of work for the first term for all subjects for which the teacher is responsible must be entered by the end of the first fortnight of the term. Schemes of work for the whole year must be entered by the end of the first term of the academic year. Schemes of work must be completed by all teachers according to this regulation and the Swaziland Ministry of Education expects school principals to ensure that the regulation is adhered to by checking and approving all schemes of work as soon as they have been completed. School principals have the right and obligation to discuss with teachers their schemes of work and should school principals not be satisfied with the schemes of work presented by a teacher, urgent re-submissions must be done. The schemes of work should include the following information:

- The topics and activities to be covered
- The amount of the time allocated to each topic and activity
- An account of the teaching methods applied for the different lessons
- Details of the prescribed books, additional materials and visual aids used for each lesson

Schemes of work which show the teachers' term and year plans for teaching are essential for the following reasons (DoE, 2000:1; Mabila, 1998:2):

- It ensures a balanced use of the time available
- It provides an important document for the teacher who may take over the class during the year
- It provides the information necessary for the school principal to assess the appropriateness of the content and the approach of the teacher and it ensures that the needs of the pupils are being met with sufficient covering of the syllabus
- It provides information needed by the inspectors to evaluate the work of the teacher

3.6.2 Preparation book presenting the daily preparation

The Swaziland Ministry of Education expects that each teacher's daily preparation be recorded in a preparation book or preparation file which should be provided by the school. The school principal must check the preparation book frequently and sign with the date of signing included in the preparation book to confirm that the content is approved. It is required that the preparation books of teachers be up to date at all times and be readily available for perusal by the school principal or a Ministry official. The following information should be included in the preparation book (DoE, 2000:2; Mabila, 1978:3):

- The date, the lesson, the period, and the name of the class
- The topic and activity to be dealt with
- The prescribed books and additional materials to be used
- The work to be done by the teacher
- The work to be done by the pupils

A high premium is placed on documenting the work and activities of the pupils in order to ascertain and monitor pupils' progress throughout the academic year.

3.6.3 Exercise books

The Swaziland Ministry of Education requires that the exercise books of the pupils in which they do all their work for all the different subjects are treated with care as these exercise books reveal the record of pupil and teacher performance. To ensure that the work being done by the pupils as ascertained and monitored by the teachers is of a satisfactory standard, the following indicators are used for assessing pupils' exercise books (DoE, 2000:2; Mabila, 1978:3):

- The quantity of the written work
- The quality of the written work
- The general appearance of the books
- The quality of the teacher's marking
- The suitability of follow-up work

The Ministry of Education of Swaziland expects that school principals keep records of all the exercise books they assess each term, with comments included about their perceptions of the work done by learners. The school principal should ensure that (DoE, 2000:2; Mabila, 1978:4):

- Written work is done regularly
- Written work is dated and titled
- The pupils' work is neatly presented
- The pupils' work is marked by the teacher with proper initialling and the date of assessing included; all written work is appropriate with regard to the level on which it is carried out and with regard to the sufficiency of meeting the requirements as stipulated by the syllabus
- Where pupils are permitted to mark some of their work, this is done accurately with the teacher confirming via initialling that the marked work has been checked

- There is follow-up based on the marking of written work

When school principals are not satisfied with the quantity or quality of the written work done by pupils or with the standard of assessing of pupils' work, the responsible teacher must be approached and guided on what remedial action is required. It is for this reason that the Ministry of Education of Swaziland puts a premium on inputs of school principals to ensure that pupils' progress is satisfactory by requiring school principals to check pupils' work regularly and systematically.

3.6.4 Records of tests

All teachers must keep a record of regular tests carried out in their classes. This record must be reflected in each teacher's official personal record keeping, whether in the scheme of work book, a mark book, or a file of test results. A copy of test results for each official test written must be sent to the school principal for central record keeping of the school's assessment activities. The records of test marks must show the mark gained by each pupil, the class average for the test, and the position with regard to academic performance in the test of each one of the pupils in the class (DoE, 2000:3; Mabila, 1978:4). This audit trail of assessment activities is crucially important for an updated indication of all pupils' academic progress and academic achievements of all learners in general.

3.6.5 Records of class work

All teachers are responsible for keeping records of class work and homework carried out in all their different classes. The marks allocated to each pupil for a particular piece of work carried out should be recorded. Where a mark is not allocated, a tick should be provided to indicate that the pupil has completed the work sufficiently. Marks for class work and homework must also be kept in the scheme of work book, or the 'official' personal mark book or file of marks for class work and homework (DoE, 2000:3; Mabila, 1978:4).

Formal record keeping of the mark allocation for pupils' class work and homework is of significant importance in that the individual pupil's progress can be accounted for when that particular pupil is not in a position to write the final examination or when a pupil performs below expected ability in the formal examination due to reasons beyond the pupil's control.

3.7 CONCLUSION

It is evident that the existence, reputation and survival of schools are entirely dependent upon the quality of the academic results of its pupils. It is also evident that in schools where the academic performances of pupils are satisfactory, this is not automatically achieved, but through focused and sustained dedication. This conscientious dedication is pursued by school principals as instructional leaders in collaboration with each and every member of their staff. Their dedication motivates pupils and the surrounding environment to contribute to teaching and learning excellence and the smooth running of the school in general. School principals are expected to be fully aware of what happens in each classroom through supervision, mentoring, and through directly participating in actual teaching. With the empirical investigation it will be ascertained to what extent school principals in Swaziland's primary schools embrace these responsibilities so as to arrange for a positive culture of teaching and learning which should lead to high academic performances by pupils.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapters 2 and 3 the nature of the school principal's instructional leadership role and its impact on the culture of teaching and learning was discussed. The effect of the school principal's leadership role on the academic performance of pupils was also examined. In these two chapters the importance of measuring academic performance was explored and the importance of the effective execution of the principals' instructional leadership role in pursuing a sound culture of teaching and learning, and achieving optimal academic results for pupils, was considered.

In chapter four the research methods and procedures followed with the collection of data for the empirical investigation are discussed. In this regard matters pertaining to the research design, the sampling procedure, the data collecting instruments and measures considered to arrange for validity and reliability of the interpreted data are discussed. Data analysis and how ethical measures were considered to ensure participants' rights and anonymity throughout the investigation are also discussed.

4.2 RESEARCH AIMS

The aim of this study was to determine how school principals effectively manage the instructional programme of their schools, stimulate a positive culture of teaching and learning and ensure optimal academic performance of their pupils. This was done by means of the following research aims (par. 1.3):

- Determine the magnitude of the school principal's instructional leadership responsibilities
- Investigate the influence of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning prevailing in a school
- Determine the factors that impede a sound culture of teaching and learning

- Develop instructional leadership strategies for school principals that are focused on the enhancement of pupils' academic performance

4.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

When conducting research, two main research approach options prevail, namely a quantitative or a qualitative research approach. These, according to Barker (2003:312), are models or patterns containing sets of legitimate assumptions and designs for collecting and interpreting data. Research in the social sciences involves the study of people's beliefs, behaviours, interactions and institutions in order to test hypotheses, acquire information, and solve problems pertaining to human interrelationship (Neuman, 2000:6; De Vos, 2011:42). Both quantitative and qualitative research approaches can be used for these studies.

The major difference between the quantitative and qualitative research approach is the reasoning behind them. In quantitative research deductive reasoning is mainly used whereby the researcher moves from the general to the specific; from a pattern that might be logically or theoretically expected to observations that test whether the pattern actually occurs. The process of thinking from a general theoretical understanding results in the development of a testable hypothesis (Babbie, 2007:46). On the other hand, qualitative research uses inductive reasoning where the researcher moves from concrete observations to general theoretical explanation (Babbie, 2007:49). In qualitative research conclusions are drawn from specific instances or occurrences about entire groups, or a particular population. With quantitative research however the concern is with a specific theoretical position that outlines the logical connection of concepts and moves toward concrete empirical evidence (Delport & De Vos, 2011:48; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:31).

To be able to understand the nature and impact of the instructional leadership role of the school principal on developing and sustaining a positive culture of teaching and learning and realising optimal academic performance of pupils in Swaziland primary schools, the qualitative research approach was employed. The researcher considered the qualitative research approach as the most suitable because the aim with the research was a deep understanding of the influence of

instructional leadership on learner performance. The use of a qualitative research approach would enable the researcher to understand the role of school principals in leading the instructional programme at their schools, in developing a sound culture of teaching, and learning and positively influencing the academic results of pupils at their schools. As an interpretive method, the qualitative research approach enables the researcher to attain a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study by focusing on the total picture rather than breaking it down into different variables (Ary, et al., 2006:31). The focus with this investigation on instructional leadership was therefore on gaining a deep understanding of the total picture of the relationship between the instructional leadership role of the school principal, the culture of teaching and learning and the academic performance of pupils.

4.4 RESEARCH SAMPLE

As was said in paragraph 1.6.2.2, in qualitative research, time and cost should be considered when choosing research sites (Strydom & Delpont, 2011:391). With this study on the relationship between instructional leadership and learner achievement, eight Swaziland primary schools in the Southern Hhohho region displaying academic effectiveness were chosen as research sites. The procedures that were followed in selecting the research sites and the organizing of the research sample are discussed next.

4.4.1 Criteria for selecting the schools for empirical investigation

In choosing the research sample for collecting data in order to answer the research questions viably, Merriam (1991:48) recommends that one should select the research sample from which one can learn the most. This means that the selected research sample should consist of people that are information rich on the topic under discussion. When choosing the participants for this study on instructional leadership, the following characteristics were considered (par. 1.6.2.2):

- For the sake of convenience and accessibility participants were from primary schools in the Southern Hhohho region in Swaziland.

- The selected schools were well-performing schools with regard to both the curricular and extracurricular programmes. Optimal academic performance and active participation in extramural activities were considered as indicators of a positive culture of teaching and learning prevailing in the school.
- The schools had adequate physical facilities such as sufficient class rooms, a library, a playground, and a computer laboratory as these factors were considered significant in creating a teaching and learning environment conducive to optimal academic performance.
- The schools had well-developed and well-applied discipline policies which ensured that teaching and learning were not interrupted by unnecessary misconduct by either pupils or teachers
- The schools had satisfactory track records with regard to staff retention because staff retention was considered to enhance the sustaining of a culture of teaching and learning

4.4.2. Organising of the research sample

The research sample for a study is a small representation of the possible whole and it is important to ensure that the research sample represents the targeted population in size and in representation (Fouché & Delpont, 2011:73). According to Strydom and Delpont (2011:391), the size of the qualitative research sample depends on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with the available time and resources.

For this study on the influence of instructional leadership on learner achievement eight primary schools from the Southern Hhohho region in Swaziland were purposefully selected as research sites. From each of the selected eight schools the school principal and five teachers were selected as participants. The school principals were selected because of their role as instructional leaders and because they were thought to possess rich data as far as instructional leadership and creating a positive culture of teaching and learning for optimal academic performance of pupils were concerned. Related to school principal selection, teachers were selected as participants because of their role as executors of the actual teaching and their experience of how the leadership of school

principals influenced their work as staff and that of pupils, thus resulting in maximised academic achievements by pupils. The indicators for selecting the participating teachers were based on the teachers' years of work experience at the specific school and the school principal's evaluation of the teachers' teaching competence as reflected in learners' satisfactory progress. The participating teachers all had at least five years teaching experience at the research site which served as initial indicator of familiarity with the culture of instructional leadership articulating into the culture of teaching and learning at the specific school and which had a positive influence on the academic performance of the pupils in the participant teachers' classrooms (par.1.5.2.2).

Individual in-depth interviews were conducted with the eight school principals. At each research site the five participant teachers were engaged in a focus group interview. This implied that in total eight individual and eight focus group interviews were conducted and a total of 48 participants took part in these interviews, namely eight school principals and forty teachers.

4.4.3 Arrangements for access to the schools

A letter requesting permission to conduct the research in the Hhohho region of Swaziland was written to the Hhohho Regional Educational Office (HREO) (Appendix A). Letters requesting permission to conduct research at the selected research sites were also written to the school principals of the selected primary schools (Appendix B). The letters explained the reason for conducting the research at the eight primary schools. Empirical research commenced after letters of approval were received from the HREO and the school principals of the selected primary schools.

4.5 DATA COLLECTION

As was said in paragraph 1.5.2.3, data collection is a very important step in ensuring that instruments are employed that are constructive in generating the required data to answer the research question and from which a new body of knowledge can be convincingly generated. As the qualitative researcher does not collect and describe data in a neutral and detached manner, but in an involved and creative manner for the sake of a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of

study, it is important that appropriate methods are used to ensure the generating of a rich body of knowledge (Holloway, 1997:142; Tshubwana, 2007:13; par.1.6.2.3). In this study on the influence of instructional leadership on learner achievement, data was gathered using the following data collecting instruments:

- Interviews
- Observation
- Study of relevant documents

(a) Interviews

In qualitative research interviewing is used because of its ability to collect diverse and in-depth data in a short time. By immersing the interviewer in the lives of the interviewees, the researcher experiences the true perspectives and interpretation of events evolving around the subject under study (Seyfarth, 2001:53). Interviews are especially useful in exploring thoughts, feelings and behaviours in different groups and in different settings (Greeff, 2011:341).

Interviewing is commonly known to consist of two types, namely individual and focus group interviewing. The major strength of the individual or one-on-one interview is that each interview provides volumes of information about the interviewee (Greeff, 2011:342). With one-on-one interviews semi-structured questions with probing possibilities are mainly used enabling the researcher to gain a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs, perceptions or accounts on and about a particular topic (Greeff, 2011:351; Kwindu, 2002:36). Individual interviews that are semi-structured give the researcher and participants flexibility and allow for probing on interesting avenues that emerge in the interview, albeit with a sustained structure to ensure that all important aspects pertaining to the phenomenon of study are addressed (Greeff, 2011:352; Seyfarth, 2001:53). For that reason and in line with the suggestions by Monette, Sullivan and DeJong (2005:178) an interview schedule with a set of predetermined questions was used to guide rather than dictate the interviews conducted with this study on instructional leadership (Appendix C).

As opposed to individual interviews, focus group interviews are used to create a better understanding of how a group of people feel or think about an issue, product or service (Greeff, 2011:360). Focus group interviewing also enable the researcher to experience a deep understanding of issues that are not likely to emerge in a one-on-one interview, because of the interaction between group members amongst themselves and the interaction between the group and the interviewer. The researcher's effectiveness as an interviewer of a group of participants relies on the researcher's ability to create a tolerant environment in the focus group that encourages participants to voluntarily share perceptions, points of view, experiences, wishes and concerns without restrains (Monette et al., 2005:186; Greeff, 2011:360). To effectively conduct a focus group interview the researcher should refer to an interview schedule to guide the interview. In the case of this study on instructional leadership and learner achievement an interview schedule was developed and referred to with the conducting of the focus group interviews (Appendix D). The interviewer allowed the participants to discuss issues collectively but did not pressurise them to reach consensus. Instead of interfering when members of a focus group disagreed on some issues, the interviewer used probing questions to allow for clarity and deeper understanding.

Interviews are functional in generating data for qualitative research; however, interviews require careful planning on the part of the researcher to reduce possible problems that may occur during the conducting of the interview. Potential problems such as interruptions, competing destructors, stage fright of some participants, questions that are interpreted as awkward, jumping, teaching, preaching, or counselling responses which hamper true meaning, revealing one's own biased response, superficial interviews, or confidential information that is evaluated as highly sensitive, are but a few of the obstacles to be aware of with interviewing (Kwinda, 2002:39). Interviewing also requires efficient skills on the part of the researcher. The researcher should, for example, display good questioning and probing skills. A seasoned researcher knows how to avoid sensitive or controversial questions which can hinder the flow of the discussions. Researchers should also follow a clear story line and practice self-control to avoid taking the centre stage during the discussion which may hinder spontaneous participation due to the researcher dominating the discussions or influencing participants towards a desired direction (Greeff, 2011:343; Kwinda,

2002:34).

The qualitative researcher employing interviewing as a data collecting instrument should also be able to utilise diverse communication techniques such as paraphrasing, clarification, reflection, encouragement, comments, reflective summary and probing (Greeff, 2011:245). More importantly, the interviewer should remain focused on the content. This implies that the researcher should listen attentively to what the interviewees say. Apart from what the participants say, the researcher should also be able to observe the manner in which they express themselves as this informs the researcher of the underlying feelings, attitudes and emotions surrounding the topic under discussion (Greeff, 2011:347).

As was said in paragraph 1.5.2.3, the qualitative researcher focuses on a deep understanding of the phenomenon of study through the utilisation of the most effective information collecting instruments. Interviewing was the most appropriate data collecting instrument for this study in order to gain a deep understanding of the relationship that existed between instructional leadership competencies and learner achievement. Both types of interviewing, namely individual or one-on-one interviews and focus group interviews were used with this study. Greeff (2011:341) postulates that the researcher's choice to use any or both of these methods of interviewing depends solely on the structure and purpose of the research study. As it appears that when these two types of interviewing are used concurrently they tend to support each other, both were employed. In this regard and to arrange for a deep understanding of the relationship between instructional leadership and learner achievement, focus group interviewing with teachers was followed by the individual interviews with the school principals to probe deeper into the phenomenon of study.

As was stated in paragraph 1.5.2.2 and paragraph 4.4.2, the individual interviews were conducted with the eight school principals of the eight research sites and the eight focus group interviews, one per research site, were conducted with a group of five teachers purposefully selected based on the advice from the school principal.

(b) Observation

Qualitative research is a dynamic type of inquiry which enables the researcher to use all possible means to gain as much information as possible in order to draw conclusions on a particular subject (Dhlamini, 2008:56). Observation in a specific natural setting is done to complete descriptions and behaviours that elucidate the kind of culture and climate that prevails in the research site. As Kruger and Steinman (2003:21) suggest, each research site expresses its culture through:

- Behaviour of group members
- Physical and social environment
- Traditions, symbols and rituals
- Teaching practices

The observation of the aspects stated above can be used as foundational cues of what takes place at each site which is then supplemented with other forms of data collection in order to be able to draw conclusions. Observation is also used to complete and confirm descriptions and results of the empirical study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:673). The extent to which researchers are involved in the observation process depends entirely on the researchers themselves and the purpose of the observation and therefore the researchers decide beforehand on the role they intend to fulfil in the inquiry (Strydom, 2011:328).

In addition to everything said about observation as data collecting instrument in paragraph 1.5.2.3, and for the purpose of this study, namely the impact of the school principal's instructional leadership role on the academic achievement of pupils in Swaziland primary schools, the researcher took the stance of a completely unobtrusive observer. This position of complete observer does not allow for direct engagement with the observed yet enhances the researcher's understanding of behaviour of the different members in each research site without actively involving them in the data collecting process (Ary et al., 2006:474).

(c) The study of relevant documents

In paragraph 1.5.2.3 it was said that written documents provide substantive information about the phenomenon under study. Grinnell and Unrau (2005:52) and Fouché and Delpont (2011:139) warn however of possible falsehood presented by official documents which arises as a result of changing outside influence as these documents are updated regularly to stay relevant for supervisors and government officials. Official documents, or non personal documents, are documents that are compiled and maintained on a continuous basis by large organisations like government institutions of which schools are part. Official documents are formal and structured documents which are presented in a particular manner with little flexibility (Strydom & Delpont, 2011:379). In using official documents the qualitative researcher must be alert to a possible lack of authenticity as officials may intentionally enter false information to impress their supervisors or government officials (Fouché & Delpont, 2011:139; Grinnell & Unrau, 2005:52).

In completing the inquiry on school principal instructional leadership and its contribution towards optimal performance of pupils in their academic work, and in addition to what was said in paragraph 1.5.2.3 on document study, documents such as the schemes of work of the teacher corps, the records of teaching and assessment progress, and the keeping of daily preparation books by teachers were analysed. An analysis of all of these contextual research-site-related documents enabled the researcher to draw conclusions on the effects of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning and learner achievement prevailing within the specific school environment.

4.6 DATA ANALYSIS

When the process of data collection is completed, the raw data need to be analysed and interpreted in a justifiably trustworthy and reliable manner in order to respond as objectively as possible to the research questions as established at the beginning of the study (Strydom & Delpont, 2011:385). Researchers engage themselves intensely in the breaking down of massive amounts of collected data in order to examine underlying principles. They also compare the collected data with findings of other researchers or with the original study if follow-up studies are conducted in order to identify relationships or develop further hypotheses (Strydom & Delpont, 2011:385). In a study such as this on the influence of instructional leadership on learner

achievement where a triangulation of different methods was used, and in line with findings of Greeff (2011:359), data analysis involved continual rereading of the transcribed interviews and field notes of the observed research sites in order to ensure the emergence of categories and themes. While comparing the emerged categories and themes from the transcribed interviews with information attained from literature and unobtrusive observations, researchers engage in a process of familiarising themselves with, recording, coding, summarising and interpreting the data (Ary et al., 2006:490; Driedger, Gallois, Sanders & Santesso, 2006:1146). It is important that researchers transcribe and analyse the recorded interviews while these interviews are still fresh in their minds. Where possible the researcher should provide each participant with a copy of the transcribed interview so that the individual participant could approve of the authenticity of the conducted interview.

In this study data analysis was done concurrently with data collection through an interactive and dynamic process that involved active note taking, transcribing and analysing interviews as soon as possible after each interview was conducted. This guaranteed that not only the recorded interviews were captured, but simultaneously ensured that a vivid picture of the entire setting, attitudes and climate of each site are evident. The researcher continually compared the information from the interviews with information gathered from the literature review, the studied contextual documents from each research site, and the personal observations of each research site's functioning.

4.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND TRANSFERABILITY

In paragraph 1.5.4 it was posited that the terms *trustworthiness* and *transferability* are used in qualitative research due to these words' better suitability for qualitative research as opposed to validity and reliability that pertain to quantitative research. When researchers try to demonstrate that a true picture of the phenomenon under scrutiny is presented, they are ensuring that their work can be trusted and that their work adheres to transferability and trustworthiness measures (Ary et al., 2006:509).

To establish rigor in qualitative research some trustworthy benchmarks are laid against which

research can be assessed. Such criteria include the careful keeping of a clear record of how the enquiry was carried out. Applying replication logic and stepwise replication also ensures trustworthiness. Replication logic as a strategy that uses theory to determine other cases to which findings can be generalised suggests that the results of a next study of the same phenomenon with the next group will yield results that are similar to the previous study (Flick, 2009:40; Shenton, (2004:63). Another way of ensuring trustworthiness is the use of code-recording as a systematic way of tracking important information by assigning different codes or tags to different pieces of information to make summarising easy and ensuring that all collected data is represented in the final report (Krefting, 1991:214). Sometimes researchers use other people to independently interpret collected data to enhance trustworthiness. Some research authors claim that when researchers compare their own interpretations to that of a neutral person they are able to establish whether their own interpretation of the data was biased or not (Ary et al., 2006:509; Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:420).

To ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research and to minimise researcher bias, the following strategies are functional (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:404):

- Triangulation of methods
- Mechanically recorded data
- Verbatim accounts
- Participants' language
- Field research
- Low-inference descriptors

In this study trustworthiness was firstly ensured by the triangulation of methods. This was arranged through conducting individual interviews with school principal participants, conducting focus group interviews with teacher participants, studying the context-related documents of each research site, and unobtrusively observing the prevailing behaviour at each research site. All interviews were mechanically recorded using a digital tape recorder and transcribing each interview verbatim as a second measure of arranging for trustworthiness of findings.

To confirm trustworthiness direct quotations from transcribed data were used to illustrate the participants' views. Even though data collection was conducted in English, participants were not restricted to expressing themselves in English, but were allowed to express themselves in SiSwati to ensure accurate responses and a meaningful flow of ideas.

Transferability and generalisability of research results pertain to the reader's action of comparing the results of one study to another in an effort to find comparable tangential points in terms of similarities and differences. Transferability requires researchers to ensure that the findings of their research are transferable from a specific situation or case to another so that second researchers are in a position to apply the findings to their own studies conducted in another, but similar context (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:420). It is important however to know that the nature of qualitative research does restrict the generalisation of findings from one population to another and for that reason researchers need to refer back to the original theoretical framework to show clearly how data collection and analysis will be guided by concepts and models, in which the researchers state the theoretical parameters of the research (Schurink et al., 2011:420). In this regard the use of multiple informants or more than one data-gathering method can convincingly strengthen the study's usefulness for other settings. With this study on instructional leadership and learner achievement, transferability was ensured through triangulation of multiple sources insofar as that interviewing, official document study and unobtrusive observations were used to reach a deep understanding of the studied phenomenon.

Care must be taken when analysing the results of the study to ensure that all the data collected are well represented and impartially presented in the findings of the study (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:101). As the researcher goes through the data, the frequent appearance of certain utterances should be noted by using certain codes. Apart from occurrence frequencies, the researcher should analyse and interpret the meanings of each set of data in the context. With this study on instructional leadership and learner achievement and in line with the findings of Rapley (2008:130) on accuracy enhancement, the researcher made use of internal and external moderators who independently analysed the data using reduction techniques to ensure that data

was manageable and contained only material that informed the findings of the study. The internal moderators of this study were the participants themselves who were given summaries of the interviews to approve their contents while the external moderator was a practitioner in the field of education who was approached to review the transcribed interviews so as to independently analyse and remove all irrelevant details from the transcriptions.

4.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Qualitative research allows the researcher close contact with the participants. Although this close contact with participants is an advantage to the researcher, it may be uncomfortable for the participants (Morris, 2006:247). To protect the participants from any possible emotional or physical harm with the conducting of the research, the following ethical measures were considered beforehand (Strydom, 2011:128; Williams et al., 1995:41):

- All possible consequences for research participants were carefully considered
- It was ascertained that the consent of participants was voluntary and that this was an informed decision, without any implied deprivation or penalty for refusal to participate, and with special consideration of participants' privacy and dignity
- Participants were at all cost protected from unwarranted physical or mental discomfort, distress, harm, danger or deprivation
- As far as the discussions of evaluation of services or evaluation of cases were concerned, it was only done for professional purposes and only with people directly and professionally involved
- All information obtained about participants was treated confidentially
- The researcher took credit only for work actually done in direct connection with scholarly and research endeavours, and gave credit to the contributions made by others

As was explained in paragraph 1.5.2.2, with this study on instructional leadership and learner achievement, to gain access to sites, letters were written to the Hhohho Regional Education Officer (HREO) to request permission to conduct the study at the selected Swaziland primary schools. Letters were also sent to the school principals of the participating schools to request

permission to conduct the study at their school premises. In line with the suggestions of Huysamen (1994:134) and Strydom (2011:119), the selected primary schools were assured of confidentiality and that their names would not be publicised. Each selected school comprehensively and each individual participant were informed that participation was voluntary and that they had a right to withdraw from the study at any time when they felt uncomfortable. The participant schools and each individual participant were assured that data gathered would in no way affect their lives as their names would not be recorded against their responses and that data would be used strictly for the purpose of research and for nothing else. Participants had the opportunity to access the results of the study at first hand and as readers they were able to confirm that what the researcher reported had happened (Gay, 1996:85; Strydom, 2011:122).

4.9 CONCLUSION

As was clear from this chapter, the research design ensured that there was a functional structure for the manner in which data was collected and analysed and with clear guidelines on the procedure that was followed with the interpretation of data so as to answer the postulated research questions successfully. With chapter four the research design and research methodology for the empirical investigation was explained. It was made clear that a qualitative research paradigm was the best option to enable the researcher to reach a deep understanding of the relationship between the school principal's instructional leadership actions and learner achievement. It was further clarified that a combination of individual interviews, focus group interviews, personal unobtrusive observations, and contextual document study ensured sufficient and trustworthy data to have deduced convincing research findings. A discussion of the research findings of the empirical investigation is presented in chapter five.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS OF THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter five reports on the research findings of the empirical investigation conducted for the purpose of investigating the relationship prevailing between the instructional leadership role of the school principal and the academic performance of pupils. The investigation was limited to primary schools in the Southern Hhohho region of Swaziland (par. 1.5.2.2; par. 4.4.2) and comprised of the following research aims, namely to (par 1.3; par 4.2):

- determine the magnitude of instructional leadership responsibilities of school principals.
- investigate the influence of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning.
- determine the factors that impede a sound culture of teaching and learning.
- develop instructional leadership strategies for school principals that are focused on the enhancement of pupils' academic performance.

With reference to the research aims, a literature study was conducted as described in chapters two and three where the issue of instructional leadership and its impact on the culture of teaching and learning was investigated. Chapter two in particular addressed the research question pertaining to the nature of the school principal's leadership role (par. 2.2), the influence of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning (par. 2.3), strategies that enhance academic performance at schools (par. 2.4) and factors that impede on a sound culture of teaching and learning (par. 2.5). To further expound on the aim of the study pertaining to the school principal's instructional leadership role and pupils' academic performance, chapter three addressed issues that related to academic performance, the importance of measuring academic performance, salient features of academic performance and some measures of educational management pertaining to the instructional leadership role of school principals in Swaziland schools.

To enhance a deeper and contextually based understanding of the phenomenon of study, namely the relationship between instructional leadership and pupils' academic performance, an empirical investigation was conducted of which the research methodology was explained in chapter 4. Data for the empirical investigation was collected from eight research sites and comprised of individual interviews with school principals, focus group interviews with educators, the studying of official documents pertaining to instructional leadership at the different research sites and the personal observation of the school climate at the different research sites (par. 1.5.2.3; par. 4.5). A brief profile of each of the eight schools that served as research sites is provided next.

5.2 PROFILES OF RESEARCH SITES

The participant schools were of two types. The one type represented government-aided schools which were either mission (church) schools or non-government-organisation (NGOs) schools, both of which were assisted by the government in terms of paying the salaries of the staff. In both cases, however, additional staff was appointed with the financial support from business organisations in the schools' surrounding environments. Apart from paying for appointment of additional staff, other services that the government could not pay for such as adequate support staff and advanced equipment such as advanced computer laboratories and sufficiently furnished libraries were supported by financial businesses in the schools' feeding areas. The second type of schools were the community schools which were built and supported by the parents, but which also got support from the government in terms of paying teachers' salaries. No additional staff was appointed at these community schools. The size of schools is usually defined in terms of streams per grade, that is smaller schools usually have only one stream which implies only one class for each grade while larger schools have two or more streams, i.e. two or three classes per grade. A brief profile of each of the eight research sites is presented next. This is done to explain the operational context from which the empirical data were collected.

School A is a government-aided school which is well equipped with a fully furnished computer laboratory, a library, and a fully furnished home economics department. It has a large sports field which includes a basketball and a netball court, and the school is also furnished with a well-equipped auditorium and with spacious school grounds. It is fully fenced and has security

personnel on ground. School A is an English medium school with double streams from grade 1-7 which means that each grade has two classes, for example, Grade 1A and 1B. Pupils in School A participate in different sporting events such as ball games, drum majorettes, debate and drama. The population of the school comprises of 420 pupils, 23 teachers and 10 non-academic staff. With regard to learner performance, school A is usually ranked among the top 10 schools in the Swaziland Primary Certificate (SPC) examination with a yearly pass rate of hundred percent.

To a large extent the profile of school B resembles that of school A insofar as that school B is also a government aided school that boasts of a large playground, a well-equipped auditorium and well-sustained basketball and netball courts. The school is also double streamed from grade 1-7 with a population of 455 pupils and 21 teachers and with 7 support staff members. The classrooms are well furnished and neat. The library and computer laboratory are well equipped. Sporting activities in the school include ball games, athletics, music and indoor games. The school's performance in the SPC examinations usually consists of a hundred percent pass rate.

School C is a government-aided school with three classes for each grade from grade 1-7. The school has a very big school yard, an assembly hall and has access to a community sports field which it shares with other neighbouring schools. Learners at school C engage in different sporting events such as ball games, cultural dances, music and debate. With regard to learners' performance in the SPC examinations school C is not as successful as school A and B in that school C has a yearly pass rate of only 85% on average. Although the teacher corps of 23 related to that of school A and B, the learner population of school C is much higher, namely 987 pupils, indicating larger class sizes.

School D is a community school which implies that it entirely depends on the parents for its funding and therefore is less privileged which is evident in that it does not have a computer laboratory or a well-furnished library. However, school D, like school A and B, is double streamed from grade 1-7 with a population of approximately 490 pupils and 17 teachers. It has a large school yard, a sports field, an agriculture department and a well-fenced garden. It also has a well-furnished home economics class. With regard to sporting activities, school D participates in

ball games and cultural dances. However, with regard to academic success, school D performs better than school C with an aggregate of 95% in its SPC examinations.

School E is similar to school D in many ways as it is also a community school and it has a very big school yard with classrooms that are well cared for. Its classrooms are spacious and well furnished. School E also have the same choice of sporting activities as school D as its pupils also engage in ball games, athletics and cultural dances. Its population is approximately 560 learners and 21 teachers with 5 support staff members. Its home economics and agriculture departments are well furnished and the pass rate in the SPC examinations is 90%.

School F is a government-aided school. It is well fenced and has a big yard. It has three streams from grade 1-7. The population of this school is large with approximately 1155 pupils and 27 teachers. It dominates in the ballgames and cultural dances in the region and also on national level. It boasts of an average of 95% pass rate in the SPC examinations.

School G like school A, B and D is a government-aided school. School G has double streams from grade 1-7 and has a population of approximately 770 pupils and 18 teachers which indicates a high teacher/pupil ratio. School G participates in ball games, cultural dances and music. It also performs exceptionally in the SPC exams with a 90% pass rate.

Lastly, school H is a community school which is double streamed from grade 1-7. Its population is approximately 560 pupils and 18 teachers which indicates a slightly lower teacher/pupil ratio than with school G. With regard to sporting activities school H participates in athletics and ballgames. Its surroundings are well kept and it has a fair fence structure. The performance of this school is also very good with an 85% pass rate in the SPC examinations.

It is clear that to a larger or lesser extent all the research sites are well equipped in terms of physical facilities, staff representation and resource provisioning. Although class sizes vary from school to school, the classes are manageable, which is reflected in acceptable academic performances by pupils. As was indicated in 4.4.1, all the schools which were selected as research sites were well performing-schools with adequate facilities and with a high retention rate

amongst teachers. The members of staff at the research sites were dedicated and committed as the conditions at their schools were favourable for teaching and learning. One aspect of these favourable conditions prevailing at the research sites pertained to teachers and pupils intrinsically adhering to order and discipline. The data that were collected from these research sites are discussed next.

5.3 SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Individual interviews were conducted with the eight school principals of the eight research sites (par. 1.5.2.2; par. 4.4.2). The themes that emerged from an analysis of the data from these individual interviews are discussed next.

5.3.1 The term *instructional leadership*

Comprehensively considered, the school principal participants described instructional leadership as the leadership given by the school principal to the teachers and pupils in the school concerning best practice teaching and learning. They pointed out that instructional leadership involves many functions. The main functions of instructional leadership pertain to providing supervision to teachers with regard to their teaching responsibilities and to motivating teachers to improve their teaching skills and learners to increase their time spent on learning. In this regard Principal A emphasised the guiding function of instructional leadership by pointing out that “*instructional leadership involves how the school principal guides and supervises the teachers in the teaching of the curriculum to the pupils*”, whereas Principal E signified the interpersonal relationship aspect of instructional leadership by explaining that “*instructional leadership involves how management, especially the principal, relates with the teachers when doing their work*”. With regard to interpersonal relationships participants agreed on the importance of the school principal’s instructional leadership task to encourage staff to forge healthy interpersonal relationships for the sake of pursuing a shared sense of purpose and achievement.

From the comments by participant school principals it was clear that school principals perceive the term *instructional leadership* as pertaining to school principals’ superior position of providing

assistance to teachers with regard to teaching obligations. This assistance is provided to teachers in the form of clear instructions, supervision for the sake of development, and guidance, not only with regard to their teaching obligations, but also with regard to how they relate with others in the work environment.

5.3.2 The instructional leadership role of the school principal

With an analysis of participant school principals' understanding of what exactly their instructional leadership role encompasses, it was clear that they understood their instructional leadership role as pertaining mainly to a monitoring of the teachers' sufficient facilitating of the curriculum and of encouraging and motivating teachers to use appropriate teaching methods applicable to the specific context in order to ensure that pupils indeed learn. With regard to the instructional leader's monitoring role, it was emphasised that monitoring only took place when school principals leave their offices for a visible presence in classrooms and on the school grounds. In this regard Principal A stated as follows: *"As a school principal I should check if there is teaching in place on the ground because if I stay in the office and not visit the classrooms, I will find that nothing is going on in the classroom"*. In relation to a visible presence it was pointed out that the instructional leader's visible presence serves as motivation factor because *"just moving around reminds teachers to go back to their tasks"* (Principal B).

Participants also revealed that school principals have to monitor and provide supervision with regard to teachers using adequate and appropriate evaluation and assessment methods. This needs to be done in close liaison with the school management team (SMT) because *"the manager works with the SMT to provide guidelines and supervise tests to ensure evaluation instruments are appropriate and that tests test effectively what is taught with appropriate length, appropriate content"*(Principal G). School principal participants also determined the providing of essential teaching materials as a critical responsibility of the school principal as instructional leader in order for teaching and learning to be effective. Linked to accountability for the provision of essential teaching materials, is the instructional leader's supervision task in terms of ascertaining that teaching theory and teaching practice are aligned. Principal E explained the instructional leader's responsibility with regard to aligned theory and practice arrangements as follows: *"As a*

principal I have to see for myself that what is recorded in the daily preparation books and schemes of work actually reflect what actually happens in the classroom”.

School principal participants agreed that instructional leaders should be competent teachers themselves and should engage in teaching some classes. In line with a practice-what-one-preaches approach, this should demonstrate to staff what is expected of them with regard to proper teaching. When instructional leaders practice what they preach by taking responsibility for teaching some classes themselves, teachers are motivated by their school principals’ examples to pursue the same excellence in their own teaching initiatives. Apart from motivating staff through their teaching efforts, instructional leaders also contribute to constructive school and classroom discipline by personally experiencing discipline challenges when they carry out their teaching responsibilities. In this regard Principal H explained as follows: *“Look at my cuffs, I am from class which helps my teachers with discipline especially in the upper classes and also helps me understand discipline challenges first hand”.*

It was clear from the individual interviews with school principals that they embrace activities such as supervising, guiding, monitoring, and ensuring the provision of essential teaching and learning resources as crucial aspects pertaining to the instructional leadership role of the school principal. It was further clear that participants placed a high premium on instructional leaders’ leading by example approaches and on instructional leaders supporting their staff in all matters and creating a climate of constructive discipline for pupils and teachers. What was evident was that a practice-what-one-preaches approach was considered as most crucial to the encompassing instructional leadership role of the school principal.

5.3.3 The impact of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning

There was a general impression amongst participant school principals that developing and sustaining a positive culture of teaching and learning is a crucial aspect of the school principal’s instructional leadership role so as to ensure the improvement of the teaching morale of the whole staff. Participants agreed that the constant encouraging by school principals of the pursuit of effective teaching for the sake of successful learning creates a harmonious climate that ensures a

convincing school culture suitable and conducive to a positive realising of teaching and learning. In this regard Principal A confirmed: *“Keep the people happy and you’ll be happy about the work they do for you”*.

School principal participants emphasised that instructional leadership roles such as class supervision and monitoring help the teachers to remain alert and do their work effectively. Control is necessary for quality outcomes insofar as that *“when school principals do not do their work of supervision, the school can’t acquire quality education because people relax when they are not spot-checked”* (Principal F). Participants pointed out however that such supervision and monitoring should not be understood as policing, but rather as an availability for assistance in order to ensure improved performance.

From the individual interviews with school principals it also became clear that the effective execution of school principals’ instructional leadership roles ensures that the set goals of the school are achieved, one of which is to ensure that learning takes place and that the learner outcomes are of good quality. Participants agreed that when teachers are not supervised they tend to neglect some of their tasks such as marking pupils work and following the class timetable which ensure that the curriculum is covered effectively. Principal A emphasised that the supervision of teaching improves not only teaching endeavours, but it also has a positive influence on evaluation *“which enhances school results”*. Tests and homework assignments are therefore used to help pupils and teachers ascertain successes and to determine shortcomings in the learning process for rectifying purposes. Principal A pointed to the value of the SMT checking learners’ tests constantly for relevancy and for the sake of meaningful learning.

With reference to the concept of time-on-task and apart from a supervisory role to support teachers’ teaching tasks for the betterment of school outcomes, participant school principals agreed that the protecting and emphasising of instructional time was an important aspect of instructional leadership. Based on the argument that processes in nature take time and that learning is a natural process therefore learning takes time, participants emphasised the fostering of a respect for lesson time. In this regard Principal H pointed out that if teachers and pupils adhere to and respect the time allocated to teaching and learning which is *“approximately six*

hours including break” teachers should have “*adequate time for teaching and pupils enough time to learn*”. For that reason an important instructional leadership task of the school principal is to constantly remind teachers and learners of the “holiness” of lesson time to ensure that teaching and learning receive due attention which in turn impacts positively on learners’ academic performance.

From the above discussion it was clear that the effective execution of the school principal’s instructional leadership role includes a supervision and monitoring role with a constant emphasis on the respect for lesson time. Participants emphasised that these tasks improved and enhanced a positive working climate, increased a commitment to teaching and learning, and intensified a focus on the end result of improved learner performance, all representing a positive school culture in terms of the way things are done at the specific school.

5.3.4 Factors within the school that impede a sound culture of teaching and learning

In relation to the importance of time-on-task (par. 5.3.3), participant school principals identified poor time management in the sense of time wasters as the worst and most common detrimental factor on the culture of teaching and learning. Participants pointed out that they constantly have to encourage teachers to observe and adhere to the encompassing timetable which include time slots for all the curricular and extra-curricular activities. Participants themselves declared that they try concertededly to avoid unnecessary time wasters such as meetings called too frequently without having an urgent and constructive purpose. In this regard Principal C highlighted: “*I avoid assembling teachers frequently as this exercise may take too much time...not unless of course there is an emergency*”. Participants were in agreement however that constructive meetings with teachers, such as the meetings focused on staff development for the sake of improved teaching and learning may be time-consuming yet these meetings are crucially necessary. With regard to counteracting time wasting, participants agreed that scheduling important staff meetings towards the end of the school day rather than at the beginning of the day was more viable as it happens naturally that some staff would like to spend time after a meeting continuing to discuss items on the agenda informally.

Participant school principals pointed out that the SMT and staff of successful schools focus on developing policies that instil the school's values and norms pertaining to an improved engagement with the task of dedicated teaching and learning. Participants pointed out however that school policies should be backed by national policies or else schools may encounter difficulties in implementing their policies should any deviant behaviour emerge. It was clear that the extent of validation of school policies was contingent on stakeholders' voluntary compliance with the policies and the adherence of these policies to national policy. With regard to school principals' endeavours of encouraging teachers to comply with internal school policies, but within the constraints set by national policy, Principal E remarked as follows: *"People have rights which are backed by law, or else we (school principals) could have killed people whom we feel don't belong here because of lack of dedication"*.

Concerning personal differences as internal obstacles to a sound culture of teaching and learning, participant school principals showed appreciation for differences among staff members that are directed by an urge for improved teaching. When differences are professional in terms of *"focusing on the ball, not the players"* (Principal A), these differences are healthy and contribute to improved practice. Long term personal differences however are detrimental to a healthy environment and a sound culture of teaching and learning and should be managed in an efficient manner. In this regard Principal B exclaimed: *"We may differ in our opinions on teaching, professional differences are healthy and can be tolerated, but personal ones are deconstructive, no one benefits"* (Principal B). From the individual interviews with school principals it was clear that a strong feeling prevailed with regard to the relation between effective schools and teachers acting professionally and responsibly despite their personal differences for the sake of effective teaching and healthy interpersonal relationships. Participants emphasised the importance of sustaining healthy interpersonal relationships amongst staff by fostering a sense of tolerating viable differences, although simultaneously disapproving of unacceptable behaviour in terms of lack of dedicated teaching.

Insufficient resources or a total lack of resources appeared to be a major concern for participant school principals. It was pointed out that if schools are not able to acquire the basic resources necessary for teaching and learning to realise aims effectively, the school's purpose and mission

and the plans for teaching and learning are seriously in jeopardy. The insufficiency of resources appeared to be mainly the result of financial constraints experienced by government. Government schools rely mostly on public funding through the Ministry of Education and Training for the Free Primary Education Programme (FPEP) and for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) who compose the majority of pupils in Swaziland primary schools as a result of the HIV pandemic with related socio-economic problems. In this regard and with reference to the Swaziland Government's challenge of funding the FPEP and OVC programs timeously, Principal G emphasised that "*the little money paid by parents does not cater for all the needs of the school*". Principal G also pointed out that although the entire school program is affected by the lack of timely financial support from government, "*it is worse with practical subjects like Agriculture because vegetables must be planted in the correct season*" or else expected outcomes in terms of proper harvests are not realised.

From the above discussion the main stumbling blocks to proper teaching and learning, and the fostering and sustaining of a sound culture of teaching and learning became clear. What transpired is that the main impediments to a positive culture of teaching and learning pertained to poor time management, a lack of alignment of individual school policies and policies on national level, personal differences among staff that are not dealt with in a mature way, and the constraint of insufficient financial resources to ensure proper teaching and learning.

5.3.5 Instructional leadership strategies to enhance the academic performance of pupils

A number of strategies were raised by participant school principals as conducive to positive learner achievement. Participants disclosed that they encouraged teachers in their schools to focus on making the learning event interesting by using tangible teaching material because "*a clean, bare classroom is not conducive for learning*" (Principal B). In order to involve all learners constructively in the lesson situation, participants encouraged their staff to apply more practically orientated methods of teaching to ensure that head knowledge becomes heart knowledge. For that reason participants encouraged their staff to practice different teaching methods in order to cater for different learning styles. Participants were in agreement that a successful school should cater for visual learners, auditory learners as well as tactile learners.

Participant school principals pointed out the importance of bringing teachers, parents and pupils together through what is commonly known in Swaziland as “open house” which refers to constructive parent-teacher engagements. In this regard Principal C explained that “*when teachers and parents meet over the child’s work, the work speaks for itself*” in the sense of reflecting either successes that have been achieved or shortcomings that still need to be addressed. With these constructive parent-teacher meetings during which effective and honest communication takes place, the result is transparency and clear understanding of the precise condition of teaching and learning. This could however be a daunting situation for the teacher, pupil or parent because, “*if the teacher needs to do more or the child or the parent ... no one wants to be put in the spotlight*” (Principal C). With regard to parent involvement and according to the participant school principals such parent-teacher meetings enable parents to follow their child’s progress, identify weaknesses and find ways of assisting with their child’s learning. In a mutual effort, parents and teachers encourage pupils to focus on their strengths for the sake of progress. These open-house days generally occur twice a year, one in the first semester and one in the second semester. To avoid disturbances during the normal instruction time, parents are encouraged to make optimal use of these open-house days for discussions with teachers on their child’s progress and only approach teachers with extremely serious concerns about their child’s progress during the normal school day.

Even though some of the participating school principals believed in an annual event for awarding pupils for commitment, hard work and excelling in their school work, most of the participating school principals discredited this strategy as ineffective as behaviour needs to be rewarded throughout the year whenever it occurs. Their opinion was that waiting for a ceremony at the end of the year makes the rewards meaningless. They instead encouraged teachers to use encouraging remarks when pupils finished their work, passed a test or showed remarkable behaviour. They also believed that giving small gifts, stars for achievement and even certain privileges worked best in encouraging a desired behaviour. In this regard Principal A remarked as follows: “*I can’t wait for the end of the year to reward good behaviour ... that’s extrinsic motivation. Pupils should consistently be encouraged within themselves to do exceptionally. Last year I accelerated two pupils who were doing very well in the third grade to fourth, they went through two streams in a year and that was great*”.

A crucial strategy which forms part of instructional leadership and which was considered by participants as the most important aspect of successful academic achievement is the safeguarding of the instructional time and the understanding of using instructional time exclusively for teaching and learning. Contemplating instructional time as the most important factor for achieving successful teaching and learning as the school's first and foremost goal, the responsibility of all the different stakeholders within the school environment to use time constructively was emphasised. In this regard Principal A explained as follows: *“Everyone was given twenty-four hours a day, and therefore I expect people to use the God-given asset of time appropriately. There is actually time for everything”*. The emphasis on the fact that all people receive an equal amount of time, namely twenty-four hours per day highlights the importance of prioritising and managing time carefully and meaningfully to include important activities such as lesson time.

Team-building exercises were identified to enhance a sound culture of teaching and learning in that these exercises allow teachers and the management to interact in a less formal manner. This was pointed out as being conducive to positive relationship formation and creative inputs for improved school success. The creating of positive relationships between staff and the school principal with a team-building approach provides the basis for teachers and the school management team to share their experiences and expectations and to appreciate each others' contributions and brilliance with regard to school progress. Such team-building initiatives encourage a shared sense of purpose and receptiveness for improved performance which Principal D explained as follows: *“If you show appreciation for your teachers, for the work they do, it becomes easy to correct them when they miss the mark”*.

In addition to team-building approaches for improved working relationships, participant school principals pointed out the value of being familiar with teachers' personal circumstances in order to understand their behaviour better. When the school principal knows each teacher well, it becomes easy to identify when a teacher is physically not well or is experiencing emotional challenges. By constantly assuring teachers that you as the school principal care about them and is willing to listen to their concerns and support them, and which then also develops into a practice-what-one-preaches approach, a relationship of trust is developed as the sound basis for a

healthy school environment and constructive school success. Principal H explained as follows: “*I take a father position to my teachers so that they can discuss their personal lives and get support from me. For example, if I know what’s going on with teacher so and so that day, I will know that nothing is happening in grade three today and if possible, find a way to relieve that teacher*”.

From the individual interviews with school principals five strategies that related to the school principal’s instructional leadership responsibilities were identified as crucial for learners’ positive academic achievement. These five strategies pertained to ensuring that lessons are made interesting by using visual teaching material and different teaching methods. It also pertained to concerted efforts to bring teachers, parents and pupils together by formally arranged open-house days and by awarding pupils consistently for commitment, hard work and excellence. Safeguarding instructional time by ensuring that sufficient time is provided for the learning process was determined as the most basic factor for teaching and learning success. This should be supported by constructive team-building exercises and by the school principal knowing and supporting staff members. All of these strategies were considered as vital to optimal learner achievement.

5.4 SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

An analysis and interpretation of data collected via focus group interviewing with the five teachers selected at each of the eight research sites, with reference to the interview schedule that guided each focus group interview (Annexure E), is discussed next.

5.4.1 The term *instructional leadership*

When asked to define the term *instructional leadership*, participant teachers defined the concept as the practical and relevant instructions given by leaders to their subordinates to guide the teaching- and learning-related activities of the organisation. In this regard Teacher B2 remarked that “*the instructions the school principal give are to enhance the smooth running of the school and ... act as guidelines for effective teaching*”.

Participant teachers emphasised that, even though they are qualified and experts on their respective subjects, they look up to their school principals and follow their school principals' example. Teachers therefore placed a high value on school principals' technical knowledge and competency and, with regard to teaching and learning, expected that "*the school principal should lead the way and see to it that everything is done according to what is expected*" (Teacher A1). Providing demonstrative leadership was therefore regarded by participant teachers as valuable instructional leadership practice. Participants considered the instructional-leadership-related tasks of the school principal as main leader of the teaching/learning situation as that of leading the staff, pupils and parents towards successful learning by pupils and managing the organisation and coordination of teaching and learning activities in order to realise the set school aim of successful academic achievement.

5.4.2 The instructional leadership role of the school principal

The responsibility considered most important with regard to the school principal's instructional leadership role was that of supervising and monitoring instruction. The importance of this supervising/monitoring role was motivated by the need to create uniform standards for working and fostering a spirit of commitment by all stakeholders in order to achieve the set goals of the school. Teacher D1 explained that "*it is within the school principal's jurisdiction to supervise if there is any teaching taking place in the classroom and that can be done most sufficiently through visiting classes while lessons are on-going*". Monitoring of teachers' work includes activities such as class supervision, checking of teaching-related official documents such as teacher's work scheme, and actual learning outcomes of pupils as is evident from pupils' exercise books and tests. To engage teachers to be dedicated and conscientious with their teaching endeavours indeed required that "*the school principal must be present at lessons to ascertain the extent to which teachers carry out their task of teaching*" (Teacher E3).

Participant teachers also pointed to the importance of school principals ensuring that sufficient teaching materials are provided on time in order for teaching to commence timeously and in an effective way. Teacher H4 emphasised the school principal's responsibility with regard to ensuring that teaching resources are available when needed by pointing out that "*the basic*

teaching materials like books and stationary should be at the school before schools open...the school principal should make sure of that". According to participant teachers the timely provision of teaching materials enhance favourable working conditions, reduces complaints from dissatisfied teachers, and encourages well-resourced teachers to focus to their teaching tasks.

A further role of the school principal as instructional leader pointed out by participant teachers was that of ensuring an orderly school environment. This was considered to be carried out by arranging for the development and implementation of a feasible policy on constructive discipline followed by teachers and pupils. In exercising proper discipline it was pointed out that school principals should be wise and exemplary because, if school principals do not follow the example, resentment may arise among teachers. Teacher F2 explained that the soundest way of maintaining proper discipline in schools is for school principals to pursue an approach of wholesome discipline themselves. Teacher F2 explained as follows: *"The school principal should set the example by being punctual himself, dress properly. Be polite to everyone...teachers will feel compelled to do likewise, otherwise the principal can't discipline others in those areas"*.

Participant teachers had agreement on the fact that it is the duty of the school principal to create a favourable environment for teachers in which to work. It was stated that school principals can create a favourable school environment by making sure that the aims and objectives of the school are clearly spelt out and understood by all stakeholders, namely the teachers, pupils and parents. It was also pointed out that school principals should consistently encourage all stakeholders to a collaborated pursuit of these well-understood aims and objectives. In this regard and in order to create a sense of mutual purpose, *"the school principal should not be unpredictable...we must all be made to feel we have the same goal...that's all!* (Teacher B2). Related to developing and sustaining a sense of shared purpose, was the need for the school principal to provide pupils and teachers with incentives to serve as intrinsic motivation for optimal performance. Incentives were described as anything from praise, recognition, gifts, to certain privileges that could motivate people to do their work with commitment. In this regard and to emphasise the importance of recognition for sustained performance, Teacher A5 explained that *"as teachers we don't expect much, but anything to show that we are appreciated...even a bar of chocolate would do"*.

As was evident from the individual interviews with school principals (par. 5.3.3), participant teachers also believed that school principals are responsible for protecting instructional time by facilitating the use of all possible lesson time for constructive teaching. For that reason the mere punctuality and presence of teachers within classrooms should be followed by productive teaching and for that to be encouraged, school principals should have a visual presence on the school premises. Teacher F1 emphasised that *“if school principals stay in the office, the people get used to that no one is watching, but if school principals make it their tendency to move around, people know they may be caught”*. The implication is that the school principal should be at school on time to contribute to a fostering of the organisational mindset of school that starts on time, of morning assembly that does not take longer than scheduled for, of pupils moving quickly and in an orderly way to their classrooms. It was pointed out that school principals are accountable for pupils not to be left unattended while teachers wrongfully enjoy an extended tea break. Participant teachers emphasised that school principals can encourage professional conduct from teachers without even having to talk to the teachers, but by school principals merely being a visible presence throughout the day.

In addition to encouraging teachers’ professional conduct, participant teachers emphasised that instructional leaders are also accountable for the progress of pupils in general and pupils’ progress from class to class. To realise this accountability for pupils’ overall well-being, school principals should coordinate and monitor the curriculum, monitor pupils’ progress by supervising the teaching efforts of teachers, monitor pupils’ activities as manifested in the work done by pupils in their exercise books and monitor pupils’ progress by discussing pupils’ results with teachers throughout the year. In this regard Teacher F1 emphasised that *“the school principal shouldn’t just stamp the teachers’ prep-book and tests, but seriously read the content to be able to give feedback and see to it that the right stuff is taught”*.

As an important facet of instructional leadership, participant teachers also expressed the need for school principals to protect teachers against parents acting unreasonably. Participants pointed out that school principals should avoid unnecessary confrontations between teachers and parents by addressing parents’ concerns and seeing to it that teaching is not disturbed. Teacher H5 emphasised the unreasonable behaviour of some of the parent corps insofar as that *“some parents*

expect too much from teachers". The same participant pointed to the possible harm done to teacher-pupil relationships by unreasonable parents and the need for instructional leaders to avoid such negative conditions to develop. In this regard Teacher H5 explained as follows: "*They (parents) don't tolerate a simple mistake that are done by teachers and that's where the school principal comes in, because if this is not done, it ruins the relationship between the pupils and teacher*".

From the above discussion on the instructional leadership strategies that teachers consider as important for ensuring successful teaching and learning, eight themes emerged. These themes pertained to the accountability of the school principal for supervising the teaching that actually takes place in classrooms and ensuring that applicable teaching materials are provided timeously. It also pertained to the importance of arranging for an environment in which proper discipline is maintained and the sustaining of a favourable environment that is conducive to teaching and learning through the clear and constant communication of school goals. It finally pertained to providing intrinsically-related incentives for pupils and teachers, protecting instructional time, monitoring pupils' progress and protecting teachers against unreasonable parents.

5.4.3 The impact of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning

Participant teachers revealed that when school principals effectively execute their instructional leadership roles, teachers are spontaneously motivated to do their work. The motivation for doing one's work is intrinsically inspired and relates to a sense of shared purpose that is created by the support from the school principal and the support from fellow colleagues who collaboratively work together as a team to realise shared aims and objectives. Teacher C3 explained the support from the school principal as intrinsically-related motivation as follows: "*What makes us work effectively in this school is that we are comfortable and know that the school principal is there to support us...there is no one carrying a whip behind us*". From this statement it is evident that when teachers get enough support from school principals the work of school principals is reduced as they do not have to spend a lot of time policing teachers.

In relation to school principal participants' opinions on the importance of providing appropriate teaching and learning resources timely (par. 5.3.3), participant teachers concurred that school principals who concern themselves with teachers' didactical needs such as sufficient and applicable teaching materials, create an orderly and contented environment in which teachers lack nothing. The timely provision of sufficient teaching materials helps teachers to be organised and do their work effectively. In contrast, the lack of appropriate didactical resources jeopardises the teaching and learning process which causes severe frustration for both teachers and pupils. In this regard Teacher B3 explained as follows: *"It is very frustrating to prepare a schedule for teaching and only to find that you can't follow it because the necessary equipments are not available and skipping certain topics often tampers with the sequence of the lessons"*.

In addition to sufficient and applicable didactical resources, participant teachers indicated instructional leadership guidance in terms of a proportionately balanced emphasis on the different teaching tasks as key to the improvement of pupils' academic results. Participant teachers were of the opinion that when instructional leadership is meaningfully provided, teachers proportionately allot adequate time to teaching, marking, giving feedback and assigning significant homework to pupils. Teacher D1 explained this motivation for an encompassing adherence to proper teaching by remarking that *"when you know the school principal may come in at any time to check what's going on in your class you always keep your marking up to date, not out of fear, but because he shows responsibility also"*.

Participant teachers also pointed out that effective instructional leadership involves ensuring that the school's aims and objectives are met effectively by making sure that teachers are always happy which enhances a high working morale. On the contrary, the neglect of actively monitoring what goes on in the classrooms negatively impacts on the culture of teaching and learning. In this regard and with reference to the fact that a chain is as strong as its weakest link, Teacher D5 explained that *"sustaining a culture of teaching and learning calls for a corporate effort of both the school principal and each individual teacher because once one disengages, the efforts of the others fail"*. It was therefore clear that improved or sustained school success in terms of learners' academic performance is contingent on the combined effort of each individual teacher and the school principal. In this regard participants emphasised the importance of school

principals' active involvement not only in the actual teaching, but also in the setting of benchmarks for testing and the grading of tests' validity and reliability for eventual positive academic performances by pupils at the end of the year. Teacher A5 explained that their pupils' tests "*go through subject panels, but must finally be endorsed by the school principal to ensure that the quality is acceptable*".

It was clear that when the instructional leadership duties of school principals are effectively carried out, teachers are spontaneously motivated to do their work and are more organised in their teaching, the aims and objectives of the school are clear to articulate into increased accomplishments, and learner outcomes are improved as manifestation of school principals' active executive of their instructional leadership responsibilities.

5.4.4 Factors within the school that impede a sound culture of teaching and learning

In relation to what was said in par. 5.3.5 and par. 5.4.5 on the importance of incentives to serve as intrinsic motivation, participant teachers identified a lack of extrinsic incentives as an important factor that impedes a sound culture of teaching and learning at a school. Teachers explained that the task of teaching is a mammoth task and that they believe that if extrinsic incentives were introduced they would be encouraged to work hard despite the hardships they face. With regard to financial incentives, Teacher B1 acclaimed that "*the incentives in private schools make them better than us in public schools*". The lack of financial incentives affect the performance of teachers in public schools because they have to cope financially in the same ailing economy as teachers in private schools who "*get topsalaries, free housing; others even get free electricity and water*" (Teacher B4).

Participant teachers also identified ineffective methods for collecting school fees as a factor that interferes with progressive teaching. It was explained that the collection of school fees which were usually not managed in an adequate manner resulted in a stalling of the process at the end of the term when teachers administer tests and exams. Very often, and as a last resort to balance the school budget, school management send learners home by the end of the school term to arrange for the collection of outstanding school fees. Apart from the emotional effect on the child who is

sent home, this unfortunate situation infringes on the teachers' time to assist pupils with revision in order for them to succeed in their academic work. Teacher E1 pointed out that *“when you have of the class sent home at a time you are preparing for exams, you get frustrated because you know how crucial that time is for revision, a final mastering of important content”*.

Participant teachers identified poor interpersonal relations among members of staff as an internal impediment to the culture of teaching and learning. They pointed out, however, that such differences are usually non-professional in nature and should be treated and ended by the school principal as instructional leader immediately and in an effective way. In this regard participants were in agreement that *“interpersonal differences are usually non-professional, it's a waste of time to pay attention to”* (Teacher E3). In order, however, to avoid an unfortunate escalation of negative relationships, such non-professional interpersonal differences should be *“nipped in the bud”* (Teacher E3) to ensure that a positive culture of teaching and learning is sustained. In this regard it was determined that teachers need guidance to differentiate between professional and non-professional matters at school, as a difference of opinion with regard to professional matters and the treating of such differences in a professional way, contribute to improved practice.

What was pointed out, however, was that school principals sometimes unintentionally promote personal differences amongst staff when *“they (school principals) make some teachers feel less valued than their colleagues, a behaviour which causes some teachers to withdraw their contributions in staff meetings”* (Teacher H3). In this regard it was pointed out that some school principals tend to exaggerate minor mistakes by some teachers because *“sometimes a teacher makes a simple mistake and the school principal dwells on that forever, then it becomes a personal thing”* (Teacher H3) with the victimised teacher tending to increasingly withdraw from professional debate. Participants emphasised that school principals who openly discriminate between teachers causes mistrust, instability and strife amongst teachers.

With regard to the school as a professional organisation arrangement that is based on the professional training and expert knowledge of teachers as professionals, decisions which affect the teachers and their work should be taken democratically. It was evident from the focus group discussions however that, teachers are often not consulted when important decisions are made.

Participant teachers emphasised the unfair challenge of implementing changes or initiatives of which the rationale is not clear to them. Some of the discrepancies in decision making pointed out by participant teachers included cases where “*as a teacher one is allocated to a class and out of the blue is transferred to another within the same year and no explanation is given*” (Teacher A1). In this regard participants were in agreement that the Swazi expression ‘*umjaj’akaphikiswa*’ (the judge’s decision is final) caused frustration and discomfort because “*as adults we need to be involved in decisions taken, especially if they (decision-making) involve what we have to do*” (Teacher A1).

An important aspect obstructing a sound culture of teaching and learning and in relation to decision-taking is the omission of involving teachers in decisions on the admission of pupils into the first grade or even all the other grades. Not involving teachers in decisions on the admission of pupils, poses challenges for the teachers that pertain to admitting pupils who are under age, or who have not passed school-readiness tests. This causes challenges for the class teacher and the school “*as these pupils often don’t cope in the classroom*” (Teacher H4). Another problem of not involving teachers in decisions on pupil admissions is that the number of admissions usually exceeds school capacity. This results in large class sizes, poor class management and insufficient teaching and learning resources which all impact negatively on effective teaching and successful learning.

A final factor raised by participant teachers as a hindrance to the culture of teaching and learning related to the language of teaching and learning. Even though both English and SiSwati are recognised as official languages in Swaziland, English as a world language has become the main language of instruction. This enables a rich curriculum as teachers use materials that are produced locally as well as internationally. However, since the emphasis on promoting the vernacular as a heritage for every child, the speaking of English is discouraged by the promoters of the SiSwati language. This however is challenging in terms of teaching and learning resources as most materials are written in English. But due to the advocacy for mother tongue instruction, Teacher C2 pointed out that “*children can no longer express themselves in English because the effort to make them communicate in English is defeated by the current argument for SiSwati instruction*”.

Participants pointed out however that the language debate “*is a political argument*” (Teacher C3) which is not necessarily focused on what is best for the pupils.

5.4.5 Instructional leadership strategies to enhance the academic performance of pupils

Among the most important strategies to promote effective learning and achieving excellent learner outcomes, is the strategy of fully engaging pupils in their school work by consistently giving learners adequate and constructive work to do in the class and at home. Participant teachers revealed that this strategy works well because children develop a sense of responsibility especially when they are given homework that relates to finding solutions on their own and taking initiative to solicit help from others outside class. Giving pupils adequate class work and homework, provides them with the opportunity to apply their gained knowledge and skills. Participants agreed on the fact that skills are developed with ample practice and for that reason Teacher C2 proclaimed that at their school they “*even give holiday activities*”.

Regardless of the advocacy for mother-tongue instruction (par. 5.4.4) and due to the status of English as the language of the business world, participant teachers explained that encouraging pupils to use English as a medium of communication improves pupils’ performance in all their subjects and form the basis for equipping them for a wider variety of job opportunities after school. Pupils are encouraged to write essays and do presentations in English which assists with a general comprehension of the written and spoken language. Teacher E3 explained that “*for teaching to be effective the children are encouraged to speak in English, they are not punished for using vernacular, but are encouraged to rather stick to English*”. She pointed out however that “*the use of SiSwati during SiSwati periods excites pupils and makes the school day interesting*”.

Participants emphasised the value of briefing the next year’s teacher on the circumstances of each individual learner. This was considered a very valuable strategy to help the next teacher to understand the new pupils and be in a position to take care of pupils with special challenges. Contemplating the significant influence of consistency with the guiding of learners throughout their school life as is done by dedicated teachers, Teacher B5 explained as follows: “*At the*

beginning of the year I make sure I hand over my pupils to the next teacher by discussing special challenges and strengths where I feel necessary. I also follow up on their progress as if they were my own children”.

Another strategy that is crucial for teaching and learning success is the strategy of employing staff according to their strengths. In this regard participant teachers emphasised the importance of recognising personal strengths when allocating teachers to their specific classes. Personal strengths were pointed out to relate to subject specialisation or grade specialisation. Participants emphasized the importance of allocating teachers appropriately and emphasised that applicable allocations result in each teacher embracing a collaborative sense of purpose with each individual member of staff contributing uniquely to the team approach of successful teaching and learning. Teacher F2 explained the constructive utilisation of each teacher’s distinct competencies at their school as follows: *“The allocation of teachers here is done using their personal strengths; we know the people who are foundation layers, the ones with special abilities for mid classes and then those who are finishers in the higher and exit grades, and we appreciate that”.*

Mentoring was considered an important strategy to sustain performances and achievements. Participant teachers explained the practice of mentoring at their school as the guiding and coaching of new teachers who join their schools whether these newcomers are fresh from college or from other schools. Mentoring was motivated by the need to ensure continuity with regard to the way in which things are done at the specific school so as to sustain a positive culture of teaching and learning. Participants pointed out, however, that in order for mentoring to be successful, newcomer teachers should be willing to learn or work with the team they are assigned to work with.

As an all-inclusive strategy for improving the culture of teaching and learning and enhancing the academic performance of pupils, participant teachers identified the value of constructive team-building exercises. It was pointed out that if these team-building efforts were well organised and teachers were made aware that they are appreciated as important assets of the school, the working morale of all the teachers are improved. Team-building exercises such as organised workshops that focus on specific aspects for the sake of professional development, games with colleagues

from other schools, and an annual year-end staff function were perceived as examples of positive team-building endeavours. In this regard Teacher A1 disclosed as follows: *“Like children expecting sweets from a father, we always look forward to the time at the end of the year whereby the school treats us to a ‘braai’ or lunch in appreciation of the work we have done...like last year we were taken to the Royal Swazi Spa; we still thrive on that splendid memory...”*.

Participant teachers emphasised however that, although the rewarding of pupils and teachers should be an essential strategy for the development and sustaining of a positive culture of teaching and learning, this does not have to be an explicit, once-off strategy each year. They pointed out that even though some schools have organised ceremonies like the annual prize-giving day, most schools use more subtle incentives such as continuous praise in the form of awarding credits, merits and stars on a regular basis. They also mentioned accelerating pupils within the same class by giving them advanced activities within the same grade, while others may after consideration be accelerated to the following grade within the same year. Participant teachers emphasised that when teachers show appreciation for pupils’ efforts, pupils are likely to maintain those performances. Within the context of the primary school environment and by teaching the lower grades, Teacher G4 explained her way of motivating her pupils as follows: *“I personally like to hug my pupils and tell them ‘I’m proud of you’”*.

As a strategy to strengthen their efforts in the teaching of all subjects and by learning from each other, participants pointed out that they make use of subject panels where the heads of departments are assigned the responsibility of assisting management and monitoring the teaching of their subjects through organising resources, arranging workshops for teachers on important specialty areas and providing guidelines for evaluation in their different subjects. Teacher D3 explained that *“when a teacher encounters problems in teaching a certain concept, the subject panel is there to provide assistance; the important thing is to learn from one another”*.

Personal development was considered an important exercise that enhances a sound culture of teaching and learning. Participants pointed out that an effective teacher is one who remains a life-long learner. School principals who encourage and support their teachers in developing themselves are likely to experience improvement in teaching and learning endeavours. Participant

teachers showed great appreciation for programmes that not only develop their teaching competencies, but that also focus on developing teachers holistically in order to improve their general well-being. Participant H5 declared as follows: *“I am grateful that our principal is very open and supports us when we pursue our studies or other kinds of training. He also shows great interest in our personal lives generally because we are not just teachers, but also parents and have diverse challenges”*.

It was evident that several strategies when put in place, improved teaching and learning with the eventual outcome of improved academic performance by pupils. It was also clear that these strategies can only be effective when school principals as the executive instructional leaders of their schools worked closely with the teachers and pupils of their schools.

5.5 SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH THE STUDY OF OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

With regard to the studying of relevant documents at the different research sites that pertained to the instructional leadership role of the school principal, data were collected which was interpreted and information analysed to lead to the findings which are discussed next.

5.5.1 Schemes of work

Schemes of work at the different research sites were not all up-to-date at the time of the investigation. It was explained that there was a programme that the Ministry of Education was running through the in-service department which required teachers to re-do their scheming to implement the objectives of the workshops. However, most schools were still discussing logistics around implementing that instruction.

5.5.2 Daily preparation books

The daily preparation books which the researcher checked at the eight research sites were all up-to-date. The preparation books were all presentable and marked or signed by either the school

principal or deputy school principal. This showed that school principals took the checking and signing of teachers' preparation books seriously and teachers showed great commitment by submitting their preparation books at the specified intervals as agreed by each school. This further implied that teaching and learning at the different research sites were carried out in a planned and structured way which transpired as a prerequisite for eventual success.

5.5.3 Test record books

At the different research sites class teachers kept test record books in which pupils' tests and other forms of formative assessment such as class and home work assignments were recorded. At some of the investigated schools at least one test was recorded for each month whereas at other schools more than one test was recorded. This served as evidence of the fact that for a school to achieve high academic results as is eventually measured by year-end summative evaluation, pupils should be engaged in vigorous and continuous formative testing in order to determine deficiencies that need to be addressed, or to confirm successes which served as motivation for further success.

5.5.4 Observation of teaching- and learning-related behaviour

Learners at the different research sites were not loitering during class time. Pupils greeted politely and offered assistance to the researcher on arrival at the research site. All of the visited schools had adequate classrooms. Some of the visited schools had special classrooms such as Home Economics classrooms and Agriculture departments, and others had fully furnished libraries and computer laboratories. Some of the researched schools had class libraries while others had their libraries as part of the staff room.

What was evident from an observation of the different research sites, and in relation to sustaining a positive culture of teaching and learning, the school principals played a major role in the provision of applicable didactical resources and the maintaining of buildings and school grounds. What was also evident, was the success with which discipline for both teachers and pupils was instilled at the different researched schools in order to arrange for an orderly environment in

which teaching and learning successfully took place. Teachers at the different research sites showed respect for their school principals and often referred to their school principals as “*Umphatsi*” (Boss). Teachers at the different researched schools were dedicated and conscientious due to intrinsic motivation that related to their school principals’ encouragement to be good teachers. The outcome was a spirit of unity in their pursuit of a shared sense of purpose towards optimal learner achievement which positively influenced the results of these schools’ grade 7 standardised examination results insofar as that these schools were successful in their strive towards an eventually hundred percent pass rate for their grade 7 learners.

5.6 A COMPREHENSIVE REFLECTION ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL’S INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE ON LEARNERS’ ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

From the empirical investigation, and in retrospect, some major findings were determined with regard to the nature of the instructional leadership role of school principals and the effect thereof on learners’ academic performance.

5.6.1 The term *instructional leadership*

It was evident that *instructional leadership* was understood by school principals as the specific roles they carried out to provide leadership to all participants with regard to all teaching activities taking place throughout each day. Participants included teachers, pupils and parents in a mutual effort towards successful learning. In this regard school principals understood their instructional leadership responsibilities as pertaining to the action of supervising teaching and learning while encouraging a collective effort by teachers, pupils and their parents towards teaching and learning in order to achieve the ultimately set goal of the school which related to satisfactory academic achievement by learners.

Similarly, teachers understood instructional leadership as the leadership and support provided by their school principals for realising of the school’s core activity, namely effective teaching and successful learning. The leadership and support by the instructional leader was understood to

manifest through clearly communicating the school goals and objectives to teachers, pupils and parents in order to ensure that all stakeholders are acquainted with what is expected and how expectations are to be realised in terms of satisfactory learner achievements.

5.6.2 The instructional leadership role of the school principal

School principal participants were in agreement on the fact that the role of the school principal as instructional leader is that of monitoring the teacher's task of teaching and pupil's task of learning. For that reason the school principal's task of supervision and support to teachers in their teaching endeavours was considered as crucial to instructional leadership. This was understood to include providing the necessary didactical material and equipment and taking a keen interest in each teacher's personal well-being. A major task of the instructional leader was considered to be the protection of the instructional time and a consistent emphasis of time-on-task as inevitable to achieving high learner outcomes.

On a similar note, teachers concurred with instructional leadership as pertaining to the supervision and monitoring of teaching and assessment. Teachers also agreed that as instructional leaders, school principals should lead the teaching activities, supervise subordinates, and ensure that official books are used as per the prescription of the Swaziland Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in order to achieve the aims of the school. Instructional leadership also entailed a demonstration of expected behaviour by the school principal with regard to using time productively, adhering to dress-code policy and ensuring constructive discipline that included teachers, pupils and parents.

5.6.3 The impact of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning

School principal participants mentioned the positive relation between executing their tasks and responsibilities effectively and the improvement of teacher morale and commitment towards their teaching responsibilities. This was believed to in turn improve pupil engagement in their work. The positive relationships between teachers and the school management team and between teachers and pupils, which all depicted a healthy school climate, enhanced the realisation of the

school's ultimate goal of optimal learning to be manifested in satisfactory pupil achievement. Participant teachers concurred with the notion of effective instructional leadership that motivates teachers to work hard and that enhances collegiality and cooperation among teachers. Teachers acknowledged that the support they got from their school principals as instructional leaders made teaching a joy and inspired them to stay engaged in their teaching task and to cover the complete curriculum appropriately within the specified time. The adequate time allocated to teaching and learning was valued as constructive for improving school results in terms of learners' academic achievements. The proper execution of the instructional leadership role by the school principal created a favourable climate for teaching and learning of which the results were effective teaching and successful learning which eventually manifested in satisfactory academic achievement in standardised assessment.

5.6.4 Factors within the school that impede a sound culture of teaching and learning

Participant school principals agreed on poor time management as a major impediment to developing and sustaining a positive culture of teaching and learning. School principals further felt that the lack of national policies to direct and support individual schools with the formulating of their tailor-made policies were counterproductive to schools' efforts of pursuing good practice. A further factor that impeded the maintaining of a sound culture of teaching and learning was the prevalence of unresolved personal differences between members of staff. The lack of sufficient didactical resources was considered to be a serious impediment to effective teaching and learning and had to be addressed at all cost.

Participant teachers identified impediments as pertaining to a lack of incentives for teachers to ensure that they remain motivated for the teaching profession. Inadequate strategies to collect school fees effectively which had an impact on instruction time, incompetency to manage interpersonal differences amongst staff efficiently and a lack of involving teachers as professionals in school decision-making were also identified as main factors hampering the sustaining of a positive culture of teaching and learning. Teachers were also concerned about overcrowded classrooms with insufficient didactical resources due to improper learner admission policies. Discrepancy amongst staff with regard to the language of teaching and learning and

uncertainty whether to promote the use of English or SiSwati were also identified as a major factor that hampered optimal learner achievement.

5.6 5 Instructional leadership strategies to enhance the academic performance of pupils

In summary, participant school principals identified seven strategies which they believed to be important with regard to enhancing pupils' academic performances. These strategies pertained to encouraging teachers to use tangible teaching materials and different teaching methods in order to present learning content interestingly and realistically while catering for all learners, namely visual, auditory and tactile learners. By making use of open-house events where parents, teachers and pupils meet constructively, common ground is reached with regard to the shared aim of satisfactory pupil achievement. By alerting teachers to the use of encouraging remarks, small gifts, stars in books or certain privileges, desired behaviour is instilled which motivates learners to excel in their learning endeavours. Team-building exercises for teachers and promoting an open-door approach which encourage teachers to approach the office of the school principal with regard to any matter of concern pertaining to either their teaching task or their personal lives which may interfere with their teaching responsibilities, enhance and improve performance. The pursuing of all of these strategies contributed to improved teaching and learning and enhanced learner performance.

With regard to participant teachers' opinions on constructive strategies for the improvement of pupils' academic performance, assigning meaningful and adequate class and homework tasks was considered good practising ground for mastering of required knowledge, skills and behaviour needed for progression. Encouraging the use of English as the language of teaching and learning was considered to prepare learners adequately for eventual work-related adult life. Strategies, such as arranging for a proper handover of pupils to the next teacher when moving to the next grade, especially when those pupils have special challenges, and allocating teachers appropriately to the different classes according to teachers' personal strengths and areas of specialties, improved sufficiency and continuity. Providing incentives to teachers in the form of salary top-ups and enjoyable year-end functions served as meaningful extrinsic motivators and as encouragement to teachers to persevere with their teaching responsibilities. Mentoring newcomer

members of staff and using subject panels to strengthen subject-related teaching and assessment and providing continuous professional development opportunities to staff, ensured an environment that is conducive to optimal learner success.

5.7 CONCLUSION

From the data collected through focus group and individual interviews, through observation of behaviour on the school premises, and through studying official documents at each research site pertaining to arranging for the specific culture of teaching and learning prevailing at the specific school, it was clear that the instructional leadership role of the school principal was acclaimed as indeed extremely influential in the teaching and learning process. It was clear that without proper execution of the school principal's instructional leadership role it would be highly unlikely for a school to reach optimal success in achieving academic success for its pupils. It was also evident that school principals used various strategies that were all constructive and functional to inculcate a sense of responsibility among both teachers and pupils in order to enhance academic success at the different research sites. Of all the strategies identified as crucial to an enhancement of learners' academic performance, the major ones related to the engagement of pupils in their school work by means of well-motivated staff, employing staff according to their strengths, and focusing on a constant and concerted effort to arrange for constructive team-building exercises amongst staff.

The next and final chapter of this study on the relationship between the school principal's instructional leadership role and the academic performance of pupils presents a summary of the major findings of the study followed by a deduction of conclusions and the posing of recommendations for improved practice.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

With this study it was confirmed that a sound culture of teaching and learning as arranged by means of the school principal's instructional leadership responsibilities contributed to learners' optimal development in terms of academic performance. Various nuances of instructional leadership tasks were elicited and it became clear that although school principals and teachers all have various interpretations of the "what" and "how" of instructional leadership contributions to pupils' academic performance, they all agreed that the school principal's instructional leadership task is crucial for setting the stage for optimal development in terms of academic performance. With this study useful strategies were identified that are recommended for improved practices in instructional leadership.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The summary and conclusions are guided by the aims and sub-aims of this study as set out in paragraph 1.3. As explained in paragraph 1.3, these aims were to

- determine the instructional leadership role of the school principal;
- investigate the influence of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning;
- determine the factors that impede a sound culture of teaching and learning; and
- develop instructional leadership strategies for school principals that are focused on the enhancement of pupils' academic performance.

With the ensuing paragraphs a realisation of these aims are succinctly discussed. As explained in paragraph 1.7, the study was divided into six chapters with all six chapters linked by the mutual aim of finding and discussing answers to the postulated research question.

In Chapter 1 an orientation to the study was provided. The discussion entailed a brief overview of issues that concern high standards in education which put school principals as instructional leaders in the spotlight concerning their performance and influence on the culture of teaching and learning. In spite of different challenges such as economic, political and socio-economic challenges, some schools strived to maintain high academic achievements for their pupils (par. 1.1). These achievements were positively influenced by school principals who know what their instructional leadership responsibilities comprised and who dedicatedly performed these responsibilities for the sake of optimal pupil performance (par. 1.1). A need to determine, within context, the major instructional leadership strategies employed by school principals to enhance the academic performance of pupils contributed to what is universally considered as best practice with regard to the relationship between instructional leadership and learners' academic development.

Chapter 2 and 3 comprised literature reviews. With Chapter 2 the nature of the school principal's instructional leadership role and its influence on learners' academic performance was explained. The qualities of effective instructional leaders were determined to mainly pertain to the school principal's ability to positively appraise staff, and to motivate and provide constructive feedback (par. 2.3). The ability of the instructional leader to develop a positive school climate and a constructive culture of teaching and learning through effectively employing more democratic methods and providing opportunities for staff's professional development allow for participative decision making and collegiality. Managing the provisioning of professional and adequate didactical resources enhances teaching and learning possibilities (paragraph 2.3). Factors that impede a sound culture of teaching and learning relate mainly to poor leadership styles (par. 2.6.1), ineffective conflict management strategies (2.6.2), non-participative decision making (2.6.3), and poor communication with educators, parents, pupils and the wider community (2.6.4). Additionally, it would be difficult for a school to achieve its goals without recruiting dedicated educators who are focused on meeting the needs of the school and realising school goals aligned to the school' vision and mission statement. Dedicated and committed educators are crucial to learner performance and instructional leaders should therefore enhance the culture of the school through mentoring to ensure high retention of staff. Without arranging for staff

development which maintains the level of professionalism, optimal academic outcomes will be hampered (par.2.6.5).

With Chapter 3 the focus was on the concept and scope of learners' academic performance. Major factors that influence academic performance relate to the extent to which pupils are guided to perform optimally in their academic work and which is then manifested in good performance in standardised tests and agreed standards for passing (par. 3.2). Academic performance is also influenced by the framework used for international benchmarking in terms of how different pupils fare in different countries, different education systems and different schools. Learners' academic performance is encouraged by the type of evaluation which a school or country generally uses, namely subjective or objective formative and summative assessment (par. 3.2). Of all the pertinent activities within the school that motivate a sound culture of teaching and learning, the major one pertains to school principals' technical competence in terms of being hands-on with regard to teaching skills in order to provide a positive example for teachers to follow (par. 3.6). Related activities include the checking of teachers' schemes of work and daily preparation books to ensure that proper preparation is conscientiously done for constructive teaching to take place so as to cover the curriculum thoroughly (par. 3.6.2). School principals' constant checking of pupils' exercise books and test records is an inevitable instructional leadership task to ascertain and monitor if work done by teachers and learners is satisfactory in terms of quality, quantity and general appearance, and if the quality of assessment with follow-up initiatives ensure the reaching of predetermined learning outcomes (par. 3.6.3; par. 3.6.4).

Chapter 4 focused on the research methodology used with this study on the relationship between the school principal's instructional leadership role and learners' academic performance. The qualitative approach pertaining to individual and focus group interviewing with purposefully selected participants, complimented by documented study and the observation of school culture-related aspects, contributed to the collection of relevant data in order to answer the formulated research questions satisfactorily (par. 4.3). The selected research design was found suitable for the conducted study due to the relevancy of data that were collected, analysed and interpreted.

With Chapter 5 the research findings from the empirical investigation were stated. According to school principals' interpretation, the concept *instructional leadership* pertained to the superior position of providing assistance to subordinates, namely teachers, on how to carry out their teaching obligations (par. 5.3.1). Teachers interpreted instructional leadership as majorly pertaining to providing demonstrative leadership in addition to providing instructions and guidelines for good practice and for ensuring the smooth running of the school in general (par. 5.4.1). In this regard school principals understood their instructional leadership role as largely pertaining to supervising, guiding, monitoring, and ensuring the provision of essential teaching and learning resources. A high premium was placed on instructional leaders' leading by example and on their full support for staff in all matters which enhanced a climate of constructive discipline for optimal functioning. The instructional leader's practice-what-one-preaches approach was emphasised as crucial for staff and learners motivation and for a confirmation of best practice intentions (par. 5.3.2). Teachers emphasised the accountability of the school principal for supervising the teaching that actually takes place in classrooms and for ensuring that applicable teaching materials are provided on time. Teachers also emphasised the importance of arranging for an environment in which proper discipline is maintained and in which conditions are favourable for teaching and learning through clear and constant communication of school goals. Other factors that teachers pointed out as important related to providing intrinsic incentives for pupils and teachers, the protection of instructional time, the monitoring of pupils' progress and the protection of teachers against unreasonable parents (par. 5.4.2).

According to school principals, instructional leadership roles related to supervision and monitoring with a constant emphasis on the respect for lesson time which improves and enhances a positive working climate and increases a commitment to teaching and learning with an intensified focus on the end result of improved learner performance (par. 5.3.3). Teachers maintained that when instructional leadership duties of school principals are effectively practiced, spontaneous motivation is stimulated for teachers to do their work. Teachers are then motivated to pay special attention to the organisation of their teaching. When the aims and objectives of the school are clearly communicated, accomplishment is increased in that learner outcomes are improved as manifestation of school principals' active and effective execution of their instructional leadership responsibilities (par. 5.4.3). With regard to factors that impede the

sustaining of a positive culture of teaching and learning, school principals stressed poor time management, a lack of alignment of individual school policies and policies on national level, personal differences among staff that are not dealt with in a mature way, and the constraint of insufficient financial resources to ensure proper teaching and learning as main impediments (par. 5.4.4). Teachers considered a lack of extrinsic motivation for teachers in the form of accommodation and topped-up salaries as a factor that hinders committed dedication. Contextual school functioning related factors such as ineffective methods for school fees collection which constrained formal instruction time and ineffective strategies for dealing with interpersonal differences between teachers were experienced as frustrating, thus hampering optimal teaching. Incidents of discriminating practices by instructional leaders such as victimisation and favouritism, and the use of autocratic approaches with regard to class allocations, the admissions of new pupils, and decisions on English as language of teaching and learning manifested as major impediments to the sustainment of a positive culture of teaching and learning (par. 5.4.4).

Instructional leadership strategies to ensure optimal performance related mainly to initiatives to ensure that lessons are interesting through the use of visual aids and integrated teaching methods. School principals rated the arranging of opportunities for teachers to meet formally with parents and pupils to discuss pupil's progress and the safe-guarding of instructional time as important factors contributing to enhanced learner performance. Opportunities for constructive team-building exercises amongst staff, and instructional leaders' total commitment to support their staff professionally and emotionally are considered as main factors that are present at well-performing schools (par. 5.3.5). Teachers' perceptions of main instructional leadership strategies for optimal learner performance included a constant encouragement of staff to ensure that pupils are fully engaged in their schoolwork through consistent, adequate and constructive work in the classroom and at home. Teachers also believed that English as the language of instruction should result in broader learning as it enabled access to a wide range of instructional materials. A valuable instructional leadership strategy for optimal learner performance pertains to arranging for the briefing of the following year's teacher about the circumstances of individual pupils and the optimal employing of staff within different grade levels according to staff's subject specialisation and areas of expertise. Teachers also rated as very important instructional leadership strategies the mentoring of new members of staff for effective integration into the

specific school environment and constructive team-building exercises to foster and maintain a sound culture of teaching and learning. Extrinsic motivation through verbal praise and tangible rewards in the form of certificates and medals of recognition served as subtle incentives for perseverance. Promoting collegiality and mutual staff support through the use of subject panels enabled teachers to improve their execution of teaching responsibilities and leadership skills. Teachers placed a high premium on the organising of formal meetings that are focused on the professional development of teachers, and the encouraging of teachers to pursue further studies for the sake of enhanced productivity (par. 5.4.5).

6.3 CONCLUSIONS FROM THE STUDY

From the literature study findings and findings from the empirical investigation it is clear that school principals as instructional leaders are the most influential figures who make all the difference in the academic performance of pupils. Poor instructional leadership by school principals serve as the major impediment to a sound culture of teaching and learning. The main conclusions deduced from this study on the relationship between the school principal's instructional leadership role and the academic performance of pupils within the specific context of Swaziland primary schools are discussed next.

- **The essence of instructional leadership by the school principal** represents the way in which guidance and supervision in teaching of the curriculum to learners is provided to teachers (par. 5.4.1). This manifested in creating and communicating a clear vision for teaching and learning activities, coordinating curriculum implementation, supervising the instructional program, and monitoring the selection of appropriate evaluation processes and procedures.
- **The instructional leadership function of supervision of teaching and learning** pertains to the school principal encouraging strong professional relationships amongst all stakeholders. Through proper supervision school principals ensure that teachers carry out their education-related task while pupils use the opportunities offered to them optimally to achieve academic success (par. 5.3.2; par. 5.4.3).

- **The function of monitoring teaching and learning** implies that school principals ascertain the correlation between what is recorded and what actually takes place in the class room. This is done by checking official documents such as teachers' daily preparation books and schemes of work, and pupils' exercise-books in which their class work and tests are reflected (par. 3.5).
- **To arrange for collaborative decision making** school principals as instructional managers are democratic in their involvement of teachers and parents in decision-making initiatives. This ensures constructive support for the attainment of optimal academic performances by learners and teacher satisfaction to be involved in matters that concern them. Collaborative decision making also reduces conflict which occurs when decisions are made in an authoritarian fashion and it promotes smooth change and the development of a meaningful policy on constructive discipline (par. 2.2; par. 2.4.3; par. 5.4.4).
- **Resource provisioning as an instructional leadership function** entails the provision of all basic teaching and learning materials from the very beginning of the year so as to ensure focused teaching and successful learning (par. 5.4.2). Late payment of fees by parents and the Department of Education as an infringement on resource provision are counteracted by focusing on durable and long-lasting teaching materials and by fostering a culture among teachers and learners of taking care of existing resources.
- **Time management as a crucial instructional leadership function** entails the constant encouraging of an optimal use of time for improved learner performance (par. 2.2). School principals as instructional leaders emphasise punctuality by being exemplary and by monitoring and supervising classroom teaching to ensure a meticulous application of the school time table (par. 5.3.3). Diligent supervision of time also pertains to checking teachers' daily teaching plans and scheme books and pupils' exercise books, test records and homework activities to ascertain the adequacy and equivalency of time on task (par.5.3.4).
- **Lesson quality as an instructional leadership function** includes responsibilities with regard to quantity in terms of arranging for a variety of subject and grading choices, and quality with regard to learner experiences in every lesson (par. 3.3; par. 5.3.5). Successful schools offer their pupils a variety of subjects to choose from, offer different

tests and grading standards, and promote individual effort and self-selection of pupils by ability (par. 3.3). Instructional leaders of successful schools encourage their teachers to make lessons interesting through the use of different methodologies and the use of visual materials so as to cater for all learners according to their different learning styles namely the visual, auditory and spatial learners (par. 5.3.5). Lesson quality is also improved by positive cooperation between teachers, parents and pupils and by well-developed assessment programmes, and the setting of benchmarks for passing. Lesson quality is finally enhanced by an instilling of high academic standards in the overall teaching and assessment of individual subjects through the use of teachers' specialties which are enhanced by the formation of subject panels.

- **Instructional leadership responsibilities pertaining to the development of new policies** is based on the notion that successful schools develop internal policies that are focused on enhancing high academic standards (par. 3.2). Policies such as the utilisation of school holiday time for additional instruction in order to cover the syllabus more thoroughly is implemented for improved learner performance (par. 5.3.4). The same applies to pursuing the internal policy of a raised pass mark in order to secure learners' success with the Swaziland Primary Certificate (SPC) (par. 5.4.4) and the need for a policy to guide the collection and payment of school fees in order to arrange for continuous instruction throughout the year without having to send pupils home for collection of school fees. The lack of national policies to back all internal school policies pose challenges, however, which often result in schools failing to enforce their constructive internal policies sufficiently.
- **The general promotion of a positive culture of teaching and learning** include aspects like participatory decision making; encouraging staff to assume appropriate leadership roles; publicly recognising staff for organisational and educational achievements; encouraging teamwork to develop confidence and competence; involving teachers in a realistic and balanced manner with regard to their teaching tasks; and optimally providing resources and professional development within the school's specific context (par. 2.3; par 5.4.3). School principals as instructional leaders promote a positive culture of teaching and learning by utilising all possible means to ensure their staff's well-being in terms of staff feeling appreciated, and having a sense of being professionally and

academically above average due to dedication which is then reflected in significant learner performance (par. 5.3.5; par 5.4.3).

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

With consideration of the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made to make school principals aware of the important role they fulfil as instructional leaders of their schools' teaching and learning programme. In order to ensure that the school's core function, namely that of teaching and learning is carried out effectively, school principals, through their role of being an effective instructional leader, develop a positive culture of teaching and learning as a crucial condition for optimal academic performance by pupils.

For school principals to constructively carry out their instructional leadership tasks they must:

- Clearly define the school's mission and communicate to teachers their responsibilities (par. 2.1)
- Manage the curriculum and instruction by monitoring pupils' academic progress and reviewing tests results with teachers (par. 5.3.2)
- Supervise teaching by regularly observing teaching and providing feedback (par. 5.3.2; par 5.4.2)
- Promote a positive teaching climate by staying focused on time-on-task and by building a coordinated instructional programme of collaborative input by all stakeholders (par. 5.4.2)
- Develop and sustain a positive culture of teaching and learning by promoting staff development through organising staff meetings, workshops, and in-service training for teachers (par. 5.4.2)
- Provide resources by timely and efficiently securing the needed instructional resources for teachers and pupils (par. 5.4.2)

For school principals as instructional leaders to positively impact on the culture of teaching and learning at their schools they must:

- Utilise participative decision making (par. 2.2; par. 5.4.3)
- Encourage all staff to assume appropriate leadership roles such as leading subject panels and/or sports departments, however taking caution not to jeopardise instructional time by these additional responsibilities (par. 2.2; par. 5.4.3)
- Publicly recognise staff for both organisational and educational achievements (par. 2.2; par. 5.3.3)
- Encourage staff to work cooperatively to enhance both confidence and competence (par. 2.2; 5.3.3)
- Provide as many teaching resources and professional development opportunities as are possible within the school's specific context (par. 2.2; par 5.4.3)
- Deal with conflict constructively and prevent conflict to spread beyond control to such an extent that the goals of the school are affected (par. 2.2; par. 5.4.4)

To counteract factors that impede the culture of teaching and learning, the school principal as instructional leader must:

- Avoid using an autocratic leadership style and instead focus on being democratic to make staff feel valued and to raise their morale (par. 2.4.1)
- Ensure that newly appointed teachers are assigned mentors to assist them to adjust to the new environment with its specific values and codes of conduct (par. 2.4.5)
- Treat all staff fairly and equally and never degrade to favouritism or victimizing which impacts negatively on staff retention (par. 2.4.5)
- Invest concertededly in enhancing professionalism among staff to ensure that teachers express themselves effectively and display the best intentions towards their pupils, their colleagues, the community, and the teaching profession in general (par. 2.4.5)

To develop and sustain pupils' optimal academic performance, school principals as instructional leaders must ensure that:

- All the systems of assessment, all measures of curriculum implementation, the entire instructional program, the professional development program, and the accountability system are linked at all levels to the academic standards for pupil achievement (par. 3.4)
- Good quality instruction is given to pupils through varied and integrated teaching methods to cater for the needs of pupils with differing interests, personalities and abilities (par.3.4; par 5.4.5; par. 5.3.5)
- The environment of the school is conducive to providing a high performance and orderly workplace through a contracted code of conduct for learners based on constructive discipline (par. 3.4)
- Teachers as competent professionals are enabled to take informed decisions on teaching and learning as they will be held accountable for the results (par. 3.4)
- Pupils' achievement in the core subjects is improved by setting specific benchmarks of achievement for every pupil to reach with no exception and with the same standard applying to all pupils (par. 3.4)
- Healthy relationships with parents, families and the community are forged as support structure for the academic achievement of pupils (par. 3.4; par. 5.3.5)

6.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Data for this study which focused on the relationship between the school principal's instructional leadership role and the academic performance of pupils were collected exclusively from schools that were performing well. The reason for focusing exclusively on well-performing schools was to determine and develop guidelines for effective instructional leadership which could serve as a model for school principals to continually benchmark and confirm their own performance as instructional leaders. However, a study with a similar focus should be extended to include schools that are not performing well. By extending the investigation to include poorly performing schools, functional and dysfunctional leadership with the effect thereof on learner performance could be compared to refine proper instructional leadership for all scenarios. This could enhance the breadth and depth of knowledge on proper instructional leadership for the sake of improved practice in terms of influence of proper instructional leadership on the academic performance of learners within all contexts.

6.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study on the relationship between the schools principal's instructional leadership role and the academic performance of pupils in Swaziland primary schools was conducted as a qualitative investigation. The study was therefore not aimed at a generalisation of findings, but was conducted in pursuit of a deeper understanding of the contextual phenomenon of study. Although only a small sample of information-rich participants were selected for data gathering and therefore could be considered as a limitation to the investigation, the collected data when analysed did provide a rich source of information.

The study was focused on schools that performed well in terms of learner achievement. Schools that were not performing well in terms of their learners' academic achievement in standardised assessment were excluded. Although valuable data were collected for guidelines on school principals' proper execution of their instructional leadership responsibilities, an extended study that includes both types of schools with regard to learner performance could have provided a balanced argument on the important relationship between the school principal's instructional leadership role and the academic performance of pupils.

6.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is clear that when school principals execute their instructional leadership role effectively it has a positive influence on the academic performance of pupils. What was meant by effective instructional leadership was determined by collecting relevant data from information-rich participants by means of individual and focus group interviews. The collected data was confirmed with information from official documents on instructional leadership-related activities and through the personal observation of aspects prevailing in school environments conducive to successful teaching and learning. It became clear that school principals as instructional leaders motivate a positive culture of teaching and learning through their constant and dedicated presence at school and their constructive support for their staff in terms of resource provisioning and professional development so as to ensure that optimal instruction takes place for pupils to achieve exceptionally. Through their instructional leadership role school principals coordinate the support

of all stakeholders by actively encouraging teachers, pupils and parents to contribute according to designated tasks and responsibilities to the realisation of exceptional teaching and learning.

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APPENDIX A

Enquiries	: J.F. Khoza	Baha'i Primary School
Tel	: 2404 617 4	P. O. Box 1900
Cell	: 7613 874 0	MBABANE

2 December, 2011

The Regional Education Officer
P. O. Box 229

MBABANE

Dear Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN THE HHOHHO REGION

I am writing this letter to request permission to conduct a research study at eight selected primary schools in the Hhohho region of Swaziland during the period May to July 2012. My research is focused on the following theme: **“The relationship between the school principal’s instructional leadership role and the academic performance of pupils in Swaziland primary schools”**. This study is conducted in partial fulfilment of the M.Ed. degree in Education Management at the University of South Africa. The study is carried out under the supervision of Prof. H.M. Van der Merwe.

In carrying out the research, two interviews will be conducted at each selected school: an individual interview with the school principal, and a focus group interview with five teachers who will be purposefully selected based on suggestions of the school principal. The time required for the conducting of the two interviews at each school will be approximately 90 minutes. When conducting the research the following conditions will prevail:

- All collected information will be treated with confidentiality.
- No disturbance will be caused to the school's normal tuition process.
- Schools' names will not be reflected anywhere.
- Participants' names will not be reflected anywhere.
- All interviews will be recorded and transcribed as soon as possible to enhance accuracy in summarising and analysing information.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J.F. Khoza

APPENDIX B

Enquiries : J.F. Khoza Baha'i Primary School
Tel : 2404 617 4 P. O. Box 1900
Cell : 7613 874 0 MBABANE

2 December 2011

The Principal

_____ Primary School

P. O. Box _____

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

I am writing this letter to request permission to conduct a research study at your school during the period May to July 2012. My research is focused on the following theme: **“The relationship between the school principal’s instructional leadership role and the academic performance of pupils in Swaziland primary schools.”** This study is conducted in partial fulfilment of the M.Ed degree in Educational Management at the University of South Africa. The study is carried out under the supervision of Prof. H.M. Van der Merwe.

In carrying out the research, two interviews will be conducted in your school: an individual interview with the school principal, and a focus group interview with five teachers. The time for conducting the interviews in your school will be approximately 90 minutes. When conducting the research the following conditions will prevail:

- All collected information will be treated with confidentiality.
- No disturbance will be caused to the school’s normal tuition process.
- The school’s name will not be reflected anywhere in the collected data.

- Participants' names will not be reflected anywhere.
- All interviews will be recorded and transcribed as soon as possible to enhance accuracy in summarising and analysing information.
- Participants have the full right to withdraw from the research whenever they feel the need to.

Further arrangements concerning tentative dates will be done telephonically with your office to ensure that the necessary arrangements with participants are made. Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J.F.Khoza

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM : INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION WITH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND EDUCATORS IN THE HHOHHO REGION OF SWAZILAND ON **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE AND THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN SWAZILAND PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

This study is conducted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Education in the subject Education Management at the University of South Africa (UNISA). The aim of this study is to:

- determine what the instructional leadership role of a school principal entails
- investigate the ways in which effective instructional leadership impacts on the culture of teaching and learning in a school
- determine the school factors that impede on a sound culture of teaching and learning
- determine strategies that school principals use to enhance high academic performance of pupils

The **anonymity of the participants will be upheld** and information will be kept strictly confidential. Your name or any other identifying details will therefore not be recorded at all. You do need to sign this communiqué to give me permission to conduct the interview.

You may refuse to answer any of the questions and you may stop participating at any time during the investigation. Your participation is highly appreciated, but entirely voluntary.

Do you have any questions about your participation in this investigation?

I -----,
hereby consent to participate in the investigation on the impact of the school principal's instructional leadership role on the academic performance of pupils in Swaziland primary schools.

Interviewer	Date	Interviewee
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APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

1. What is your perception of the concept *instructional leadership*?
2. What do you perceive as the major instructional leadership roles of school principals?
3. What is the influence of the execution of your instructional leadership role on the culture of teaching and learning and on learner achievement in your school?
4. What factors within a school impede a sound culture of teaching and learning and learner achievement?
5. What major strategies do you as an instructional leader use to enhance the academic performance of your pupils?

APPENDIX E
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

1. What do you understand under the concept *instructional leadership*?
2. What do you perceive to be the major aspects pertaining to the instructional leadership role of the school principal?
3. How does school principals' execution of their instructional leadership role influence the culture of teaching and learning and learner achievement?
4. What factors within a school do you perceive as impeding a positive culture of teaching and learning and learner achievement?
5. What instructional leadership strategies are employed at your school to enhance the academic performance of the pupils in your classes?

APPENDIX F

AGREEMENT TO CONFIDENTIALITY - FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

CONFIDENTIALITY

A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION COMPRISING SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND EDUCATORS IN THE SOUTHERN HHOHHO REGION OF SWAZILAND ON **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE AND THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN SWAZILAND PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

This study is conducted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in the subject Education Management at the University of South Africa (UNISA). The aim of this study is to:

- determine what the instructional leadership role of a school principal entails
- investigate the ways in which effective instructional leadership impacts on the culture of teaching and learning in a school
- determine the school factors that impede on a sound culture of teaching and learning
- determine strategies that school principals use to enhance high academic performance of pupils

This study respects the anonymity of **ALL** participants and the keeping of what transpired in the interview as strictly confidential. No name or any other identifying details are recorded. No information on discussions in the focus group interview may be shared outside this room as that may infringe on the confidentiality of the study and the confidentiality of what participants shared. Your cooperation in this regard is highly appreciated. **As a participant you will have the privilege of accessing findings of the study as a copy will be sent to your school.**

-----,

hereby consent to keep all discussions that transpire in this interview as highly confidential. I therefore consent not to share anything discussed in this interview with anyone outside this room.

Interviewer -----	Date -----	Interviewee -----
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