

**THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE HIGH SCHOOL  
HEAD IN CREATING A CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN  
ZIMBABWE**

by

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## **DECLARATION**

**I declare that:**

**THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE HIGH SCHOOL HEAD IN CREATING A CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN ZIMBABWE is my own work, and that all sources used or quoted have been indicated or acknowledged by means of complete references.**

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**SIGNATURE**  
**S. MASUKU**

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**DATE**

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to following

- My beloved and affectionate wife, Patricia Tutani
- My parents
- All the family members
- All brethren who assisted in prayer
- The Mighty God (Psalms 65:5 & 106:1).

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In this study, the researcher aimed to investigate and explore the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a culture of teaching and learning (COTL), with specific reference to high schools in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. In an attempt to realise that end, a qualitative approach drawing from ethnographic studies was used to collect data. Therefore, the research instruments included qualitative observations, individual and focus group interviews and document analysis. The participants included five high school heads, ten heads of departments (HODs), ten assistant teachers, and twenty five parents. These were drawn from the five high schools selected for the study.

The main findings of the study are that a model for effective instructional leadership aimed at creating a culture of teaching and learning (COTL) consists of long-term and short-term dimensions. The long-term instructional leadership dimension comprises: visioning, communication of the school vision, value management, professional development of staff, and empowerment. The short-term instructional leadership dimension comprises of characteristics of the instructional leader, characteristics of the followers and characteristics of the situation. Characteristics of the instructional leader include his or her perception of stakeholders, task or people orientation, personality, knowledge and experience, value system and trust in followers. Characteristics of the followers include their readiness to take responsibility, motivation to excel, knowledge and experience. Characteristics of the situation include the school climate and culture, relationships among members of the school community, structuring of tasks, availability of human and material resources, and the use of incentives.

The effective application of the instructional leadership model for effective practice by the high school head as the instructional leader in creating a culture of teaching and learning (COTL) takes into account both the long-term and short-term dimensions of effective instructional leadership in order to achieve meaningful educational change.

## **Key terms**

Instructional leadership, Culture of teaching and learning, School head, Midlands Province, Quality education, Long-term instructional leadership, Short-term instructional leadership, Characteristics of the instructional leader, Characteristics of followers, Characteristics of the situation.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AGM	: Annual General Meeting
COTL	: Culture of Teaching and Learning
CPD	: Continuing Professional Development
DEO	: District Education Officer.
F&F	: Fashion and Fabrics
F&N	: Food and Nutrition
HODs	: Heads of Department
MoESAC	: Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture
NCSL	: National College for School Leadership
PD	: Professional Development
PDPs	: Professional Development Programmes
PTUZ	: Progressive Teachers' Union in Zimbabwe
SDC	: School Development Committee
SIP	: School Improvement Plan.
ZIMTA	: Zimbabwe Teachers' Association

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **ORIENTATION**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Students deserve to have access to good education so that they can develop emotionally, spiritually and physically (Deal & Peterson, 1999:3). Schools are judged as successful if purposeful teaching and learning occur. However, the type of environment conducive to teaching and learning is often not achieved because of the interplay of internal and external factors that tend to create a negative perception of learning amongst students rather than turning them into students who are positive about learning (see paragraph 2.4.2). Harris (2007: 1) notes that the experience of school leaders, teachers and students in recent decades has been affected directly by a range of external factors, which have fundamentally altered the character and nature of schooling. There are also influences at work both inside and outside the formal education system that impact on what is taught and how teaching and learning may take place. In this regard, a supportive and positive culture of teaching and learning (COTL) is needed to effect reforms that can result in school effectiveness. According to Bush (2007:391), there is a general belief that the quality of leadership contributes significantly towards school and student outcomes.

It is unlikely that schools can attain the desired academic standards if cultural patterns and methods to support teaching and learning are not created through instructional leadership. Masitsa (2005:205) considers the principal as an instructional leader to be in a position to address problems related to the school's COTL. As they face the challenges of today's changing and competitive world (see paragraphs 2.2; 3.6), schools and in particular, high school heads/principals have to adopt an effective instructional leadership role and perhaps a new model for effective practice to create as many win-win situations as possible which can lead to a conducive COTL (Peters, 2008: 21). Accordingly, this research investigated the

instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL, supported by an empirical investigation into this role in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Good leadership is critical to a school's success and achieving sustainable improvement in teaching and learning (Coles & Southworth, 2005: xvii; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006: 1). Razik and Swanson (2010: xv) declare that:

In a time of high educational expectations and professional accountability, today's educational leaders need to possess a broad variety of skills that enable them to function comfortably and effectively in changing environments and other highly politicized conditions.

All schools and education authorities are increasingly being held more accountable to the public for the education they provide (Bowora & Mpofu, 2000:113). Therefore, they are expected to provide good value for the considerable sums of taxpayer money expended on education. Heads of high schools often find it difficult to meet the ever-changing demands and expectations regarding their instructional leadership role in creating a COTL in their respective schools. Within the context of educational change taking place all over the world, the job or role of the high school head has changed irrevocably. Oplatka (2004:434) notes that contextual conditions in which schools in developing countries work and the cultural values defining the role of the principal pose a potential obstacle to the effectiveness of principal's instructional model. According to Chirichelo and Richmond (2007: vii), school leaders are expected to supervise staff, discipline learners, interact with parents, manage facilities, lead the instructional programme, assure the safety of teachers and learners, manage budgets and participate in school reform, amongst others.

Today's high school head assumes an instructional leadership role that is growing increasingly complex, as the nature of society, the economy, and schools as organisations continues to change (Andrews & Anfara, 2003:344). Portin, Shen and

Williams (1998, cited in Botha, 2004:246) point out that the role of the principal in the new dispensation represents a balance between instructional leadership and management. For this reason, McEwan (2003) sees the journey of an instructional leader as an on-going journey, along a route filled with detours and potholes, as well as along freeways and straightways. In the present school setting, the high school head in Zimbabwe according to the Director's Circular Minute No. 15 of 2006 is mandated with the responsibility to provide instructional leadership that can enhance a positive culture of teaching and learning which can result in the provision of quality education in schools.

The Elton Report (1989, cited in Bowora and Mpfu, 2000:113), notes that the most effective schools seem to be those that succeed in creating a positive atmosphere for teaching and learning based on a sense of community and shared values (see paragraph 2.3.1.5). Nkobi (2008: 472) argues that school heads as instructional leaders play a fundamental role to ensure the quality of education by improving teacher competencies for enhanced learner performances. The indirect effect of school effectiveness on student outcomes actually has a direct impact on instructional leadership because cultural dimensions tend to influence effective learning (Van der Westhuizen, Mosoge and van Vuure: 2004: 705). Trends of accountability on the part of high school heads seem to have a significant impact on their ability to implement a model for effective practice to create a COTL.

Over the past two and a half decades, researchers have been concerned with the question regarding the relative importance of school factors *vis-a-vis* non-school factors as determinants of student achievement in developed countries (Peresuh & Kadzamira, 1999:67). Unfortunately, not much has been done for developing countries such as Zimbabwe. Day and Sachs (2004: 3) have observed that what students learn, how they learn, what they must attain, as the outcome of teaching and learning are the major concerns of the school principal as an instructional leader. However, Oplatka (2004:434) posits that instructional leadership in most developing countries is relatively rare unlike in developed nations. According to the

Sunday Times, June 21 2009, poor quality teaching, teacher absenteeism and a negative perception towards teaching and learning, were found amongst the reasons why learners drop out of school or attend irregularly. In Zimbabwe, bells of alarm have been rung with regards to the deteriorating state of the education sector (The Sunday Mail, January 24-30 2010). Furthermore, another reporter in The Herald, Monday 13 October 2008 challenges the role of parents in promoting quality education. The poor performance of education systems has been described by Nyagura and Chivore (1999:15) as a common phenomenon in most African countries. Nyagura and Reece (1989, cited in Shumbayaonda & Maringe, 2000:22), have reported that the majority of Zimbabwe's high school heads were concerned about the inability of most teachers to develop effective lesson plans and transform national syllabuses into operational terms. Against such a background, the present study seeks to investigate the instructional leadership role in improving the culture of teaching and learning, supported by an empirical investigation in selected high schools of the Midlands Province.

Literature on school effectiveness is scanty, but Peresuh and Kadzamira (1999), point out that research findings have consistently shown that schools exert a powerful influence on students' achievement. Hargreaves (2001), Crowner (2001) and Fullan (2001, cited in Bottery, 2004), have all concluded that the quality of leadership plays an important role in the motivation of teachers and students as well as the quality of teaching and learning that takes place in the classroom. Wilson (2006:236) has also underscored the role of the school principal in creating a COTL in schools. Heachinger (cited in Davis, 1999:12) agrees with the above authorities in the following extract:

I have never seen a good school with a poor principal, or a poor school with a good principal. I have seen unsuccessful schools turned around into successful ones, and regrettably outstanding schools slide into decline.

The above statement implies that high school principals need certain prerequisite skills to devise a model for effective practice in order to achieve a COTL. Because of the changing circumstances in which the school headship operates, it is therefore appropriate to provide an accurate and up-to-date description of the behaviour, actions and activities underpinning the instructional leadership role of high school principals in creating a healthy COTL. However, Bush and Oduro (2006:359) postulate that principals in Africa often face daunting challenges when they have to work in poorly equipped schools with inadequately trained staff. In most cases, including Zimbabwe, this scenario is made worse by the fact that there is a lack of formal leadership training for school heads/principals.

To address the decline in the quality of education as reported by Shumbayaonda and Maringe (2000:25), high school heads in Zimbabwe need to develop a school vision for teaching and learning as a top priority (see paragraph 3.4.1.2). Indeed, the poor academic performance in both the Ordinary and Advanced level examinations has raised such great concern among stakeholders that the instructional leadership of the school head is viewed as a panacea to the extremely challenging task of creating a COTL that can see a redress of the situation. Nyatanga (2010:140) advocates for greater emphasis on quality rather quantity in Zimbabwe's education system. The national average pass rate at O' level in 2010 was 19% (The Times, 20-26 June 2011).

Dimmock (2000:1) notes that schools can become learning centres if they are created and designed intentionally. However, studies by Mackay (1999), Hopkins (2002), Pasi (2000), Harris (2001), and Marriott (2001) cited in Dimmock (2000:1) have shown that the role of the school principal in creating a COTL is made more complicated in situations where change puts him or her in a situation characterised by conflicting pressures and role conflicts. Coleman and Earley (2005: 15) argue that while it might be taken as a foregone conclusion that the focus of school leaders should be on teaching and learning, in practice this may not be the case. In their view, there can be role conflict between instructional leadership and administration.

Just like in any other developing or developed country Zimbabwe's education system emphasises getting outstanding academic results in the public examinations. Ordinary and Advanced level results have a symbolic value and both are prerequisites for employment and further education. The downside of this scenario noted by Nyamuda (2004:104) is that education is perceived to be a panacea for all of life's problems and an avenue to a better life. Against such a background, high schools in Zimbabwe are under pressure to achieve an improvement in student performance. Evidence from research by Dean (2002:1) has revealed that schools need support, encouragement and recognition of achievement and in the author's opinion, this gap may be filled through effective instructional leadership. The study therefore, investigated the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL and the most appropriate model to use for effective practice.

Watkins (2000:10) has identified two schools of thought, which have dominated the debate on quality education. First, is the "Effective Schools" approach, which relies on quantitative analytical techniques to explain students' academic achievement. This model emphasises the different educational inputs and the environment in which the school operates and views the students' socioeconomic backgrounds as a critical factor in school effectiveness. According to Ignathios (2003: 48), resource input factors tend to have an impact on school effectiveness in the developing countries. Important inputs include financial or physical resources, the quantity and quality of teachers and the availability of textbooks on student outcomes or academic achievement. The second school of thought on school effectiveness is the "Schools Improvement" approach. According to Watkins (2000: 10), the model tends to focus on the qualitative process within the school system and emphasises relationships between school personnel namely teachers, students and the principal. This approach also emphasises the importance of some process variables such as the motivation, attitudes and behaviour of school personnel, management practices, the school ethos as well as the social organisational and historical context of the school. School leadership should therefore be concerned with creating an environment in which people are motivated to produce and move in the direction



indicated by the head or principal (Mastrangelo, Eddy & Lorenzet ,2004:438). As suggested by Nkobi (2008:477), instructional leadership should accommodate collaboration processes as well as strategies of parental mobilisation and involvement and the effective management of resources.

Kapfunde (2000:7) has observed that school heads face increasingly difficult and demanding environmental pressures which include; increased local and global competition, technological changes, increased legal and pressure group demands, as well as the challenge of preparing their learners for the increasingly differentiated and demanding markets that face them upon graduating from high school. These pressures have required the implementation of an effective model of instructional leadership so that the school can compete for students with a large measure of success. Coleman (2001:330) recommends that school principals have to broaden their focus and place a greater emphasis on the teaching and learning process to achieve effectiveness, which is measured by the academic proficiency attained by students. In this regard, the role of instructional leadership in creating a COTL cannot be overemphasised.

Since independence in 1980, Zimbabwe has taken pride in the high literacy rate of its population because of the massification of education (Chisaka & Mavundutse, 2006:140). According to Mlahleki (2010:104), Zimbabwe has consistently regarded education as a basic human right, a basic human need and an economic investment in human beings who are the means and ends of all economic activities. This policy is enunciated in the country's Education Act of 2006 [Chapter 25: 04]. However, of late, the public has been critical of the quality of education provided, especially in high schools. *The Herald*, 13 June 2006, reports a case where students were incited by parents to boycott classes in protest against the poor standards of teaching and learning at the school. In the same vein, the *Sunday Mail*, 20 February 2006 has also reported a public outcry about the uncultured school graduates in the country's education system. Parents and/or guardians continue to raise questions concerning teaching methods, the school curriculum, the discipline of both teachers and

students and other observable effects of a poor COTL stated above and in paragraph 2.4.2.

Masitsa (2005:128) views the school principal's role as effective if it results in effective instruction. Robbins and Alvy (2003: xiii) subscribe to the notion that there is no one secret formula for school effectiveness, but they also argue that there is a need for tried practices that school principals can use to create a COTL. Studies by Sweeney cited in Bredeson (2003:12) have shown that there are certain activities, specific actions and behaviours that tend to make the difference when it comes to student achievement. The strong drive for school effectiveness, the accountability movement and also the renewed interest and focus on quality education noted by Wilmore (2002:5) calls for a model for effective practice in high schools.

The problem statement should be interpreted against the above background.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

High schools, like other organisations require a reasonable amount of order and conformity to be successful in achieving quality education. A plan of action and a sense of direction are needed to create, maintain and improve a COTL needed to achieve quality education. Quality education has recently become a priority for the Zimbabwean government because of the contribution of education to the socio-economic and political development of the country. Indeed, the most effective schools are those that have created a positive atmosphere based on a sense of shared values (Bowora & Mpofu, 2000 :113).

Larner (2004: 37) has pointed out that the principal is the single most important individual contributing to the success of any given school. The 21<sup>st</sup> century school head in Zimbabwe is viewed as all things to all people because he or she is regarded as a strategic instructional leader who is both a visionary and a change agent. In the light of the above, the central question that will be answered by the

research study is, “What is the instructional leadership role of the high school head (or principal) in creating a COTL, with specific reference to high schools in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe?”

### **1.3.1 Sub-problems**

In order to find answers to the central question raised above, the study was guided by the following sub-problems:

- What conceptual framework can be provided for building a COTL? (Chapter 2)
- How can instructional leadership be conceptualised to create an effective COTL? (Chapter 3)
- How is the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a culture of teaching and learning perceived by heads of departments (HODs), teachers, parents and high school heads in selected schools of the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe? (Chapter 5)
- What model of instructional leadership can be provided for effective practice? (Chapter 6)

The aims of the study are identified below in the light of the above problem statement.

### **1.4 AIMS OF THE STUDY**

Based on the description of the background to the study, the statement of the problem and sub-problems above, the following aim and objectives have been identified. The central aim of the study was to investigate the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a culture of teaching and learning (COTL),

and to support this investigation with an empirical investigation in selected schools in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. This general aim of the study can be broken down into the following objectives:

- To provide a conceptual framework of a culture of teaching and learning (COTL). (Chapter 2)
- To provide a conceptual framework for the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL. (Chapter 3)
- To determine whether the conceptual framework of instructional leadership would be of use in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. (Chapter 5)
- To provide a model for effective practice in instructional leadership. (Chapter 6)

In order to achieve the above aim and objectives of the study, a qualitative research approach is employed.

## **1.5 MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY**

The early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been characterised by great interest in educational leadership because of the general belief that it contributes immensely to effective teaching and learning (Oplatka, 2004:391). The magnitude of changes to the school system in Zimbabwe seems to advocate for effective instructional leadership so that a positive culture of teaching and learning can be cultivated to meet local and national needs. Some of the measures that have been put in place include a national curriculum which tests students at key stages of their education (Forms 4 & 6) and the publication of school results as league tables, a locally managed school budget, a parents' charter and parental choice of school. There is also competition between schools for students and increased powers for school governors to ensure that teachers create a culture for teaching and learning. Powers for parents or guardians in school management have also been enhanced through

the establishment of School Development Committees (SDCs) in the country's Education Act (Chapter 25:04). New roles and responsibilities are continuously placed on high school heads to improve the COTL.

To deal effectively with the many current reforms, high school heads as instructional leaders, need to develop and use a range of leadership skills and behaviours to create a COTL. However, lack of clarity about what principals of schools may do to promote student learning has been highlighted by Bryk, Comburn and Louis (1999, cited in Conrad & Serlin, 2006:217). A review made by Oplatka (2008:434) has shown that instructional leadership functions are rare in most developing countries. Bush and Oduro (2006:359) also note that there is lack of formal training for school principals in developing countries which makes their instructional leadership a daunting challenge. This study was therefore motivated by the need to investigate the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL, and to do an empirical investigation on this role in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe.

The rapid social change in developing countries such as Zimbabwe has had an impact on the instructional leadership development process. Nyamuda (2004:97) emphasises the need for a balanced model for effective practice, which acknowledges universal leadership principles. The researcher's twenty years experience as a teacher in-charge, a Head of Department (HOD) and school deputy head, have revealed that leaders of high schools are confronted with complex dilemmas and challenges regarding the task of creating a COTL. Furthermore, a paucity of cross-cultural research on leadership in the context of the interaction between cultures has also been noted by Nyamuda (2004:97). It is therefore envisaged that this research can make a meaningful contribution to the instructional leadership role of the school head in creating a COTL.

Significantly, Peresuh and Kadzamira (1999:66) have confirmed that research on school effectiveness in developing countries has been limited. In addition, the two authors point out that literature on school effectiveness in Third World nations is

scanty. The poor performance of Zimbabwe's education has been noted by Nyagura and Chivore (1999:34); while Shumbayaonda and Maringe (2000:28) refer to the decline in quality education that has led to the investigation into the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe.

The research questions which form the basis of the study have been prompted by real world observations by the researcher within the field of educational leadership and his interest in the area. Specific answers to the question of how high school heads or principals influence school outcomes and how their practices are mediated by the school context have to be found so that quality education can be promoted.

The researcher has also been motivated by the desire to provide a meaningful contribution to the development of both the theory and the practice in terms of the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL. In addition, the researcher was also motivated by a desire to uncover the salient features of the teaching and learning process in high schools in Zimbabwe. The study was particularly concerned with exploring insights emanating from the interventions that have been ongoing in high schools. Furthermore, this study analysed the evidence available to date, concerning the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a sustainable COTL. A clear understanding of what reality is from the point of view of people within the role, is essential to construct a practical theory (Fullan, 2001: 58). The researcher's desire to offer useful information on the perceptions of teachers, parents and high school heads on the instructional leadership role of the high school head, furthermore prompted his interest in the theme of this study.

The desire to examine the forces that shape conceptions of school headship, the demands of accountability, the changing social fabric and the changing roles of high school heads as well as the crisis-situation in Zimbabwe as a result of political and economic developments, have all motivated the researcher to undertake the study.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is tumultuous and what the future will require of educational leaders is therefore uncertain (English & Furman, 2007:133). New research is thus needed to assist practising and prospective school leaders to provide a model for effective instructional practice that can make quality education possible. High school heads in Zimbabwe handle a multiplicity of roles and in this regard, they are becoming increasingly vulnerable as they work in the glare of the public gaze and have to comply with the principle of accountability (Middlewood, Parker & Beere, 2005:27).

## **1.6 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY**

Certain assumptions have to be adhered to, to ensure the success of this study and to yield results that can be replicated. Assumptions are conditions that must hold true for the study to be conducted (Moyo, Ncube, Chikoko, Mtezo, Chisi, Gombe, Madziyire, Mhlanga & Kangai, 2002:8). The conditions are taken by the researcher to be facts, though they are not the object of the study. In addition, the assumptions underlying the study assist the researcher with defining conditions under which the results of the study remain credible. The assumptions of the study are both physical and conceptual, and this study is based on the following assumptions alluded to by Schram (2003:68):

- It was assumed that participants (high school heads, heads of department (HODs), teachers and parents) would respond to the research instruments willingly, sincerely, truthfully, honestly and with a fair degree of accuracy. At this point in time it was therefore assumed by the researcher that the current political and economic climate in Zimbabwe would impact adversely on the instructional leadership of the high school head in creating a COTL.
- It was assumed that human behaviour and the ways in which participants constructed and made sense of their lives would be highly variable and locally specific.

- It was also assumed that the political and economic climate would impact adversely on the research itself, eg on how long the researcher would be allowed in the research location because of factors such as suspicion and general apathy.
- It was assumed that patterns of socially acquired and shared behaviour could be discerned through experience (observations) and inquiry (that is, interviewing participants).
- It was assumed that social behaviour and interaction would reflect varying patterns of what should occur (ideal behaviour) and what might occur (projective behaviour).
- It was assumed that the interpretation or representations of the findings would be built upon the points of understanding and misunderstanding that occurred during the study.

Slavin (2007:123) argues that in qualitative research, the world is approached with the assumption that nothing is trivial and that everything has the potential to be a clue that unlocks a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. In this study, it was also assumed that the most critical behaviour of high school heads is a dynamic process of complex interactions that consist of more than a set of facts or even discrete incidents. The study was also hinged upon Creswell's (2008) contention that human behaviour is influenced by the setting in which it occurs. Finally, the study was based on the assumption that the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL is identifiable and perceived differently by teachers, parents and even by high school heads themselves.

## **1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**



All research aims at establishing valid and reliable facts and relationships that can be replicated by other researchers. For this study to earn credibility, establish facts and relationships worthy of replicating, there are some limitations to which have to be alluded. Limitations are those factors or conditions beyond the reasonable control of the researcher that impinge either on the execution of the study or the validity of the findings, or both (Moyo & Mumbengegwi, 2001:9). The limitations of this study are of both a physical and a conceptual nature. The following are some of the limitations:

- Time and financial constraints limited the size of the sample, the duration of the study and the geographical area covered.
- The study relied on voluntary cooperation of participants, which could be difficult to secure because of the political situation prevailing in the country.
- Self-reports used to collect data for the study could be prone to exaggeration, dishonesty, and untruthfulness or bias due to the adverse socio-economic environment prevalent in the country.
- Participants could misinterpret the research questions, deliberately falsify or lack the ability to articulate their views, values or perceptions (Creswell, 2003).
- Researcher bias and effect during the observations and interviews could have influenced participants' responses (Gay & Airasian, 2003:213).
- As participants could be candid about what they did or felt, they could have got carried away (Thomas & Nelson, 2001:283).

While the above confounding circumstances could possibly affect the understanding of the results of the study, they were addressed and controlled by the research

design used. The limitations related to the data collection techniques used are discussed in paragraphs 4.9.1.2; 4.9.3.5;4.9.4.1 & 6.5.

## **1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

The research was based on a literature study, observations, individual and focus group interviews as well as a limited document analysis. The literature study was intended to support statements and points of view with research evidence to provide empirical justification. Mokoena (2003:7) regards literature study as an important tool which provides guidelines for the construction of the theoretical framework for the research and also for the structuring of the research instruments used to collect data. For this study, relevant literature on the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a culture of teaching and learning was consulted in order to get an objective view of the problem stated in paragraph 1.3. Literature review was done in chapters 2 and 3.

Creating a COTL is such a complex, multidimensional social phenomenon that it can best be understood by undertaking an interactive and intensive study of the various interventions that occur in schools. Qualitative methodology, drawing largely from ethnographic approaches was employed to develop information that was accurate and interpretable and to achieve the aim of the study stated in paragraph 1.4. The qualitative methodology used in the study involved the direct observation of actions in its natural contexts, interviews designed to elicit the multiple meanings of participants about a phenomenon and the collection of documents for analysis. The researcher was engaged in the empirical research study for a period of nine months.

According to Metz (2000, cited in Schram, 2003:31) the term “research methodology” refers to the theory and analysis of how the investigation proceeds. The research methodology employed in this study involved a careful examination of the issues, principles and procedures associated with the study. It also guided the researcher on particular methods that he could use to generate and analyse data

collected. Research methodology focused on the description, explanation and justification of the research methods. Research methods refer to the specific techniques or logic used by the researcher to carry out the study (Conrad & Serlin, 2006:377). The techniques include how research questions are stated, the sampling strategy for data collection procedures and ways of structuring, analysing and interpreting data.

The research design of the study refers to the overall plan for collecting and analysing data needed to find answers to the research questions (Slavin, 2007:9). Moyo *et al.* (2002:22) add that the research design spells out the basic strategies adopted by the researcher to develop information that is both accurate and interpretable. The research design of this study determined whether the research questions raised were answered adequately. Bryman (1988, cited in Moyo *et al.*, 2002:23) has noted that the choice of the research design is often influenced by the nature of the research problem, the resources and time available, the preferences of the researcher and also the design's strengths and limitations. The research design used in the study incorporated some of the most important methodological decisions that the researcher made in conducting the field study. First, the design was intended to ensure that the main research question raised in paragraph 1.3 could be answered. Second, the research design was intended to control all extraneous variables which could affect the research findings. Thirdly, the research design was intended to have some external validity and reliability.

As alluded to earlier, qualitative methods used consisted of in-depth semi-structured interviews, direct observations and document analysis. The study was carried out in a naturalistic setting, with the researcher as the primary data collection instrument. The researcher went directly to the social phenomenon under study and observed it as completely as possible, to develop a deeper and fuller understanding of it (Babbie, 2001:285). The research methodology is discussed in greater detail in paragraph 4.2.

### **1.8.1 Characteristics of the research design**

Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2006:264) cite certain characteristics of a qualitative research design that describe the design precisely that was used in this study. First, the researcher played an interactive role in order to get to know the participants and the social context in which they lived (see paragraph 4.7). Secondly, data collection techniques involved observations and interviewing that brought the researcher in close contact with participants for an extended period. Thirdly, the researcher asked broad research questions designed to explore, interpret or understand the social context of a phenomenon. In addition, Creswell (2003:183) has identified some characteristics of qualitative research that also relate to this study.

The research design used was emergent, rather than tightly prefigured. The data that emerged was descriptive and, where appropriate, reported in the participants' words. Focus was on the participants' perceptions, experiences and the way they made sense of their lives in relation to the research topic. The phenomenon studied was viewed holistically (see paragraph 4.3.8). Furthermore, the researcher was immersed in the details and specifics of the data to discover important categories, dimensions and interrelationships.

As suggested by Thomas and Nelson (2001: 185), the research design used in data collection was flexible and open to enable the researcher to adapt the investigation as the understanding of the phenomenon deepened. Flexibility in the research design allowed the researcher to probe deeper into the minds of the participants to clear up any form of misunderstanding that may possibly occur. It also enabled the researcher to test the limits of participants' knowledge about the theme. In this regard, focus group discussions and interviews were used (see paragraph 4.9.3.3). According to Flick, Von Kardorff & Steinke (2004:226) a flexible research strategy is necessary because "all too long rigid adherences to principles of methodological procedures can close access to important information."

During the field study, the researcher participated overtly and/or covertly in the school settings to watch what happened, to listen to what was said by the school personnel, to ask questions and collect whatever data was available for the study. Data collection was non-manipulative, unobtrusive, non-controlling and open to whatever emerged. Sheppard (2004: 162) states that the aim of the social researcher is to minimise his or her effect on the behaviour of participants and to increase chances that what emerges in the setting can be generalized to other settings. Findings were placed in a social, historical and temporal context, with each case encountered assumed to be unique and special. Detailed, “thick” descriptions, in-depth inquiries, direct quotations capturing participants’ personal perspectives and experiences about creating a COLT were part of the methodology used in the study.

To collect valid and reliable data, real-world situations involving the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL were studied as they unfolded naturally. Rudestam and Newton (2001:32) have postulated that participants’ attitudes and behaviours can best be understood within a natural setting. The research design used in the study relied on the use of tacit knowledge and was based on the assumptions discussed earlier in paragraph 1.6. The researcher initiated prolonged contact with the participants and was immersed in a natural setting of interest. At the same time, he tried to remain detached from the subject matter as much as possible.

## **1.8.2 The qualitative research methods of the study**

The aims of the study set out earlier were achieved by using multiple ethnographic research methodologies, namely in-depth open-ended interviews, direct observations and documentary analysis. Each of these will be described in brief in this section and more details will be included in chapter four.

### **1.8.2.1 Participant observations**

In this study, participant observations were used to collect data needed to answer the main research question and its sub-questions raised in paragraph 1,3. Howard S. Becker (cited in Patton, 2002:121), posits that participant observation is the most comprehensive of types of qualitative research strategies. This type of research method is described as an observation of some social event, the events which precede and follow it and explanations of its meaning by participants and spectators before, during and after its occurrence. Conrad and Serlin (2006:381) view it as a systematic, purposeful and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction as it occurs. Data consisted of detailed descriptions of key participants' actions, activities and the full range of interpersonal interactions and organisational processes that promote a COTL.

Participant observation was made in a non-structured manner to enable the researcher to record unexpected occurrences and for the phenomenon to speak for itself as proposed by Moyo, et al (2002:24). This qualitative research instrument placed the researcher in a better position to take note of the behaviour of the high school heads and teachers regarding the creation of a COTL. Participant observations took place in actual school settings. Being a participant observer with a "residence" in the natural setting provided the opportunity for observing both the breadth and depth of the instructional leadership role of the school head in creating a COTL in high schools (Gay & Airasian, 2003:178). The researchers' observations involved dualities such as immersion versus imaginability, going native versus feeling strange and the immediate versus the reflective.

Through participant observations, the researcher managed to gain access to and insight in the high school setting, and get close enough to the participants to note the behaviour of high school heads regarding the creation of a COTL. The critical aspect of the observations involved observing and taking in as much of the data as possible. Gaining entry to a research site and the ethical issues that could arise were some of the aspects with which the researcher had to contend with (Creswell,

2003: 184). The researcher interacted with the subjects to gain rapport with them and to develop a better understanding of their functions and relationships with other members of the school community.

Observational activities were kept as unobtrusive as possible so that the researcher could learn about matters that participants might otherwise be unwilling to talk about, understand the context within which intervention occurred, and to obtain some kind of 'direct line' to the processes and outcomes of the interventions (Sheppard, 2004:209). The design used to collect data was flexible enough to permit consideration of multiple settings (five schools were involved) in subsequent observations. After selecting the field settings, initial field contact was made by telephone, cellphone, letter or e-mail where possible. The practical application of the qualitative observation technique used in the study is discussed in detail in paragraph 4.9.1.

### **1.8.2.2 Interviews**

The researcher held face-to-face interviews with high school heads and focus group discussions with heads of department (HODs), teachers and parents to collect data needed to address the research problem stated in paragraph 1.3. The data collected consisted of information and direct quotations from the participants concerning their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge about the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL. Interviews enabled the researcher to investigate what participants knew, what they liked or disliked, in terms of their values and preferences and what they thought in terms of their attitudes and beliefs about the topic under study. Tuckman (2001:216) states that interviews can be used to discover what experiences have occurred and what is actually taking place at present concerning a phenomenon.

Qualitative interviewing used to collect data consisted of a series of friendly conversations in which the investigator gradually introduced new insights in order to

gain information sought. The three most important elements of interviews described by Spradley (cited in Borg & Gall, 2002: 397) which were useful in this study include an explicit purpose, ethnographic explanations to the participants and ethnographic questions aimed at eliciting participants' perceptions of some aspects of the COTL. A combination of informal, conversational interviews, topic-focussed and open-ended interviews were conducted in the quest for a model of effective practice employed by high schools as they create a COTL. The interviews conducted were flexible and open-ended, to allow for natural conversations.

According to Creswell (2003:9), meanings of a phenomenon are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting. Control measures were built in to verify the data obtained from participants during the interviews, which dominated the study. As argued by Patton (1987, cited in Thomas and Nelson, 2001: 235), focus group interviews may provide quality controls because participants tend to provide checks and balances on one another. By using key-informant (or focused) interviews, false and extreme responses by individual participants were minimised. The heads of department (HODs) and teachers who participated in focus group interviews were purposefully selected on the basis of their willingness, experience, gender and area of specialisation. Parents involved in the focus group interviews were drawn from the School Development Committee (SDC) and included the Chairperson, the Secretary, the Treasurer and two committee members. Borg and Gall (2002:399) suggest that members should be chosen because they have more knowledge or have different perspectives. In this study, interviews and focus group discussions were important for collecting data because background information about the study could be accessed. The interview technique is discussed in depth in paragraph 4.9.2.

### **1.8.2.3 Document analysis**

A study was made of documents relating to the role of the high school head in creating a COTL. Data was collected by studying documents and data analysis



yielded excerpts, quotations or entire passages (Best & Kahn, 2006: 257) that were useful in the study. Staffroom notice boards, minute books for staff meetings and other printed forms were also studied when available. According to Patton (2002:293), the above sources provide the researcher with information about things that have occurred before the study and include private interchanges to which the researcher could be privy and can also reveal goals or decisions that might be unknown to the researcher.

The researcher took it upon himself to meet all conditions set to have access to any documents needed for the study. However, he was cautious to avoid infringement of participants' actual or potential copyrights, where documents were considered to be "literary property" that could not be copied or reproduced by anyone. Informed consent was sought first and all the ethical issues pertaining to social research observed. The technique is discussed in more detail in paragraph 4.9.4.

## **1.9 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS**

Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (2002: 494) recommend that any terms or concepts that may be unfamiliar to the reader or those to which the author ascribes a specific meaning, should be defined and clarified. In this research study, the following concepts are used in the context of the meanings explained below.

### **1.9.1 Role**

Kuper and Kuper (1999:748) define a "role" as an organised set of observable and expected behaviours pertaining to a specific office or position. A role has certain obligations and responsibilities which specify behaviour and may be termed role expectations. Getzel and Guba (1989, cited in Wright, 2001:9) describe a role as an institutional blueprint for action, which derives its meaning from other related roles in the organisation.

### **1.9.2 The school head**

The school head is the professional taskforce person at the helm of the school and the one who ensures that teaching and learning occurs in the school at acceptable standards by determining the direction to be followed and striving to create a positive COTL (Kasambira, 1999:126; Zvobgo, 1999:126). As stipulated in the Vacancy Announcement – Internal Circular Minute No. 3 of 2010, the school head in Zimbabwe serves as the link between the school, the Regional Office, the community and the general public. Bowora and Mpofu (2000:60) describe the school head as the hub of both the administrative and teaching processes. Wilmore (2002:14) adds that the school principal (who is known as the school head in Zimbabwe) is the one who advocates, nurtures and sustains the school culture and instructional programmes to ensure student and teacher growth. In this study, the school head is also referred to as the principal or educational leader.

### **1.9.3 High schools**

These are post primary educational institutions that prepare students, between twelve and eighteen years, for vocational and tertiary education. In Zimbabwe, these are schools that provide formal education for six years from Form 1 to 6.

### **1.9.4 The Midlands Province**

The Midlands Province is one of the ten provinces in Zimbabwe and is the most central province and one of the largest. It covers an area of about 49 166 square kilometers. According to the 2002 national census, its population was 1.5 million. This province is divided into seven education districts, which include Chirumanzu, Gokwe, Gweru, Kwekwe, Mberengwa, Shurugwi and Zvishavane. The present study was conducted in the Gweru district.

### **1.9.5 Culture of teaching and learning**

Smith and Schalekamp (1997, cited in Calitz, Fuglestad & Lillejord, 2002: 239), define a culture of teaching and learning (COTL) as:

..the attitude of teachers and learners towards teaching and learning, the spirit of dedication and commitment in a school which arises through the joint effect of school management, the input of teachers, the personal characteristics of students, factors in the family life of students, school-related and social factors.

In general terms, a culture of teaching and learning (COTL) refers to the attitude of the school head, heads of department (HODs) and teachers, parents and the wider community towards teaching and learning, and also the presence of quality teaching and learning (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2003: 3).

### **1.9.6 Instructional leadership**

Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004:11) define instructional leadership as:

the identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination, and use of the social, material, and cultural resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of teaching and learning

According to Nkobi (2008:18), instructional leadership seeks to improve the teachers' quality of classroom work for the ultimate purpose of enhancing learners' achievement and also improving their attitudes and behaviour towards school work as well as their personal life. According to the Director's Circular Minute No. 15 of 2006, the core business of a school head is instructional leadership. The concept of instructional leadership is explained in greater detail in paragraph 3.3.1.

### **1.9.7 Quality education**

The quality of education is viewed by Moyo and Mumbengegwi (2001:185) in terms of the correspondence between the expectations of society and the changes that occur in the learners, the education system and society as a whole. Quality education assumes a specific standard of performance based on three interrelated factors, namely efficiency in meeting set goals, relevance of the education offered and the pursuit of excellence and human betterment. Watkins (2000:103) also includes teacher motivation, the school environment, the school curriculum, instructional leadership, and language of instruction used as essential elements of quality education.

### **1.9.8 School effectiveness**

According to Kasambira (1999:164), “effectiveness” means providing a decided, decisive, or desired effect. Etzion (1964, cited in Chakanyuka, 2004:7), defines effectiveness as the extent to which an organisation achieves the objectives for which it was established. Ignathios (2003: 11) states that, “a school is said to be effective if it is doing right things in a right way and strives to achieve its objectives using its resources optimally, economically, efficiently and sufficiently”. Sergiovanni (2001: 204) perceives school effectiveness to mean achieving higher levels of pedagogical thoughtfulness, developing relationships characterised by caring and civility. The Director’s Circular Minute No. 41 of 2006 stipulates that schools should be centres of care and support for the promotion of quality education. The above descriptions provide an adequate understanding of the meaning attached to this concept in the study.

### **1.9.9 A model for effective practice**

Kasambira (1999:16) defines it as “a systematic approximation of reality, which comes complete with a convincing internal logic, a set of assumptions, postulates, data and inferences about some phenomena”. He goes further to say that a model attempts to describe the theoretical and practical aspects of a phenomenon.

Masiwa and Kabanda (2006:100) perceive a model as a representation of the real world. It is a roadmap to success in whatever one intends to achieve. Mawonera and Lee (2005:20) also describe a model as a statement based on the existing knowledge about a phenomenon to provide the best explanation about it. In this study, the model of instructional leadership is essential because it provides a broad framework for the high school head in creating a culture of teaching and learning (COTL) in line with the above explanations of the concept.

#### **1.9.10 School climate**

Hoy and Miskel (1982, cited in Madziyire, Makombe, Makoni & Mugwangi, 2001:118) and Sergiovanni and Starratt (1983, cited in Bowora & Mpofu 2000:25), concur that a school climate refers to the set of internal characteristics of a school that distinguishes it from other schools and influences the behaviour of teachers, students and the principal. DiPaola and Hoy (2008:43) define it as: “a relatively enduring quality of the school environment that is experienced by teachers, influences their behaviour, and is based on their collective perceptions”. The end product of school climate includes aspects such as shared values, social beliefs and social standards. School climate also refers to the subjective effect of the formal system, the informal management style of the school head or principal and other environmental factors on the attitudes, values, beliefs and the motivation of the various school groups (Grobler, 2003: 3). Chakanyuka (2004:14) describes it as the ‘feel,’ the ‘atmosphere’, the ‘personality’ or the ‘tone’ of the school. School climate is more extensively discussed in paragraph 3.5.3.1.

#### **1.9.11 School curriculum**

The term “curriculum” is a blanket term that is used to describe anything and everything connected with a school, including teaching and learning. It is the principal means whereby the school pursues its educational purposes and organises

its time (Tranter & Percival, 2006:92). The school curriculum influences the present and future academic, social, emotional and physical growth of students.

#### **1.9.12 School Development Committee (SDC)**

A School Development Committee (SDC) is an organ which consists of elected representatives of parents/guardians, teachers and other local leaders (Chisi & Nsingo, 2004:69). The concept was instituted by the Zimbabwean government as a cost sharing measure through Statutory Instrument 87 of 1992. The SDC is responsible for maintaining the school buildings, constructing new structures, and providing teaching and learning material and equipment for their schools (Director's Circular Minute No. 3 of 2006). Its other functions cited by Mapolisa, Manere, Shava, Matinde and Zivanayi (2006:123) include pegging levies paid by students, and engaging in fundraising activities to boost financial coffers in their schools.

### **1.10 THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY**

The study is organised into six chapters. Each chapter deals with a specific aspect of the study. The contents of each chapter are briefly explained below.

#### **Chapter one**

This is the orientation chapter. Its purpose is to provide the reader with an indication of what to expect in the research report. The chapter covers the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the research aim, the motivation of the study, the assumptions of the study, the description of the methods of the investigation, an explanation of the key concepts in the study and the structure of the study.

#### **Chapter two**

This chapter consists of a review and analysis of related literature, which provides a conceptual and theoretical framework for understanding and creating a culture of teaching and learning (COTL).

### **Chapter three**

Chapter 3 contains a literature review that relates to the principal's instructional leadership role in creating a COTL. It provides a conceptual framework of instructional leadership.

### **Chapter four**

Chapter four presents the research methodology and design used to collect data (see paragraph 1.8). The chapter discusses how the empirical study is designed and conducted. The chapter also justifies the research design used. Research instruments used to collect data are described and explained.

### **Chapter five**

This chapter presents analyses and discusses the collected data to find answers to questions raised earlier in the study (see paragraph 1.3.1). The data gathered are conveyed in various forms. Direct comments made by the participants are included.

### **Chapter six**

This is the final chapter. It gives a summary of the whole study, draws conclusions based on the research findings and makes recommendations and suggestions for further research.

## **1.11 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has presented the problem that has motivated this research and its setting. In addition, it contains the background to the study, statement of the problem, specific research questions, and aims of the study and the motivation for the study. Furthermore, this chapter has also dealt with the assumptions of the study and its limitations. Key concepts pertinent to the study have also been clarified and the research methodology and design used are also described. Finally, the chapter has given an outline of the structure of the study. The next two chapters will give a review of the literature and will present a conceptual framework that is relevant to this study.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING A CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the first chapter, an introductory orientation was given regarding the research problem under investigation. It was pointed out that leadership plays an important role in the creation of a COTL. In this chapter focus will firstly be on the concepts organisational culture and school culture as such and, secondly, how an effective COTL can be created in schools.

The concept of 'culture' has been receiving increasing attention in recent years in the literature on education in general and on educational leadership in particular. Today, schools face increasingly difficult and demanding environmental pressures, increased local and global competition, technological changes, increased legal and pressure group demands. They also face more differentiated demanding markets for their graduates (Kapfunde, 2000:7). Worldwide, education is undergoing radical change concerning the notions of teaching, learning and schooling. Importantly, numerous educational reforms and school restructuring movements are being introduced to achieve educational effectiveness and school development. Typical examples of efforts that are part of reform movements in Zimbabwe include the continued search for effective schools, the dramatic shift to school-based management and an emphasis on development planning, the promotion and maintenance of quality education, and the implementation of various school restructuring programmes. The country's reforms are characterised by a departure from quantity to quality, from maintenance to effectiveness, from improvement to development, from external to school-based management and from simplistic to sophisticated technology (Nyatanga, 2010:140). In response to these trends, considerable advances in research, practice and policy are under way towards

creating a COTL in the country's high schools where the public has expressed concern over the poor academic results in the Ordinary and Advanced level examinations.

Byrnes and Baxter (2006:1) assert that there is a pull between their roles as managers and visionary leaders that school principals today experience as they find themselves balancing the expectations of the school board, teachers, students, parents, and the central administration. They also admit that the most difficult and important role of principals is that of leading their schools to improvement.

The office of the high school head in Zimbabwe entails a high level of responsibility regarding the teaching and learning process that occurs in his/her school (Zvobgo, 1999:126; Kasambira, 1999:126). Handling the complex nature of the fast-paced change on many fronts of the various constituencies (that is, teachers, students, parents/community and the government) demands the implementation of a model for effective practice to create a positive and successful COTL. This review of the related literature includes the concept of 'culture' in general and school culture with a focus on what it is, how it works and why it is so important. Joubert and Bray (2007:xii) contend that schools have an obligation to nurture and protect democratic norms and values and above all, provide quality education in order to realise the dream of every learner to enjoy a quality life. Best practices, best thinking and emerging issues in instructional leadership are required to create a COTL intentionally.

## **2.2 THE CHANGING FACE OF SCHOOLS REGARDING A CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Undoubtedly, schools are different organisations today from what they were a decade ago. Without question, the role of the school principal regarding the creation of a COTL is completely different from what it used to be in the 1990s, and in the years before that. Different as it may be, the role of today's school principal is

deemed no less important than it was previously. In fact, it is now believed to be even more essential than ever before if top-performing schools are to be achieved (Gupton, 2003:21). Apparently, there is a new COTL in some schools to a larger or lesser extent. Tranter and Percival (2006: 10) posit that schools of the future will be staffed by experts who will be expected to carry out their respective roles. In Gupton (2003:22), Kent Peterson reviews the research on what effective principals do to assist students achieve success in their academic work. He highlights the following type of behaviour expected of effective school principals in this century. They are expected to provide instructional leadership and nurture it in others, shape the school culture, manage and administer complex organisational processes, build and maintain positive relations with parents, the community, and lead and support school improvement and change.

Teaching and learning have changed radically over the past forty years (Peters, 2008: 21). In the past, teaching expectations were restricted to presenting programmed lessons with answer keys and objective tests accompanying textbooks and this made it possible for teachers to execute their various responsibilities easily (Levin & McCullough:2008:2). According to Levin and McCullough (2008:2), classroom discipline was generally not a serious problem perhaps because teachers enjoyed both parental and leadership support. Most students were in fact, scared of being sent to the school principal's office in connection with their misbehaviour. In the past decades, the curricula and standards were determined by the central education body and accountability was not a real issue. Botha (2004:239) notes that global trends which include an increase in stakeholder participation, the devolution of decision making powers from the central to the school level, a change in stakeholder values as well as the devolution of authority and responsibility have apparently placed a range of new demands on the education system, including that of Zimbabwe.

Research in the fields of teaching and learning, technology, and globalisation has changed the face of teaching and learning. The responsibilities of teachers and

school heads continue to increase in a bid to keep abreast of the ever-growing internal and external demands placed upon schools. Bush and Oduro (2006, cited in Onguko, Abdalla & Webber, 2008:716) contend that school heads in developing countries work in very challenging contexts of a political, socio-economic and technological nature. The move to shift from the management of schools towards school leadership as a factor underpinning school success was launched in 2000 by the National College for Leadership in England (Earley & Weindling, 2004:14). The typical instructional leadership team of a high school in Zimbabwe consists of the school head, the deputy school head and HODs. The underlying philosophy and perception of schooling in Zimbabwe is that education is regarded as a basic human right. In keeping with this approach, schools are expected to prepare the nation's youth for future social, political, economic and cultural success (Mlahleki, 2010:104). Traditionally, education is often perceived as a means for achieving these functions only. However, due to the rapid development and change in almost every aspect of the world, the government of Zimbabwe accepts education for its own sake and also regards it as an important economic investment in human beings (Mlahleki, 2010:26). Although Zimbabwe is a developing country that is currently experiencing political, economic and social crises, its education system experiences all aforementioned pressures which affect school heads on top of the unique challenges associated with the present crises (see paragraph 5.5 and 5.6). The Herald, Monday 13 October 2008 reports that the social and economic stresses are so high that the country's education infrastructure is not what it used to be due to a combination of factors.

Accountability as an emerging and critical issue requires the school principal to redirect his/her attention from the competent administration of the school rules, operations and finances to instructional leadership (Owings & Kaplin, 2003:240). Today's school principal has a more immediate and direct responsibility to ascertain that all students benefit from the teaching and learning process. In Zimbabwe, ensuring that all students attain at least five subjects in the Ordinary level examinations is non-negotiable nowadays. According to Earley and Weindling (2004:78), accountability refers to:

A condition in which individual role holders are liable to review the application of sanctions if their actions fail to satisfy those with who they are in an accountability relationship.

Earley and Weindling (2004: 78) have identified four kinds of accountability relationships. They include moral accountability (to students), professional accountability (to educators), contractual accountability (to the school principal) and market accountability (to the world of work).

Essentially, accountability and standards have become dominant themes in most educational systems in this millennium. Accountability entails two responsibilities (Joubert & Bray 2007: xv). First, there is the responsibility to undertake certain actions. The second is to provide an account of those actions. Public schools do not only have to ensure that students can meet the high standards set for each grade and for graduation, but they are also expected to prepare them for a more complex and changing world.

The push for national, provincial, and district accountability standards places considerable pressure on school leaders, teachers and students to provide measurable outcomes to meet everyone's standards. Van der Westhuizen, Mosoge and Van Vuuren (2004:705) argue that a number of school principals have been rendered ineffective by the wide-range of changes taking place in the education system. Against such a changing scene in schools and the accountability issues discussed above, heads of high schools have to embrace their roles as change agents and instructional leaders in order to develop a school culture and classroom practices that value student and instructional diversity. For schools to respond to the changing face of schooling discussed above, they have to create a COTL through a model of effective practice.

School reforms often fail because the focus is not placed on the process of creating a COTL. Newman (cited in Huffman & Hipp, 2003:5), has noted that change in

education comes about only when teachers are helped to change themselves. The restructuring of schools to achieve effectiveness requires shared values and norms, an emphasis on student learning, reflective dialogue and collaboration. Sergiovanni (in Huffmann & Hipp, 2003:5), has called on schools to become learning communities. However, the task of promoting a COTL is daunting (see paragraph 2.9.2). In this regard, building a professional learning community is constrained by the numerous demands on teachers and administrators, the growing accountability issues, the increasingly diverse needs of students, teacher isolation and burnout. As societies become increasingly diverse as far as their cultural contexts are concerned, the role of education and schooling is to change both in terms of the goals that are set and the ways those goals can be accomplished in practice. The role of the school head as an educational leader keeps changing due to the influence of global population shifts, information technology and communication, pluralism and multiculturalism (Journal of Educational Administration:2010:1). Therefore, to develop, nurture and sustain a community of learners in the midst of the numerous compounding factors requires the implementation of a model for effective practice.

## **2.3 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND RELATED CONCEPTS**

### **2.3.1 The meaning of organisational school culture**

Since this study is about creating a COTL, it is important to begin by examining the concept of 'culture' in general as well as the concept of a culture of teaching and learning (COTL) in particular.

'Culture' is clearly a difficult and abstruse concept to define. Of the many different conceptions of culture that have been put forward, none is universally accepted as the best one. However, for purposes of conceptualisation, some of the recent definitions will be cited to develop a more concise meaning. Schein (cited in

Willarman, 2002:522; Davis, 2006: 30), provides a widely recognised definition of culture:

...a pattern of basic assumptions - invented, discovered or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration - has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to the specific problems.

Conner (1993: 164) as cited in Kaser, Mundry, Stiles and Loucks-Horsley (2002: 52), also defines culture as:

The beliefs, behaviours, and assumptions of an organisation that serve as a guide to what are considered appropriate or inappropriate actions for individuals and groups to engage in.

In addition to the above, Deal and Peterson (1999: 2-3) explain culture as the unwritten rules and expectations that apparently permeate everything, including the manner in which members talk, what they talk about and whether they seek colleagues out. Deal and Peterson believe that the term culture provides a much more accurate and intuitively appealing way to assist school leaders to better understand their school's own unwritten rules and traditions, norms, and expectations that apparently affect: the way people act, how they dress, what they talk about, whether they seek out colleagues for assistance or they don't, and how teachers feel about their work and their students. Culture is also defined by Tillman (2002:4) as:

A group's individual and collective ways of thinking, believing, and knowing, which includes their shared experiences, consciousness, skills, values, forms of expression, social institutions and behaviours.

Merriam and Mohammed (2000: 45) point out that the culture of a society is the glue that holds members together through aspects such as dress, values, beliefs, aspirations and challenges among others. Handy (1987, cited in Van der

Westhuizen, 2002: 120) view culture as the sum total of inherited ideas, values, beliefs and knowledge that determine a social structure and motivate people to enhance and cultivate traditions. Schein (1992, cited in Busher, 2006: 91), identifies a number of functions served by organisational culture. They include: giving meaning to human behaviour; generating shared values, beliefs, and assumptions; ensuring consistency of action among members of a group; conveying a sense of identity; and providing a common purpose for organisational members by specifying the goals and values by which the organisation should be directed. The extent to which organisational members interact, determines whether these functions of culture are going to be performed.

Every school has its own culture that is socially constructed by the members within it (Sarason, 1982, cited in Datnow, Hubbard & Mehan, 2002; 128). As far back as 1932, Willard Waller (cited in Deal & Peterson, 1999: 2), wrote:

Schools have a culture that is definitely their own. There are, in the school, complex rituals of personal relationships, a set of folkways, mores, and irrational sanctions, and a moral code based upon them. There are games, which are sublimated wars, teams, and an elaborate set of ceremonies concerning them. There are traditions, and traditionalists waging their world-old battle against innovations.

According to Wilmore (2002: 10), new teachers are inducted into a school culture through the comments and instructions they get from their seniors such as the high school head, the deputy school head and HODs. New students are also inducted into the school culture by their respective class teachers. Davis (2006: 40) notes that:

The culture of the educational organisation shapes and moulds assumptions that are basic to understanding what it means to be a teacher. The culture informs the teacher as to what it means to teach, what teaching methods are available and approved for use, what pupils or students are like - what is possible and what is not. The culture also plays a large role in defining for teachers their commitment to the task; it evokes the energy of the teachers to perform the task, loyalty, and commitment to the organisation and to its ideas.



According to French, Atkinson and Rugen (2007: 140), the interwoven elements that form the fabric of school culture include: how members of a school community teach and learn from each other, interact, communicate, express themselves, work together, reflect on their practice, and celebrate events. A school culture is the creation of its participants namely, the school head, teachers, parents and members of the wider community. Within the educational service, whether at school, regional or national level, culture has a symbiotic relationship with the behaviours of the school head, teachers, students, parents and the entire community. It is a construct that consists of a wide range of expectations about what is proper and inappropriate (Wrigley, 2003: 34).

Wrigley (2003:34) explains that school cultures:

....are dynamic and created through the interactions of people. They are a nexus of shared norms and values that express how people make sense of the organisation in which they work and other people with whom they work.

The statement above implies that school culture is manifested through relationships that are encouraged between students and teachers, as well as between students, by particular approaches to teaching and learning.

School cultures are highly contested because of the interplay of both internal and external forces. Moreover, school improvement cannot be understood by merely focusing on internal processes alone but there is also a need to examine the interaction between internal and external cultures. These include the dominant ideas and values within the wider community and the principles that permeate the micro-political culture. DiPaola and Hoy (2008:47) view school culture as a pattern of basic assumptions, values, norms and acceptable attitudes that are invented, discovered or developed as the school principal, teachers and students learn to cope with problems concerning the teaching and learning process. Thus, a school culture

includes an atmosphere of diligence and hard work that develops with students because of the commitment and involvement of parents, leadership by the school principal and the professional conduct of educators (teachers). Definitions of school culture, as given by Pryor and Pryor (2005:9) include factors such as the values, attitudes and beliefs that determine behavioural norms. School culture determines relationships, work habits and practices, communication and language, a sense of self-space, values and norms, beliefs and attitudes as well as mental processes and learning.

The culture of the school determines how teachers and students behave, whether they support and collaborate with one another or compete against each other, whether they work well together or whether there is conflict, whether teachers feel job satisfaction and enjoyment or whether they do not. School culture defines how teachers teach, how students learn, how people in the school system get along together and how much success is achieved in attaining school goals through the school head's instructional leadership. Dean (2002: 10) regards school culture as a strong undercurrent, which flows beneath the surface, giving meaning to and shaping the daily choices and priorities of school activities.

It is therefore essential that school leaders should transform their school culture in order to enhance teaching and learning so that they become ingrained parts of daily school life. Importantly, the culture of a school reflects the values, beliefs and behaviours of its members (Owings & Kaplin, 2003: 62), namely its teachers, students and the school principal. In fact, it is one of the variables of school life, and the interaction through which other aspects of education are achieved. Sullivan and Glanz (2005:49) contend that school culture encompasses the habits, routine and behaviours (conscious and unconscious) that reveal the beliefs, norms and values that develop over time. Coles and Southworth (2005:53) maintain that the culture of a school describes the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs shared by a school organisation's members, operating unconsciously. Not only does school culture describe how things are, it acts as a lens or screen through which the world

is viewed and also defines reality for members of the school community. Furthermore, it influences how a school community goes about its business.

School culture is viewed by Dalin, Rolff and Kleekamp (2003:97) as a complex phenomenon, which appears at three different levels. The first is the transrational level where values are conceived to be metaphysical, based on beliefs, ethical and moral insights. The second is the rational level where values are seen to be grounded within a special context of norms, customs, expectations and standards. The sub-rational is the third level. At this stage, values are experienced as personal preferences and feelings rooted in emotion. School culture is an amalgamation of the values, beliefs, practices, and assumptions of the teachers, staff and students. It is created through their relationships and experiences, and is reinforced in the traditions, rituals and ceremonies, stories and legends pertaining to the school. Organisational climate is one of the aspects that sets the scene for effective instructional leadership. According to DiPaola and Hoy (2008:43), teachers' performance in schools is partly determined by school culture. The role of assumptions, beliefs, norms, values, behaviours, rituals, stories and legends, and ceremonies in sustaining school culture are discussed below.

### **2.3.1.1 Rituals**

Bush and Anderson (2003: 9) contend that school culture is typically expressed through rituals and ceremonies such as prize giving, assemblies, and national holidays. Symbols and rituals are very important in the school culture because they serve to reinforce the values and bond members of the school community together (Peterson & Deal, 1998, cited in Roberts & Pruitt, 2003: 174). Rituals are planned and unplanned procedures or routines that are infused through social interaction with deeper meaning and explicit purpose (Driskill & Brenton, 2005: 49). In addition, rituals are repetitive sequences of activities that express and reinforce the key values of the school, what goals are most important, which people are important and

which are expendable. Deal and Peterson (1999:32) point out that rituals assist members of the school community to make common experiences uncommon events in a bid to promote a COTL.

Rituals sometimes mark certain benchmarks and accomplishments. In schools, prize-giving functions, assemblies, graduation ceremonies, and national celebration ceremonies are organised so that students, teachers, staff, parents, and the community participate.

### **2.3.1.2 Stories and legends**

Stories are an important aspect of school culture because they provide explanations for and legitimacy to current instructional practices. For a school stories also help to exemplify what is good for the school and its constituents especially with regards to academic and sporting achievements. The use of stories is one of the avenues through which both new and existing members of a culture can be informed about and reminded of its values (Robbins & Alvy, 2003: 35). Noe (2002, cited in Roberts & Pruitt, 2003: 174) posit that stories of important people and events in the school not only help to inspire members of the learning community, but also help to reinforce the culture. Besides reminding members of the school community about vital values, stories and legends also provide opportunities for members of the school community to talk about issues directly affecting organisational performance. Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge & Ngcobo (2008: 57) claim that stories and legends lay the foundation for the process of leading and managing school development.

### **2.3.1.3 Ceremonies**

Ceremonies are an important aspect of a school culture. According to Deal and Peterson (1999:35), ceremonies are periodic events that help to bind all members of the school community to each other. In anthropology, the culture of an organisation is the concept through which 'orderliness' and 'patterning' of people's life experience

are explained. Celebrations help to put the school's values on display and should be honoured constantly.

#### **2.3.1.4 Assumptions**

Culture is perceived by Schein (1996, cited in Andrews and Anfara, 2003:347), as assumptions that are invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems. Assumptions are the preconscious "system of beliefs, perceptions, and values" that guide behaviour (Otto, 1989 in Deal & Peterson, 1999:27). Assumptions are deeply embedded in the cultural tapestry and according to Otto (1989), they shape thoughts and actions in very powerful ways. A school's underlying assumptions may concern the nature of teaching, the nature of the curriculum or the types of students. Assumptions in a school are the unconscious and therefore unquestionable perceptions people hold about what is important (Murphy & Lick, 2005: 74). Wrigley (2003:34), cites two basic assumptions that emanate from this perspective. One of these is the source of the expectations that define legitimate actions. The other one concerns how the expectations become part of the assumptive worlds of each member of the school organisation. In addition, assumptions and beliefs often reflect on intentions that are difficult to discern. Louis (2006: 258) maintains that assumptions can be uncovered by asking organisational members to explain the observed inconsistencies between their espoused values and actual behaviours (2.3.1.4).

#### **2.3.1.5 Values**

"Leaders are expected to ground their actions in clear personal and professional values" according to Bush (2008:277). Values are guidelines for behaviour, criteria by means of which the actions of organisational members are evaluated. Furthermore, values are closely related to the ideals shared by a group and people's behaviours are measured by the values and standards of their specific group. Driskill and Brenton (2005: 42) maintain that values tell members of an organisation what is

important, what to pay attention to, and how to interpret meanings. In addition, values are regarded by Deal and Peterson (1999: 26) as the conscious expressions of what an organisation stands for. They proceed to say that values define a standard of goodness, quality or excellence that undergirds behaviour, decision-making and what people care about. Reiss (2007: 53) concurs with Hoy and Miskel (1999: 215) that values are conceptions of what is desirable. It needs to be emphasised that values form an integral part of planning, decision-making and all other management activities in a school organisation and are therefore vital for the accomplishment of school goals.

Deal and Peterson (1999: 26) argue that values are not simply goals or outcomes, but rather, they are a deeper sense of what is important for an organisation. Values are basic, direct, affective and behavioural in character and exist at five levels; the individual level, the group level (in the classroom), the organisational/school level, the subculture level and at the society level. At the individual level, values represent motivational goals and they can also be representative of conflict or peace of mind in the school head and among individual teachers as they go about their daily routines. At the cultural level, values are quite complex and according to Thomas (2000:23), they can be conceived in many different ways and this is sometimes a source of conflict. Values also reflect the utilisation of the available resources, and how human and financial matters are handled.

Values are perceived by Goldsmith, Lyons and Freas (2000: 93) as standards set, which serve as enduring principles that enable members to maintain their bearings. Davies, Ellison and Bowring-Carr (2005: 188) maintain that values underpin a sense of the public good in education. Value systems in a school culture are the things regarded as important and that are held in high regard by the members of a group. Value systems influence the norms and standards that in turn, influence patterns of behaviour (Matanda & Gwete, 2005: 48). In a culture where learning, collaboration, and quality are valued, the physical environment reflects these core values. In addition, there are activities in place within the physical environment that remind

members in the organisation of the importance of learning and collegiality. The instructional leader's value management in terms of creating a COTL is discussed in paragraph 3.5.1.4.

#### **2.3.1.6 Beliefs**

Beliefs are an important aspect of school culture. According to Murphy and Lick (2005:74), beliefs are the values and expectations that people hold to be true about them, others, their work, and the school. Beliefs provide the basis for what people consider to be right or wrong, true or untrue, good or bad and relevant or irrelevant about their school and its operation. There is a common thinking that belief systems within the school exist at the deepest level and consist of tacit assumptions and understandings that are cherished by all the school's stakeholders in a particular context. Importantly, belief systems in a school culture influence the value systems mentioned above.

Beliefs are consciously held, cognitive views about truth and reality (Otto, 1998 in Deal & Peterson, 1999:26-27). They originate from both group and personal experience. In a school setting, beliefs are very critical because they represent the core understanding about students' capacity and teacher responsibility for the teaching and learning process. According to Pellicer (2008: 51), the leader's basic and positive beliefs about the necessary goodness of people define the limits of their potential and give them freedom to do great things. On the other hand, negative beliefs predispose people to behave in destructive and undesirable ways. In this regard, the instructional leaders' value system in creating a COTL is discussed in chapter three in paragraph 3.5.1.4.

#### **2.3.1.7 Norms**

Norms are the shared feelings a group has of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable, whereas values are closely related to the ideals shared by a group (Blauw, 1998:16). Generally, organisational members behave towards one another in accordance with the expectations they perceive to exist within a particular culture. In addition, group expectations (or norms) are usually a function of an unwritten code of behaviour. More often than not, norms are not thought through consciously by organisational members, but instead they develop through established patterns and habits (Naidu *et al.* 2008: 58). Moreover, norms develop formally and informally as schools and groups discover and reinforce particular ways of acting and interacting (Deal & Peterson, 1999:27). Importantly, the norms of a school culture involve what should or ought to be done as well as what should not be done in the school. It should be noted that positive norms vary from one school to another. Shiluvane (2001:31) also adds that norms are the standard, customary behaviour to which an individual subscribes. Norms consolidate the assumptions, values and beliefs held by the school head, HODs, teachers and students with regards to the teaching and learning process.

Shared norms are important because they assist a group to sustain its cultural tradition. Indeed, it is important that the school leader identifies the positive norms, and reinforces them and furthermore, he or she should try to identify the negative norms to be addressed.

#### **2.3.1.8 Behaviours**

Behaviours are the ways people conduct themselves on a day-to-day basis. The American Heritage Dictionary (1982) defines behaviour as, “the actions or reactions of persons or things under specific circumstances.” In addition, behaviour is observable and can be viewed objectively. Murphy and Lick (2005:74) describe behaviour as perceptible actions that are based on values and expectations and are ideally intended to carry out the mission of the school; therefore behaviour is a critical component of instructional leadership.



### 2.3.2 Layers of organisational culture

Williams and De Gaetano (1985, cited in Roberts & Pruitt, 2003: 173), identify three important layers of school culture that influence instructional leadership. First, is the outer layer which include obvious and observable factors such as the language people use, the way people dress, food, the physical layout of buildings, architecture and appearance of offices and the overt signs of status. In a school, the hall displays, the amount of student work exhibited, the way furniture is arranged and the slogans that are posted on notice boards are indicators that provide clues about the culture of the school. For Holbeche (2006: 180), letters, memos, papers, reports, forms, system, policies, procedures as well as the overt behaviour of organisational members are part of the visible manifestations of the culture. Thus, this layer of culture is all about what people can see and hear when they walk around the organisation after hours in the absence of community members. While it is easy to observe them, insiders are often so used to them that they fail to regard them as important.

Second, is the middle layer which is concerned with the day-to-day practices that make up the ongoing life of the school. Referring to a school organisation, Roberts and Pruitt (2003: 173) have this to say:

*This is the “how” layer: How do we do things around here? How are staff meetings conducted? How are end-of-term transition activities for students conducted? How are parents received into the building?*

The middle layer refers to the norms and values of a culture, which are often written down, and include statements about purpose, mission and objectives (Holbeche, 2006: 179). This component of school culture is often known by members of the school community and is formally or informally transmitted to new members.

Third, is the core layer which refers to the fundamental values, assumptions, and shared beliefs of the members of the school organisation (Roberts & Pruitt, 2003:173). Roberts and Pruitt (2003;173) state that this is the deepest layer, which is often taken for granted; hence outsiders may not see it readily. Busher (2001: 76) contends that:

Although powerfully visible through various symbolic practices, organisational culture is often taken for granted by current participants in an organisation who may be unaware how a particular culture has been constructed, how it might or can be changed or how it is sustained by those people in positions of power and authority.

Some members within the school may find it difficult to articulate what the core layer of school culture entails. One of its basic underlying assumptions is that when organisational values, which would otherwise have been viewed as controversial, are seen to work effectively for a long time, they tend to lose their subjective feel and seem to become accepted facts which are essentially regarded as true. School leaders are therefore expected to ground their actions in clear personal and professional values (Bush, 2008:277). Another underlying assumption is that organisational members may think that their behaviour reflects an accurate picture of reality, forgetting that a certain way of responding to situations may only be one choice among many possibilities. This layer of culture seeks to justify the rationale for doing certain things in a particular way. Effective instructional leadership therefore is one that sets clear expectations and implement high standards to improve teaching and learning at a school. Each of the three layers of culture discussed above has a forming and controlling function regarding the members of a cultural group and develops over time in response to a complex set of factors (Nduna, Nyamuda & Nyatanga, 2004: 34). Generally, the layers focus on student achievement, collaboration, inquiry, problem-solving, and continuous improvement should permeate all the above layers of school culture.

## **2.4 School culture and strategic change**

Change leaders at school level will need to understand the elements at work in any change process and to use the appropriate leadership approach to give the change effort the best chances of success. Importantly, the role of the school head lies in his or her ability to coordinate each of the previously discussed aspects of school culture so that a unified culture of shared expectations and accountability is forged (Director's Circular Minute No. 41 of 2006). The culture of a school can be regarded as an invaluable asset but only in those instances where it is either in alignment with where it ought to be or is flexible enough to permit for change in instructional practice when necessary. The sharing of beliefs, assumptions, and values discussed in paragraph 2.3.1 does not develop overnight, but develops over time.

Loughridge and Tarantino (2005:4) contend that school culture reflects among others, how long the school has been in existence, how long the staff has been there and who the major players are on the staff. The two writers describe the school culture aptly as a mirror of the community. To effect a change in the school culture so that it results in its improvement, one or more of the assumptions, beliefs, norms, and behaviours that are part of school cultures need to be realigned through a process Murphy and Lick (2005: 75) call *cultural shift*. The realignment is intended to ensure that the building blocks of the school culture are consistent with the new direction of the school. A change in the school culture would require the members of the school community to change their behaviour, reinforcing and penalising positive and negative behaviour respectively. The fast changing socio-economic environment in Zimbabwe places great responsibility on schools to be centres of development for children.

### **2.4.1 Characteristics of a healthy school culture**

Matthew Miles (1969, cited in DiPaola & Hoy, 2008:44) views a healthy organisation as one that survives and adequately copes with disruptive external forces while at

the same time directing its energies towards its main goals. Although there is no clear-cut formula for achieving a healthy school culture, Ramsey (2008: 19-20) and Deal & Peterson (1999: 116) mention a number of characteristics that are indicative of a healthy school culture. They are outlined below.

A healthy school culture balances the interests of the one, the few, and the many. It decentralises decision making, while at the same time maintaining a unified and central focus. The culture allows teachers and students to utilise their talents to the full and to exercise some control over their work.

A healthy school culture is principle-driven. This means it values principles over personalities or procedures. The focus is on the cultivation of learning and interaction among teachers and administrators to improve teaching and learning outcomes for students and for the school community.

A healthy school culture stresses relationships and connections. Each member's sense of affiliation in the school is strengthened and this enhances rich supporting relationships (see paragraph 3.5.3.2). Poppleton and Williamson (2004:289) argue that when teachers participate in responsible and initiating roles in school change, they tend to be more positive and can willingly engage in further change.

A healthy school culture is driven by passion. This means that all stakeholders are motivated to do what is expected of them. ~~Every aspect of t~~The school community should nourishes learning and assists everyone who comes into contact with the school to contribute to the learning community. A healthy school culture is consistent, members are empowered and it brings the best out in everyone involved. It is a learning community where students and teachers alike are engaged in matters of importance to them. Nyamuda (2004: 69-73) proposes empowerment through an entrepreneurial culture, through effective communication, networking and delegation.

A healthy school culture is fear-free. This means students and teachers feel secure enough to experiment and take risks. In addition to this, the school has expectations of excellence, high performance, and exceptional service and mediocrity is unacceptable (see paragraph 3.5.1.6).

A healthy school culture is characterised by transparency based on open communication and a smooth flow of information in all directions (see paragraph 3.4.2). It values the sharing of ideas and opinions. In a school with a healthy culture, collegiality and collaboration are emphasised (see paragraph 3.5.1.4). Importantly too, the school focuses the mission statement of the school on student and teacher learning and the school belongs to the school community and incorporates the collective vision of the community (see paragraph 3.4.1). Thus far the characteristics mentioned by Deal and Peterson (1999:116) as well as Ramsey (2008:19-20) discussed above that serve as a prerequisite for effective instructional leadership that promotes a COTL.

The above elements bestow a special style, temperament, feeling and tone on every school system. Since not all school cultures are healthy, it is also important to examine the elements of toxic cultures.

#### **2.4.2 Elements of toxic school cultures**

The following are some of the characteristics common to toxic school cultures stated in Deal and Peterson (1999:118-119):

Firstly, the schools become fixated on negative values and this negativity overrides optimism and the culture assumes a strikingly negative tone. The school principal seeks to maintain order and to keep parents at bay. Steyn (2003:330) adds that there is a breakdown of leadership.

Secondly, the schools become fragmented; meaning is derived from subculture membership, anti-student sentiments, or life outside the school. There is nothing positive and symbolic to hold members of the school community together. Teachers go through the motions regarding their tasks and there is hardly any cooperation. Students in turn, become aware of the underlying conflict and take advantage of it. Under such a scenario, it becomes imperative for leadership to provide a sense of advancement and motivate the disparate followers (Taffinder, 2006: 8).

Thirdly, the schools become destructive with teachers berating students and having lower expectations of them. They spend most of their time and energies promoting themselves and talking about issues unrelated to teaching and learning. In addition, the leadership and staff dislike their clientele and have a negative attitude towards students.

Fourthly, the schools become spiritually fractured. Most members of the school community display a sense of anomie, hopelessness, narcissism or unreflective mindlessness. Staff and students feel personally lost or pessimistic, discouraged, and despondent.

It can be concluded from the above that the culture of a dysfunctional school would also include teachers who are not adequately skilled in teaching, who arrive late for their classes at school and are not adequately prepared for lessons and in general, who resent the school. Other features of a toxic COTL cited by Chisholm and Vally (1996:1) include poor attendance, teachers who are not motivated to teach, poor school leadership, demotivation and low morale among both teachers and learners and poor state of buildings.

In view of the above features that typify a toxic school culture, it is therefore important to discuss antidotes for this toxic environment.

### **2.4.3 Antidotes for negativism in a school culture**

Deal and Peterson (1999:12) have provided five practical strategies that can help school leaders to deal with the undesirable elements of a negative culture. The first is confronting the negativity by giving people a chance to express their sentiments openly. The second is focusing energy on the recruitment, selection, and retention of reflective and positive staff and striving to celebrate the positive aspects as well as focusing on what is possible. The third is attempting to eliminate the negative consciously and directly, and replacing it with positive norms. The fourth is developing new norms for success and renewal. The last one is attempting to identify and relocate personnel to a different environment where they may be more successful and compatible with the prevailing culture.

## **2.5 TYPES OF SCHOOL CULTURES**

School cultures vary widely from school to school: from the hierarchical and bureaucratic organisational structures that characterised most public school systems in the last century to the developing professional collaborative cultures of today (French, Atkinson & Rugen, 2007: 141). Naturally, there are as many kinds of school cultures as there are schools. However, the common denominator is that some school cultures are stronger, more vibrant, healthier and more successful than others. The culture of a school, as is the case with its climate, stems from the vision, which guides all members who work in it (Dean, 2002: 12). In a school system where there is a shared vision and shared values, trust can prevail. Where there is trust, all people within the school system are more likely to be willing to express their problems and find means and ways to forge ahead as a unity. However, culture starts with the school leadership. What it simply means is that the school principal must share the school vision with the rest of the members of the school community (refer to paragraphs 3.4.1 & 3.4.1.1).

As high schools in Zimbabwe strive to move towards building new cultures that are more effective in improving the COTL, it is important to look at the various types.

Table 2.1 below shows a general overview of types of school governance, [andas](#)

~~well as decision making,~~ curriculum, ~~and assessment~~ and decision making associated with various school cultures provided by French, Atkinson and Rugen (2007: 142), which will be followed by a further discussion.

**Table 2.1: Types of school cultures**

Type of culture	School governance	Instruction, curriculum, assessment, and decision making
Hierarchical and bureaucratic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centralised decision making by a small group of administrators with little or no teacher input. Teacher autonomy within the classroom, with restricted participation in schoolwide organisational and curricular decisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defined by the state and district specialists. Testing used to sort students homogeneously (by grade levels, for programmes, in classroom groups). Teacher's job is to present a prescribed set of content and skills. Individual teachers are held accountable for student failure.</li> </ul>
Non-collaborative: "Balkanisation"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Separate and competing groups seek power for their own ends.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor integration of curriculum and instructional goals. Atmosphere of competition among teachers.</li> </ul>
Non-collaborative: "Comfortable collaboration"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comfortable, easygoing atmosphere is pleasant but does not solve troublesome issues facing the school community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers share some ideas, techniques, and materials to improve teaching and learning, but avoid deeper issues that affect curriculum and long-range planning.</li> </ul>
Non-collaborative "Contrived collegiality"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal, but not necessarily collaborative, structures (such as site-based management councils, school improvement teams, peer coaching) are in place and enable teachers to work together.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work appears collaborative on the surface but does not translate into the deeper, more significant and productive practices found in collaborative settings.</li> </ul>



Professional collaborative culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principal is a facilitative leader. Teachers have significant involvement in decision-making. Teachers and students collaborate on issues that affect the whole school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant teacher involvement in decision making about school goals, curriculum, and instructional practices. Collaborative responsibility for student achievement.</li> </ul>
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### 2. 5.1 The culture of individualism

The culture of individualism refers to a scenario where teachers rarely observe each other while teaching. Individual teachers differ in their styles and approaches to instructional situations (Makombe & Madziyire: 2002: 25) and seldom collaborate with the serious analysis of and reflection on their teaching. The individualised culture is caused by the physical isolation of classrooms, the tendency that teachers equate professional interaction with teacher evaluation and its negative connotations and increasing demands on and expectations of teachers, which leave them with little time for collegiality. According to Nkobi (2008:490), teachers' experiences and perceptions are different and they impact on the environment in which they work and also on the quality of their performance.

### 2.5.2 The balkanised culture

The balkanised culture is described by Hargreaves (1992, cited in Gordon, 2004: 160) as made up of separate and competing groups, **all** jockeying for position and supremacy like loosely independent entities. The separate groups usually consist of teachers or students who socialise together. Hargreaves goes on to remark that a balkanised culture often leads to poor communication, inconsistent expectations of students, poor long-term monitoring of student growth and conflicts over scarce resources. Hargreaves has observed that balkanisation tends to occur in high

schools partly due to their division into specialised subjects. According to Fullan and Hargreaves (1992, cited in Bush & Middlewood, 2005:51), teachers in balkanised cultures attach their loyalties and identities to particular groups of their colleagues. The existence of such groups in a school often reflects and reinforces diverse group dynamics which in turn have an impact on teaching and learning.

### **2.5.3 The functioning professional collaborative culture**

Wrigley (2003:45) states that “improving a school is a journey of hope based on shared beliefs, values and real commitment”. The functioning collaborative culture is characterised by mutual acceptance, trust, openness, support, sharing and recognition. A functioning collaborative culture entails agreements on core values while at the same time tolerating and even encouraging disagreement within the parameters of the agreed upon values. According to Hoadley, Christie and Ward (2010:383), a collaborative teacher culture is associated with better results. Leadership is critical because it provides information about innovative approaches, identifies instructional problems and suggests solutions and assists teachers towards the promotion of goals (Chigumira, 1999:117). This type of culture is difficult to establish and let alone to maintain. Reasons given include the tight schedule for teachers and the heavily packed curriculum, which makes collaboration difficult to achieve.

The types of school culture given above will have an impact on the instructional leadership of the school head in the long-term and short-term (see paragraphs 3.4 & 3.5), and should be taken into account when providing instructional leadership in order to bring about desired change.

## **2.6 FUNCTIONS AND IMPACT OF SCHOOL CULTURE**

In paragraph 2.3 the importance of culture was discussed in general; whereas this paragraph focuses specifically on the functions of school culture. John Goodlad (1984, as cited in Constantino, 2003:11) states that:

Alike as schools may be in many ways, each school has an ambience (culture) of its own and, further, its ambience may suggest to the careful observer useful approaches to making it better.

Several studies have shown the importance of a collaborative school culture for improving student achievement and motivating teachers. Cheng (1993, in Andrews and Anfara, 2003:34) found out that school culture correlated with teachers' attitudes towards their work. Cheng also found out that stronger school cultures had teachers with a higher level of motivation. Fullan (2005:58) notes that of the 134 secondary schools in England that were part of the 2004 Hay Group study, the successful schools had a much more demanding culture characterised by a hunger for improvement, promoting excellence and had hope for every child. Other important functions of school culture identified by Basson et al (cited in Van Deventer & Kruger, 2009: 5) include: helping to define teachers' tasks; influencing teachers' commitment to their teaching task; binding all members of the school community in a common vision towards an effective COTL; determining the desired behaviour of both teachers and learners, and facilitating decision making.

On the other hand, the less successful schools were characterised by a less demanding culture, with a minimum level of improvement and a feeling of demotivation. In addition, these schools were more forgiving if the desired results were not forthcoming. Schools are effective to the extent to which they fulfil their purpose of providing quality education (Masitsa, 2005:213).

High schools generally emphasise excellence in both academic matters and character in their various departments. A close look at what goes on in the school as a whole, and the classroom in particular would show that schools do much more than just impart knowledge to students. According to Elbot and Fulton (2008: 1),

schools influence the manner in which the students look upon themselves and others; affect the way learning is valued and sought after and lay the foundation of lifelong habits of thought and action; shape opinion and develop taste, assisting students to form likes and dislikes. According to Van Deventer & Kruger, (2009: 6), principals and teachers can influence the COTL by providing sound convictions about education; implementing an effective school policy; caring for the school buildings; modelling accepted norms and values (see paragraphs 2.3.1.5; 2.3.1.7 & 3.5.1.4); enhancing a genuine philosophy of teaching and learning, and formulating a guiding school vision and mission.

In the light of the above, one would not question, nor deny that the culture of a school has a strong impact on both the students and the teachers. Barth (2002:7) asserts that:

A school's culture has far more influence on life and learning in the schoolhouse than the state department of education, superintendent, the school board, or even the principal can ever have.

Elbot and Fulton (2008:2) also argue that a school's culture – whether vibrant, adaptive and thriving, or toxic and dying - affects everything that is associated with the school. The implication of the sentiments expressed above is that schools need an intentional culture based on shared values, beliefs and behaviours if they are to succeed in building an environment characterised by excellence for their students on an ongoing basis. To achieve this winning culture, the long-term leadership approach discussed in paragraph 3.4 is needed.

School culture tends to influence virtually every part of the enterprise; from what members talk about, to the type of instruction that is valued, to the manner in which professional development is viewed. Strong, positive, collaborative school cultures have powerful effects on various aspects of school life. Prominent authors on culture such as Deal and Peterson (1999: 7-8) and Servais and Sanders (2006: 91-92) have provided a synopsis of the various functions and benefits of a school culture. The

main features of this cultural framework are provided below as examples that justify the importance of a school culture. A school culture fosters school effectiveness and productivity. School culture improves collegial and collaborative activities that help to foster communication and problem-solving practices. A school culture fosters successful change and improvement efforts. An investigation by Poppleton and Williamson (2004:289) has revealed that teachers' positive consequences of work life occur when they are involved in the highest level of planning, initiating and shared decision-making. A school culture builds commitment and identification of staff, students and administrators. A school culture amplifies the energy, motivation, and vitality of the school staff, students and the community. A school culture increases the focus of daily behaviour and attention on what is purported to be important and valued. The importance of school culture is emphasised by Peterson (2002:10) when he argues that:

When a school has a positive, professional culture, one finds meaningful staff development, successful curricular reform, and the effective use of student performance data. In these cultures, staff and student learning thrive. In contrast, a school with a negative or toxic culture that does not value professional learning, resists change, or devalues staff development that hinders success. School culture will have either a positive or detrimental impact on the quality and success of staff development.

Elbot and Fulton (2008:3) have observed that few educators seem to appreciate the importance of a school culture and as a result, little or no effort is taken to create it intentionally. However, there is growing data advocating the need to make a concerted effort to build a lasting COTL in schools.

## **2.7 THE FOUR MIND-SET MODEL OF SCHOOL CULTURE**

According to Elbot and Fulton (2008:39), the work of schooling for academic excellence can be approached in the context of four different mind-sets, namely the dependence, independence, interdependence and integration mind-sets. These mind-sets help shape our reality. Each of the mind-sets is explained briefly below.

### **2.7.1 The dependence mind-set**

This mind-set subscribes to the qualities of acceptance, humility and respect, which relate to respect for tradition, for decorum and respect for a chain of command. Operating under such an orientation ensures that everything is done effectively and efficiently. The mind-set of dependence enables teachers to honour the school-wide disciplinary policy and sometimes members are expected to adjust or alter their approach to discipline. The downside of the mind-set of dependence noted by Elbot and Fulton (2008:40) includes a lack of initiative, creativity and collegiality and a lack of the reflective pursuit of set goals. Leading a school in terms of a mind-set of dependence results in doing what the school principal asks them to do even if the tasks are irrational and against their will and teachers lack a sense of ownership in the affairs of the instructional process.

### **2.7.2 The independence mind-set**

The independence mind-set entails initiative, and responsibility for accomplishing goals. When a person is operating under such an orientation, he or she is likely to have the answer to pressing problems and to have personal interpretations of rules, decorum and respect (Elbot & Fulton, 2008:40).

### **2.7.3 The interdependence mind-set**

The interdependence mind-set embraces caring energy (Elbot & Fulton, 2008:40). At its best, this orientation can assist schools with addressing certain issues by tapping into the collective knowledge and wisdom. This can lead to a heightened sense of solidarity among the group. The call for a paradigm shift from independent to interdependent thinking and acting is being made in many spheres in this new millennium, because it can lead to the creation of a healthier school climate. According to DiPaola and Hoy (2008:47), instructional leadership occurs when the principal works with his or her teachers to improve instruction by way of providing a

school culture and climate where change is linked to the best knowledge and practice about teaching and learning.

When a school head leads in terms of a framework of interdependence, he or she shares power with the whole staff, facilitates collaboration (when appropriate) and reinforces certain behaviour so that each member of the school community feels part of the whole (the holistic perspective). It should also be pointed out that the school principal is still expected to determine the manner in which teachers view their work. This implies that the school principal can frame how teachers, students and parents relate to each other and to the school's physical space. However, one limitation associated with this orientation is that the school principal may end up managing different "islands" (Elbot & Fulton, 2008:40).

#### **2.7.4 The integration mind-set**

Integration refers to "the extent to which areas and people are brought together and are able to share a unified culture" (Coleman & Earley, 2005:64). Therefore, the integration mind-set involves bringing together the best qualities or practices of the three other orientations described above. As Martin Luther King junior, (cited in Elbot & Fulton, 2008: 41) puts it: "We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." Harcher and Hyle (1996, cited in Nkobi, 2008:483) advocate for a collaborative power in instructional leadership so as to "balance power inequalities in the school and its wider community."

Just as is the case with the other three mind-sets, the integration mind-set can be used to expose current limitations, point out new possibilities, and provide specific tools for more highly integrated ways of performance.

## **2.8 THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN CREATING SCHOOL CULTURE**

It has already been stated that culture reflects the values and beliefs that are demonstrated by members of a community or organisation. Servais and Sanders (2006: 88) see cultural leadership as the opportunity to guide, develop, and sustain the culture of an organisation. Knezevich (1984, cited in Beach & Reinhartz, 2000: 74) asserts that:

Leadership is a process of stimulating, developing, and working with people within an organisation. It is a human oriented process and focuses upon personal motivation, human relationships or social interactions, interpersonal communications, organisational climate, interpersonal conflicts, personal growth and development and enhancement of the productivity of human factors in general.

Leithwood, Jantz and Steinbach (1999:8) stress that:

Leadership is a process of influence to the achievement of desired purposes. Successful leaders develop a vision for their schools based on personal and professional values. They articulate this vision at every opportunity and influence their staff and other stakeholders to share the vision. The philosophy, structures and activities are geared towards the achievement of these shared visions.

To achieve school improvement, shared values and a common vision help to focus the school's staff on the work to be accomplished. In line with the conception that the vision should focus on teaching and learning, Hord (1995, in Huffman & Hipp, 2003:78) observes that a core characteristic of the professional learning community is an undeviating focus on student learning.

The development of the school vision is discussed in the next chapter in paragraph 3.4.1.2.

Shared values and a common vision play a definitive role in determining the norms for behaviour within a school. These norms are manifested in the shared responsibility for student learning, a caring environment, open communication, a balance of personal and common ambitions and a trusting relationship. Fidler (1997, cited in Earley & Weindling, 2004: 4) identifies two key features that are associated with leadership,



namely, a sense of purpose and confidence that is engendered in the followers and the influence of followers on the goal or task achievement.

Bush and Glover (2003: 10) add that leadership is involved in inspiring and supporting followers in the task of attaining the set goals and the envisioned vision.

Besides providing leadership aimed at uniting the school community, there are also some specific types of behaviour, characteristic of leadership that facilitate the creation of a cohesive, student-centred COTL. Larsen (1987, cited in Gupton, 2003:63), comments that principals of high-achieving schools were perceived by their faculties (that is teachers, students and parents) as engaging in goal setting; creating a favourable school climate (see paragraph 3.5.3.1); maintaining school community relations (see paragraph 3.5.3.2); promoting staff development, and as facilitating effective and fair supervision and evaluation (see paragraph 3.4.4.1).

In order to accomplish the above functions, Larsen (in Gupton, 2003: 63) identifies what a principal who seeks to create a COTL does namely, communicating high expectations for student academic performance to teachers (see paragraph 3.5.1.6); protect teachers, students and support staff from undue pressure so that they have more time to concentrate on their core business; assessing the morale of the entire school community (see paragraph 3.5.2.2); recognising the professional achievements of the teachers and the students from a personal point of view; and establishing a safe and orderly school environment, which has a clear code of conduct (see paragraph 2.9.2.6).

Deal and Peterson (1999), Evans (1996), Fullan (2001) and Sergiovanni (2001), cited in Murphy & Datnow (2003: 86) concur that school leaders play a pivotal role in shaping the culture of their institutions. The literature identifies the beliefs, knowledge, interaction patterns and actions that culminate in the creation of a culture conducive to teaching and learning. Managing the instructional programme, promoting a positive school climate and defining a mission or vision have been cited

as some of the effective actions that school leaders can take to create a COTL. It is important to note that school principals are expected to shape the school culture so that teachers are able to teach and students are able to learn (Deal & Peterson, 1999: 10).

McEwan (2003: 108) argues that a single school leader can hardly succeed in creating a school culture without the involvement of other members of staff. Glanz (2006c: 80) posits that the school leader should possess a charismatic quality that attracts followers and also demonstrate empathy and caring for individuals. An awareness of teacher leadership has received considerable attention in recent years. In addition, teachers are increasingly being valued for their knowledge of the curriculum and instruction. While most teachers welcome their incorporation into the management of the teaching and learning process, some problems regarding role conflict have arisen. Distributive leadership as it is often known emphasises the importance of the social context in building a culture in a school system. DiPaola and Hoy (2008:9) regard distributed leadership as a necessity for principals who intend to share and protect their time for instructional leadership. The role of the school head as instructional leader in structuring the instructional programme is discussed in paragraph 3.5.3.5.

The existence of a collegial relationship among principals and teachers is a powerful aspect of creating a COTL. Robbins and Alvy (2003:45) argue in support of positive human relations skills such as working with people, building trust, creating a climate for teachers to freely discuss their classroom practice and assisting individuals to reach their potential. This relationship provides opportunities for broad-based participation in decision-making. Rather than serving as the sole decision maker, the school principal seeks ways to share the decision-making function. However, this practice is not easy to implement as it requires the school principal to relinquish some of his/her power to permit staff to take part in the shared learning and decision-making process about issues that relate to student learning. According to Tillman (2008: 601), the relationship between teachers and students and principals

and students is critical for the students' social, emotional and academic development. The authority of the school head as an instructional leader in creating a COTL is discussed in paragraph 3.5.3.3. Leadership in its entire scope is discussed in the next chapter where the instructional leadership role of the high school head or principal in creating a culture of teaching and learning (COTL) is analysed.

## **2.9 CREATING A CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

### **2.9.1 The concept of a culture of teaching and learning**

The nature of the concept 'COTL' has already been explained briefly in paragraph 1.9.5 and will be discussed further in some detail to illuminate it. According to Davidoff and Lazarus (1997, cited in Nemukula, 2002: 1), a COTL refers to beliefs and a value system in which both teachers and students value the process of teaching and learning, where their practices reflect their commitment and where the resources to facilitate learning and teaching are provided. Van Deventer & Kruger, (2009: 4-5) provide a list of characteristics of a school with a sound COTL which includes: a positive climate; effective instructional leadership; a shared sense of purpose; sound home-school relations; availability of resources; high professional standards among teachers; order and discipline; healthy relationships between all role players, and well maintained buildings and facilities.

Contrarily, a poor COTL is characterised by teachers who lack the zeal to teach; weak instructional leadership; tension between the various members of the school community; apathy and feeling of hopelessness among teachers; indiscipline and drug abuse by the learners; demotivation and low morale among teachers; high teacher mobility; vandalism; a high drop-out rate, and shortage of necessary facilities and resources (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2009: 4-5). Davidoff and Lazarus (1997, cited in Van Deventer & Kruger, 2009: 6) also contend that the unwritten and written rules (norms), values and beliefs are linked to the COTL because they

influence the behaviour of people. Leithwood, Jantz and Steinbach (1999:12) add that a COTL refers to the attitudes teachers and students have towards teaching and learning and their enthusiasm regarding schoolwork including the instructional leadership role of the school head.

Smith and Pacheco (1996) cited in Blauw (1998: 23), define a culture of learning as the disposition and attitude of pupils' learning. A culture of learning refers to a positive atmosphere, a climate conducive to teaching and learning at school so that high academic standards can be achieved. Nielsen (1992, cited in Masitsa, 2005: 206), regards a culture of learning as a positive climate where the atmosphere is suitable for effective teaching and learning, where everyone who has an interest in the school, expresses pride in it where students are given maximum opportunity to learn and where there are high expectations for students to achieve. According to McEwan (2003: 45), the school climate has to do with how people feel about school culture. Schools and classrooms are sites where specific values and constructions of knowledge are developed and transmitted. A school or classroom that is conducive to students' learning is characterised by a warm climate, which is physically, emotionally, and intellectually inviting for all students and teachers (Gupton, 2003: 127).

School climate is not as subtle or as enduring as school culture, but more akin to morale (see paragraph 5.4.2.2.1). Morale is viewed by Van Deventer & Kruger, (2009: 16) as a feeling, state of mind, and a mental and emotional attitude, which makes teachers like their work. A good morale is associated with hopeful attitudes, an optimistic view towards one's colleagues, and enthusiasm for one's work, whereas poor morale is associated with cynicism, feelings of despair and a lack of enthusiasm (Leithwood & Beatty, 2008: 24). Importantly, morale is the focus of a set of forces within the school system that impacts on the teachers as well as the learners. Raising the teachers' morale does not only make teaching more pleasant for learners, but also helps create an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. In turn, this tends to contribute towards a positive school climate. Furnham

(2005: 65) attributes the creation of a motivating and healthy school climate to the school head's behaviour and leadership approach. Creating a positive school climate means that all the role players have to work together as a team so that a culture of teaching can be created (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2009: 11).

Beach (1985, cited in Jubenkanda, 2004: 219), views learning as the human process through which knowledge, skills, habits and attitudes are acquired and utilised so that learners' behaviour is modified. The conditions of learning include both the conscious experience and mastery of things learnt. A culture of learning presupposes an atmosphere of diligence or hard work that develops in students due to a combination of the personal characteristics of the students, commitment and involvement of parents, leadership by the school principal, the professional conduct of teachers and their attitudes towards the school community. Two aspects of a culture of learning are identified by Smith and Pacheco (1996, cited in Blauw, 1998: 23). The first relates to aspects relating to the learner, such as self-discipline, motivation, interest in the learning and teaching process, student morale, attitude towards learning and a determination to work hard. The second aspect of a learning culture relates to the characteristics of the school and its environment, examination results and discipline in the school. The dedication of teachers is also a variable of a culture of learning. Without an atmosphere that creates an effective school characterised by a harmonious and well-functioning instructional programme, the dream of quality education remains a myth. In all aspects of creating an effective culture of learning the principal plays a vital role (Onguko, Abdalla & Weber, 2008:717).

Hargreaves (1994, cited in Blauw, 1998:24), posits that a culture of learning and teaching includes beliefs, values, habits and the assumed ways in which teachers discharge their duties. Hargreaves argues that a better understanding of what teachers do is only possible if the culture, of which the teacher is a part, is understood first. In addition, Hargreaves (cited in Blauw, 1998:24), identifies two dimensions of a culture of teaching, namely content and form. The content of a

teaching and learning culture is made up of shared norms, attitudes, values, beliefs, habits and assumptions of teachers. It can be viewed against the context of what teachers think, say and do. The extent to which the norms, values, beliefs, and assumptions are shared defines the strength of the school culture (Hawley & Rollie, 2002: 99). This form of teacher culture consists of the characteristic patterns of relationships and forms of associations between respective members. With respect to form, the school's COTL may vary from one that largely supports isolated and individual work to one that is based on collaboration (see paragraphs 2.5.1, 2.5.2 & 2.5.3). This dimension depends on the nature of the relationships between members of the school community (see paragraphs 2.9.2.2, 3.5.3.2 & 5.4.2.3.3). The broad forms of teacher culture are discussed in paragraph 2.5).

Research by Coleman (2001, cited in Naidu *et al.*, 2008: 184) has identified six ways that a culture of learning and teaching in schools can be managed. This can be achieved by ensuring respect for learners as individuals and as a group occupying an important position in the school; fair treatment of students regardless of their socio-cultural background, gender or intellect; teachers' autonomy as a matter of right and a responsibility derived from their physical and social maturity; intellectual challenges that motivate both teachers and learners to experience learning as a dynamic, engaging and empowering activity; social support in both academic and emotional concerns; and security in relation to the physical environment of the school and interpersonal relationships between teachers and students. The role of the principal as an instructional leader is to protect academic instructional time, monitor the quality of instruction, and also work with teachers in creating a healthy culture of teaching and learning (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008:2). Achieving the above, paves the way for the process of promoting an effective COTL, which is discussed below.

### **2.9.2 Promoting an effective culture of teaching and learning (COTL)**

The most pressing issue with which schools have to contend is creating a culture conducive to teaching and learning (Lethoko, Heystek & Maree, 2001:311). Successful learning by students, quality teaching and school organisation conducive to successful learning and teaching are all intrinsic elements of an effective and healthy school culture (see paragraph 2.4.3). Thus, the importance of the role of instructional leadership in creating a COTL, which is discussed in chapter three cannot be overemphasised. As will be shown in the next chapter, school heads as instructional leaders have the challenging task of creating a COTL. To succeed in directing the activities of teachers and students towards the attainment of the desired COTL, school heads, as managers and instructional leaders, require extensive knowledge of teaching and learning (see paragraph 3.5.1.5). Of equal importance is the fact that school leaders also need the support and cooperation of teachers, students and parents. The aim of this study was to investigate the high school head's instructional leadership role in creating a COTL with particular reference in the empirical investigation to selected schools in the Midlands province.

The emphasis on establishing an appropriate culture that is likely to lead to effective teaching and learning in schools rests on the understanding of staff as individuals, on understanding the sub-cultures of particular subject areas and on understanding students as individuals and how they perceive the process of schooling. Busher (2006:83) emphasises the importance of considering the views of parents and to work more closely with them in order to sustain the effective learning of students. According to Calitz, Fuglestad and Lillejord (2002: 5), the generation of a productive teaching and learning culture in schools is characterised by norms and values that emphasise the inclusion and acceptance of individuals; an appreciation of individuality and/or collaboration, shared responsibility and teamwork (see paragraph 3.5.3.4); a search for quality improvement and better ways of achieving an enhanced performance; a flexible channel of communication that allows everybody to share ideas; problem-solving and conflict resolution capacities, and leadership initiatives that are based on competency and experience (see paragraph 3.5.1.5).

Creating a COTL is the institutionalisation of a positive student, staff, parent, and community attitude regarding maintaining an effective school. A positive school culture is created, developed and encouraged by quality leadership. More specifically, a COTL in a school is created by its members (Busher, 2006: 82). It is manifested in the symbolic, practical, linguistic and interpersonal interactions of its members and in the social structures that are constructed, upheld and modified. Subgroups or subcommittees in a school have their own sub-cultures that not only reflect facets of the whole culture, but also have their own particular perspectives. The process of teaching is increasingly being perceived as a culture or set of sub-cultures. Therefore, research on teaching as a culture should be perceived in the context of improving teacher quality by providing better opportunities for teacher development (Thomas, 2000:85). This can be achieved through both long-term and short-term leadership that will be discussed in the next chapter in paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5 respectively. Creating a culture where teaching and learning are celebrated and practised by everyone in the school makes a significant difference (Middlewood, Parker & Beere, 2005: 51-52). Thus, schools have to create a climate where positive working relationships operate within a shared ethos of enquiry and healthy critical debate. Against this background, strategies for teacher development and the outcome of current research have become closely related activities.

Elbot and Fulton (2008:73-112) have suggested eight strategies which may serve as additional entry points for creating a COTL in schools, which will be discussed below.

### **2.9.2.1 Teaching, learning and assessment**

The norms for good teaching and learning in a school contribute considerably to a vibrant and successful school culture. At the best schools, these norms are transparent and widely shared (Elbot & Fulton, 2008:106). To succeed in building a positive school culture that can maximise teaching and learning, beliefs and



practices about how to assess student learning should be embedded in the school culture. Importantly, the best schools maintain a balance between enhancing learning and providing a variety of opportunities to maintain good instructional leader-community relations (Makombe & Madziyire, 2002:41).

### **2.9.2.2 Relationships**

Feldman and Rafaeli (2002: 315) contend that human connections and interactions are vital because they facilitate communication that helps to create shared understanding. Importantly then, achieving effective and ethical human relations is the key to leadership at every level (Robbins & Alvy, 2003: 45). Goens (2005: 39) maintains that great leaders win people's hearts and minds over by fostering commitment when they recognise that relationships with others are needed in the search for purpose and meaning. Mbigi (1997, cited in Bush, 2007:403) notes that the black African heritage (Ubuntu) emphasises a great concern for people and being a good person. In his opinion, this should be reflected in modern education. Therefore, the quality of relationships between teachers, students, parents and the school head plays a pivotal role in the culture of a school. Elbot and Fulton (2008: 106) have observed that students who feel cared for and connected to their teachers, tend to engage in the learning and teaching process to a large extent. Accordingly, care, trust and loyal support among school groups will help to build a solid foundation for the creation of a COTL. Relations between instructional leaders and members of the school community are discussed in the next chapter in paragraph 3.5.3.2.

### **2.9.2.3 Problem solving**

Leadership requires effective diagnosis of problems followed by the adoption of the most appropriate response to the situation at hand (Bush, 2007:407). The manner in which the school organisation confronts challenges and solves its problems has a great bearing on its culture. There are some school organisations where school leaders monopolise the problem solving process; whereas in other schools,

collaboration is the norm. In addition, some school organisations encourage staff to raise issues of concern so that they can be resolved; while others take great exception to this. A reflective approach to problem-solving is critical in periods of turbulence when the instructional leader needs to assess the situation carefully and react appropriately (Bush, 2007:402). Thus, school heads who solve problems concerning teaching and learning alone tend to forego the benefits of teamwork that will be discussed in the next chapter in paragraph 3.5.3.4.

#### **2.9.2.4 Expectations, trust and accountability**

Expectations act like a magnet in the process of creating a culture of learning and teaching. They can attract students and staff or drive them away. In their research conducted over a period of ten years in exemplary schools, Austin and Holowenzak (1985, cited in Gupton, 2003: 57) conclude that:

Expectations about achievement and social behaviour held by the principal, other administrators, and teachers strongly affect student achievement and social behaviour. Teachers, administrators, and others involved in the school social system communicate their perception of appropriate and proper achievement and their expectations and assessment of students through informal interaction with students and with each other. This interactive process significantly affects the nature of student achievement.

Effective schools communicate high expectations regarding all aspects of the learning and teaching process. McEwan (2003: 46) has recommended some strategies that can be used by the school principal to communicate high expectations to students which include; establishing inclusive classrooms that send the message that all students are valued and can learn; providing extended learning opportunities for students who need them (remedial learning and teaching); observing and reinforcing high expectations in the classroom ensures an academically demanding climate and an orderly, well managed classroom and ensuring effective instruction that makes it possible for all students to learn.

Academic and character expectations are emphasised to challenge students to utilise their mental abilities to the fullest. However, high expectations alone may not suffice if they are not purpose-driven and specific (Peters, 2008: 27). As will be pointed out in the next chapter (see paragraph 3.5.1.6), successful instructional leaders who seek to establish a COTL have high expectations of both themselves and of others. In view of that, a combination of support, trust and accountability are needed. The importance of accountability and trust has already been alluded to in paragraph 2.2.

### **2.9.2.5 Voice**

Within each school system, there is a contest of different voices, which promotes school development. Sockney and Mitchell (2001:13-14) advocate for 'voice' in post-modern leadership. Sockney and Mitchell argue that principals have to facilitate participation by educators, parents, learners and the community in all issues that are of interest to them especially those related to discipline. Nkobi (2008:477) views parental participation in children's education as a critical factor in the activities of an instructional leader and posits that it leads to effective teaching and learning. For instance, the voice of teachers who insist on challenging inequality, tedium and superficial or irrelevant learning is a powerful force despite the opposing forces from within or without the school. Of equal importance is the voice of the community conveyed through teachers, students, the school principal or anyone who may be aware of the school's problems and aspirations.

Voice reflects the extent to which individuals are 'heard.' Elbot and Fulton (2008: 90) contend that students who receive attention from their teachers and the administration tend to feel more connected to their school and more invested in their own learning. Unfortunately, the *status quo* in most schools tends to render students "passengers" in their school. Schools have to be cognisant of what students expect of their teachers in order to create an effective COTL in their schools.

Students are especially appreciative of teachers who take a personal interest in them and their development (Beresford, 2003, cited in Busher, 2006: 116). The study will find out how both the teacher voice and parent voice are employed in the process of creating a COTL through the ethnographic approach that will be described in chapter four, paragraph 4.8.1. Just as students, teachers and parents experience a greater sense of ownership regarding the success of the school if their voice is heard. Due to the fact that many students live in a single working-parent home or a home where both parents work, there is an increasing demand on teachers including the principal to play the *in loco parentis* role.

An analysis of the above expectations of parents of their children's teachers shows that they (the parents) expect teachers to fulfil roles that would traditionally have been theirs.

#### **2.9.2.6 The physical environment**

Chisaka and Mavundutse (2006:165) believe that quality is associated with a beautiful environment. On the same token, Lethoko, Heystek and Maree (2001:316) contend that people tend to value new, good-looking, and properly maintained facilities and infrastructure. Facilities that are well cared for tend to motivate both students and teachers in their work (Hartshorne, 1991; Chisholm & Valley, 1996; cited in Lethoko, Heystek & Maree, 2001:316). Poor physical conditions and shortcomings in the provision of resources, facilities and equipment in schools have been found to be a contributory factor to the lack of a COTL in schools (Steyn, 2002:230). In particular, disparities in terms of school buildings and resource provision are a common feature in most schools in developing countries including Zimbabwe. As stipulated in the Vacancy Announcement No. 3 of 2010, school heads should ensure that school buildings, furniture, equipment and other facilities are maintained in a good state of repair. Some of these include water, electricity, security fence, photocopiers, textbooks and telephone just to mention a few. A school's physical environment contributes considerably to the creation of a COTL.

Elbot and Fulton (2008:110) note that the school's physical space 'holds' together all members of the school community and helps to foster a sense of well-being for everyone concerned. A school environment that fails to hold and nurture members of the school population as well as outsiders can have a negative impact on the teaching and learning process. Without a supportive environment where both teachers and students truly believe and feel committed to the prevailing culture, these expectations may not be realised (Owings & Kaplin, 2003:99). A school should be a place where learners can concentrate on their studies and are free of fear regarding such issues as discipline, safety and security (Naicker & Waddy, 2003: 5). Mastrangelo et al (2004:438) postulate that leadership is concerned with creating an environment in which followers are motivated to produce and move towards the direction set. The arrangement of the furniture in the classroom as well as displays on walls have a significant effect on the school culture.

#### **2.9.2.7 Markers, rituals and transitions**

Markers refer to the moments, events or experiences that have an important effect on teaching and learning. They refer to transforming times, powerful initiations or the discovery of important values that have changed the lives of members of an organisation, including a school. In his informal survey inquiring into the most meaningful events in the lives of recent high school graduates, Charles Elbot (in Elbot & Fulton, 2008:95) found that some students confirmed that certain special experiences affected their learning. Elbot and Fulton (2008:98) point some commonly missing practices out in some school cultures, which include; initiating volunteers into the school culture; developing a ritual for sharing success stories; initiating commonly practised school procedures; welcoming new teachers and families into the school community and holding transition rituals for students and staff transferring from the school.

Schools have a unique opportunity to influence the way in which things are done in the daily life of a school. Too often members of the school population approach a

new situation with the idea of integrating everything that has worked in the past without taking the current circumstances into consideration.

### **2.9.2.8 Leadership**

Leaders who establish and give credence to the status symbols that are the main artefacts of an organisational culture, shape organisational culture as role models for organisational members (Nahavandi, 2006: 21). In addition, leaders who have founded an organisation tend to leave an almost indelible mark on the assumptions that are transmitted to the next generation. Importantly, followers also tend to take their cues from their leaders regarding types of behaviour that are either acceptable or unacceptable. Controlling decision standards regarding the rewards system adopted by organisational leaders also help to shape culture. The power of leadership to make decisions about or on behalf of the organisation pertaining to structure and strategy is another effective way of shaping a culture.

In essence, building a culture that rewards learning, begins with the leaders themselves (Collinson & Cook, 2007: 200). Edgar Schein (1992, cited in Elbot & Fulton, 2008:100), posits that the most important task of leaders is to create and manage culture. Kent Peterson (cited in Robbins & Alvy, 2003: 41) has also pointed out that one of the most important things a leader does is to create, shape and manage culture. Fullan (2001: 44) shares this sentiment by stating that effective leaders know that the hard work of reculturing is the *sine qua non* of progress. The role of instructional leadership in creating a COTL is discussed in the next chapter in paragraph 3.3.

In a school with a strong leadership culture, the school principal, the students, the teachers and the parents are all empowered to lead. Kretter and Hestett (1992, cited in Antonakis, Cianciolo and Steinberg (2004:181) argues that leadership effectiveness emanates from the leader's influence over culture and his or her ability to change the culture of the organisation. In this regard, Botha (2004:241) maintains

that effective principals should demonstrate exceptional qualities of leadership such as reflection, vision, commitment, courage and empowerment. A skilful school head can escort his or her school community through the process of identifying those values to which the community should cling, values that should be dispensed and those values that it needs to embrace. More of the school head's instructional leadership roles in creating a COTL are covered in the next chapter.

## **2.10 CULTURE-BUILDING ACTIONS**

Ramsey (2008:66-72) outlines some important culture-building action steps that school heads as instructional leaders can use to create a successful culture in their institutions.

The first step is to introduce staff to the next generation of long-range planning; which he calls "Appreciative Inquiry." As Ramsey (2008:66) explains it, an appreciative inquiry is all about building on the existing strengths of the culture. The assumption is that schools move and grow towards whatever they routinely do. Appreciative Inquiry practitioners use a variety of data to find answers to problems, determine directions and make choices. Proponents of this approach claim that it is the most productive and effective way of creating a positive culture because it engages everyone in the school organisation; is inspiring and open-ended; is upbeat and builds positive momentum, and brings out the best in those involved and energises the entire school.

The second step is to work on creating and expanding connections or relationships with all members of the school community. Building relationships is regarded by Robertson, Callinan and Bartram (2002: 201) as a pillar to effective leadership. Thus, key to building a healthy culture lies in the development of strong internal connections in all areas. This means establishing relationships with students, staff, the parents' school board members or the School Development Committees (SDCs), unions such as the Zimbabwe Teachers' Association (ZIMTA), community

organisations, social services agencies, politicians, health care professionals, businesses, philanthropists, the faith communities, and anyone else who can assist (or harm) the future of the school. Using appropriate language to shape school culture is another effective strategy that can be used. Importantly too, the school head should have adequate time to attend to everyone and should recognise and work with all people. Other actions include making physical changes in the school environment, hiring culture builders and outsourcing new ideas and information about teaching and learning.

The task of creating a positive school COTL, which is supportive of student achievement, is not only multifaceted and complex, but is also an essential and fundamental part of instructional leadership.

## **2.11 CONDITIONS SUPPORTIVE OF A SCHOOL CULTURE CONDUCTIVE TO TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Building a culture of professional collaboration is critical for long-term, sustainable school change that results in improved student learning and achievement. Researchers now consider the creation of a professional collaborative culture as a critical component of successful schools for long-term, sustainable change. French et al (2007: 145) propose that teachers should work together and share decision making with school leadership on key matters that affect the entire school. French et al (2007:145) add that all members of the school community must share the notion that collaboration is the best way to achieve the school's goals. When teachers work together and share decision making with the school's administration on crucial matters that affect the whole school, they tend to experience more job satisfaction and are able to create more authentic experiences for their students. Job satisfaction is a multifaceted construct that has many meanings and evokes many interpretations. Villard (2004, cited in Adeyemo, 2007: 210) describes job satisfaction as a dedicated evaluation of the job as a whole and refers to



components such as financial rewards, resources needed to get the job completed, autonomy, occupational prestige, interesting challenges and comfort factors such as working hours. Evans (1999: 6) views job satisfaction as a state of mind encompassing all those feelings determined by the degree to which the individual perceives his or her job needs to be met, and more narrowly, by the extent of personal achievement which the individual attributes to his or her performance. Simply put, job satisfaction is a product of the congruence between personality and job characteristics and a positive emotional state that results from the appraisal of one's job or job experience.

An effective school culture invites and supports improvement from within rather than from externally developed reform and restructuring efforts. A continuous improvement of a COTL is possible when there is a long-term systematic, cumulative empowerment of education practice (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993: 49). Of great importance is the fact that a culture of improvement provides the stable building blocks discussed in paragraph 2.3.

Supportive conditions for a positive school COTL develop when the school head models the attitudes and behaviours for excellence. In this respect, Boyd (1992), Louis and Kruser (1995), cited in Huffman and Hipp (2003:81), have found that relations and structures are supportive conditions for an effective COTL. As mentioned previously, Robbins and Alvy (2003: 45) regard relations as the thread that runs throughout the organisation and affects the culture, personnel practices, and every individual who has contact with the school. The leader can maximise good human relations with other people by building trust, creating a climate for teachers to discuss their own classroom practice freely and helping individuals to attain their potential. Relationships between instructional leaders and followers are also discussed in paragraph 3.5.3.2.

Healthy relationships in a school community are largely facilitated by a culture of respect and trust among the colleagues, the applicable skills and knowledge

required for teaching, support from the administration and intense socialisation processes (Hord, 1998 in Huffman & Hipp, 2003:81). In a professionally collaborative culture, members of the school community work together effectively because they will be guided by a common purpose. Teachers, students, parents and school leaders all share a common vision (see paragraph 3.4.1). Collaboratively, the members of the school community develop goals that can lead to the realisation of the school vision. Moreover, their diverse voices, experiences and styles add to the strengths and vitality of the school culture.

School structures can be redesigned to reduce isolation, provide time for teachers to collaborate, enhance teacher-student interaction, and increase the physical proximity of staff with one another. External aspects, such as school policies and any form of assistance from the central office, need to be redesigned to promote greater collaboration and meaningful professional development. Structures merit reassessment whenever strategies change. An organisational structure as defined by Mullins (1995, cited in Joubert and Bray 2007:2) is *"a planned condition of activities of a number of people for the achievement of a common goal or purpose."* To be efficient, schools need some formal structure so that the highest possible standard of teaching and learning can be attained. Furthermore, schools have to develop their capacity to organise themselves appropriately, to design and create effective patterns of work, administrative processes and procedures at all levels. In the school system, the numerous decisions that have to be made mean that the school head can hardly manage to make them alone. Although the most powerful members of staff may not occupy positions of responsibility in the school, others may still look to them for leadership in times of decision-making. As noted by Davies, Ellison and Bowring-Carr (2005: 78), such individuals are usually charismatic and acknowledged experts who enjoy a certain level of respect or they may hold influential positions outside the formal school structure.

While school leaders may use the formal school structure to implement change in the school's culture, they need to be aware of the informal rules and relationships

prevailing in the school and should be cognisant of this when planning and conducting their day-to-day management tasks. Chapter three will focus on how the high school head's instructional leadership creates and supports a COTL.

The school culture's framework regulating the prescribed patterns of behaviour and expectations are invented, reinvented, developed, adopted or adapted by its members over time. In fact, a school's culture is more than the sum of its parts and takes on a life of its own (Ramsey, 2008:4). In fact, it defines what is preferred, praised, tolerated, encouraged or discouraged, rewarded or punished and what is taboo, who is up or down, and who is allowed to play (and win) within the school. The school culture, whether good or bad, is maintained, sustained, transmitted and perpetuated through its traditional customs, history, stories, heroes/heroines, rituals, ceremonies, celebrations, special events, mascots, logos, slogans, mottos, symbols and symbolic acts (Dalin, Rolff & Kleekamp, 2003:97).

The key to full realisation of an effective COTL depends on the capacity of the school leader and the staff at school level as well as by the support of the parents and the wider community. Steyn (2002:250) recommends that the emphasis should fall on the people within the school organisation to achieve maximum effectiveness. A healthy school culture does not happen by accident, but is created intentionally (Elbot & Fulton, 2008:132), because teaching and learning are linked to capacity, the suitability of the curriculum, the commitment of both teachers and students and the manner in which standards are set and assessed.

The school culture can be said to be the glue that binds the elements of the school together. It is viewed by Raynor (2004: 120) as an emergent property of the ways in which people relate the message they give each other over a period of time.

## **2.12 CONCLUSION**

As the school culture develops and unfolds, school heads need to be careful not to destroy it, but should rather allow it to develop in harmony with the flow of the school to promote teaching and learning. Importantly, healthy school communities are built on a culture of mutual trust and respect among students, teachers, school leadership, parents and community members. One principal (cited in Robbins & Alvy, 2003: 41), notes:

Culture is really the stage on which leadership gets played out. ....And, what's more as a principal I always have to be aware of my behaviour - what I attend to, put last on my priority list – what I participate in, what I don't – shapes the culture of the school.

Conceptualisation of the school culture was needed in which the meaning of a COLT could be communicated to educators. In this regard, creating a COLT is essential for every high school because it promotes internal harmony, co-operation, and the smooth functioning of the school.

To this end, the literature study in this chapter has focused on the changing face of schools regarding a COTL, the meaning of culture in its generality and in the school context. The building blocks of the school culture and its different types were also discussed. It emerged in the literature study that the full realisation of an effective COLT depends on the capacity of the school leader and the staff at the school level as well as the support from parents and members of the community at large.

The next chapter continues with what has been touched on in this chapter. The focus will be on the role of the school head's /principal's instructional leadership in creating a COTL in high schools.

## CHAPTER THREE

### A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR CREATING A CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter two, it was shown that organisational culture plays an important role in binding social groups together. School culture was also portrayed as an integral part of the infrastructure of an organisation because it influences every aspect of school life: learning, members' interactions and perceptions of others, their interpretations, their perceptions, their commitment to the school and their own work within the school organisation. The present chapter is a continuation of the literature survey started in chapter two. It involves the discussion of instructional leadership which is the most needed leadership at a school, particularly for the creation of a culture of teaching and learning.

Gupton (2003: vii) alleges that the most important function that school managers have to perform is to provide instructional oversight and guidance. The general consensus is that school improvement is one of the areas that require strong leadership, a notion that is supported by Byrnes and Baxter (2006:33) when they say that excellent organisations have visionary leaders at the helm. West-Burnham and O'Sullivan (1998: 23) maintain that almost every model of improvement, effectiveness, change and quality revolves around the concept of 'leadership'. McEwan (2003: xiii) posits that effective schools with high-achieving students do not just develop by themselves, but are cultivated and thrive under the strong instructional leadership of principals who create a school culture and climate that are conducive to learning, and communication.

Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2009: 1) contend that most of the changes occurring in education relate to the instructional leadership task of the educational leader who

is the school head in the Zimbabwean context. As chief executive officers, high school heads/principals are expected to ensure that effective learning and teaching take place. Glanz (2006b: 1) declares that principals are ultimately responsible for providing top-quality instruction that aims to promote the best practices in teaching to ensure student achievement. Instructional leadership has emerged as one of the approaches to leadership which represents models of leadership in education (Coleman & Earley, 2005:14). To put the concept of 'instructional leadership' in perspective, it is necessary to clarify the concept of 'leadership' first and to distinguish it from management.

### **3.2 NOTIONS OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Although leadership and management overlap (Bush, 2007:272), they are not synonymous terms and a distinction needs to be made.

#### **3.2.1 Leadership**

Much has been written about the concept of 'leadership' and its meaning has been recognised for a long time. However, Earley & Weindling (2004: 4) are in agreement with Dimmock & Walker (2005: 11) that 'leadership' remains an elusive concept. Leithwood *et al.* (1999, cited in Earley & Weindling, 2004: 4) also reflect this viewpoint:

Leadership as a concept and a set of practices has been the subject of an enormous quantity of popular and academic literature... Arguably, a great deal has been learned about leadership over the last century. But, this has not depended on any clear, agreed definition of the concept, as essential as this would seem at first glance.

The reasons attributed to the elusiveness include the ubiquitousness of the concept and its multifaceted nature (Dimmock & Walker, 2005: 11). Among the many scholars who have attempted to define leadership, most recognise it to be the

influence process that takes place between leaders and followers. In this regard, Bush and Clover (2003: 8) make it clear that:

Leadership is a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. Successful leaders develop a vision for their schools based on personal and professional values. They articulate this vision at every opportunity and influence their staff and other stakeholders to share the vision. The philosophy, structures and activities of the school are geared towards the achievement of this shared vision.

Gary Yuk (1991, cited in Daresh, 2001: 105) concurs by saying that leadership is interpersonal influence, exercised in a situation and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of mutually agreed upon goals. Some scholars add that the influence amounts to getting staff to agree to act in ways they may not have been inclined to choose by and for themselves; while others see leadership as inspiring performances and achievements among staff that extend beyond what they might reasonably have expected (Dimmock & Walker, 2005: 11-12). Palestini (2003: 5) views leadership as “the ability to establish and manage a creative climate open to change and continuous improvement where people are self-motivated toward the achievement of mutually developed goals in an environment of mutual trust and respect, compatible with a mutually developed value system”.

Fiedler (1997, cited in Earley & Weindling, 2004: 4) posits that there are two features associated with leadership. One of them is a sense of purpose and confidence that is engendered in followers and the other is that followers are influenced towards goal or task achievement. Leaders use influence to guide others through a certain course of action or toward the attainment of specific goals. Both these elements focus on achieving the goal of effective teaching and learning. Leadership is viewed by Van Niekerk (1995, cited in Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2009: 2) as a relationship concerned with inspiring followers as individuals or as a group to such an extent that they willingly and enthusiastically work to accomplish set aims. Thus, the presence of a leader assumes some form of hierarchy within the group, and in some cases, this is formal and well defined or informal.

Basing their view on a review of a series of leadership studies, Hogan, Curphy and Hogan (1994, cited in Pellicer, 2008: 13) maintain that leadership involves persuading other people to set their individual concerns aside temporarily in order to pursue a common goal that is important for the responsibilities and welfare of the group. From an educational point of view, leadership includes the ability to conceptualise emerging trends in education and to guide a school through various challenges (discussed in paragraph 3.6) by achieving a vision based on shared values. In addition, Bush (2003: 5-6) identifies three dimensions of educational leadership. The first is what he refers to as the ability to influence the actions of the group or individuals. The second refers to the personal and professional values based on the character of the educational leader. The last one is the leader's vision and ability to articulate the vision throughout an organisation (see paragraph 3.4.1). There seems to be general agreement that leadership involves setting the general and long-term directions of an organisation. Values, thoughts, and behaviours that are the essence of leadership are social and interactive processes, which are culturally influenced and constructed through long-term and short-term leadership. These dimensions are going to be discussed in detail in the various sections of the chapter under the long-term and short-term instructional leadership framework.

Everyone, no matter at what level, will have his/her own style of leadership (Tolhurst, 2006: 221). To give school leaders the needed guidance to coach their staff, the common leadership styles used are examined below.

### **3.2.2 Leadership approaches**

Tolhurst (2006: 221), agrees with Earley and Weindling (2004: 11) on six leadership approaches, which school heads often use.



The **coercive leader** will make demands on those who are being led and will expect immediate compliance and results. The leader uses punishment, threats and reprimands to obtain compliance.

The **authoritative leader** will present staff with a clearly outlined long-term direction and vision. The leader is the ruler, gives instructions, takes full responsibility for decisions, and creates needs among staff especially when morale is low. Oplatka (2004:437) finds this approach to be dominant in most developing countries.

The **affiliative leader** will focus on relationships and views staff as friends rather than employees. The leader creates harmony among team members by emphasising people's personal needs rather than achieving goals.

The **democratic leader** will invite people to participate voluntarily in the development of decisions. Commitment is built around team members to generate new ideas and efforts are made to create positive interpersonal relationships.

The **pace setting leader** will expect perfect and immediate performance from the staff. He/she leads by example and focuses on accomplishing tasks to high standards of excellence.

The **coaching leader** will offer guidance to his/her staff and creates a good climate in the staffroom. The leader focuses on the long-term professional development of members by checking immediate standards of performance. Coaching enhances team moral, generates responsibility, underpins and assists in implementing organisational change.

In addition to the above, Loock, Campher, Du Preez, Grobler & Shaba (2002:1) include the holistic leadership style in which the leader builds and maintains a sense of vision, culture and interpersonal relationships. The leader also recognises that followers share his/her core values and promotes improvement, collaboration and

continuous professional development. Two other leadership styles mentioned in literature are cited in Ramparsad (2004: 67, 68). They are the *laissez-faire* and the bureaucratic leadership styles. In the *laissez-faire* leadership style, the leader's presence is not felt and staff members have the freedom to make individual or group decisions. The leader guides the staff by appealing to personal integrity and hence creates a situation where individual members feel trusted. On the other hand, the bureaucratic leader occupies a legitimate position or status in the bureaucratic system. He/she adheres to rules and regulations strictly to maintain his/her position. Success depends on his/her ability to integrate, blend, and balance and adapt his/her style to conform to the prevailing situation.

Web (2005, cited in Nkobi, 2008:482) argues for the combination of instructional leadership with transactional and transformational leadership. Burns (1978, cited in Cooper, 2003:28) views transactional leadership as a traditional managerial process in which rules and standards are used to guide leadership behaviour. He goes further to say that the approach is associated with bureaucratic and hierarchical organisations such as schools. Coleman and Earley (2005:16) identify transactional leadership as a contract between the leader and followers where the former strives to safeguard the interests of the latter. The transactional leadership approach is also based on the assumption that people are motivated by reward and punishment. According to Miller and Miller (2001:398), this approach does not produce long-term commitment to values and vision discussed in Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk's (2009) leadership model (see paragraph 3.4). To a greater extent this leadership approach tends to stifle the teachers' professionalism and thereby affect the values that the school might seek to achieve (Coleman & Earley, 2005:20).

By engaging in transformational leadership behaviours leaders can change followers from being self-centred individuals to being committed members of a team (Antonakis, Cianciolo & Steinberg, 2004:175). This means the leader has to motivate followers so that they can perform at levels far beyond expectation. The

transformational leader achieves this by increasing followers' awareness of the importance of the intended outcomes and the means to attain them. According to Landy and Conte (2007:519), transformational leadership involves the interplay between the leader and his or her followers in which each raises the other to higher levels of morality and inspiration. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999:9) provide eight important dimensions of transformational leadership:

Building school vision; establishing school goals; providing intellectual stimulation; offering individualised support; modelling best practices and important organisational values; demonstrating high performance expectations; creating a productive school culture; and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions.

The eight dimensions of transformational leadership cited above are broken into four scales namely, idealised influence, individualised consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation (Antonakis et al, 2004:175-176; Coleman & Earley, 2005:16-17)

Each of the above leadership approaches has its own advantages and disadvantages and as such, high school heads need to take cognisance of the challenges inherent in the situation, the task, the followers and also in themselves. Because of the limitations of the discussed approaches, the researcher has opted to provide a more comprehensive framework for instructional leadership based on the theoretical leadership model developed by Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk (2009; see also Coetzee, Van Niekerk & Wydeman 2008) from other prominent leadership models.

From the literature review undertaken, leadership is considered one of the management tasks. Although management and leadership are not mutually exclusive, Gopee and Galloway (2009:48) hold the view that leadership is a subset of management.

### **3.2.3 Management**

Management has become an important activity within education, as within other public services. A careful examination of what some of the management scholars have written reveals a number of definitions of the concept. Kydd, Crawford and Riches (1997, cited in Masuku, 2002: 16) view management as a:

...rational activity concerned with finding the most effective and efficient ways possible of deploying resources to achieve the purposes of the organisation.

The definition reveals that management is an integrated activity, which is about making decisions and judgements based on values. Masuku (2002: 18) is of the opinion that management is concerned with all human activity pertaining to a school as an on-going organisation. Earley and Weindling (2004: 5) maintain that management is the implementation of school policies and the efficient and effective maintenance of the school's current activities. The process of management is viewed by Mullins (2005: 165) as essentially an integrating activity that permeates every aspect of an organisation. Gronn (2003: 6) regards management as work activity that includes the duties and responsibilities of organisation managers as determined by the terms and conditions of their employment contract. According to Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge & Ngcobo (2008: 5), the purpose of management in all areas of the school is to enable the creation and support of conditions under which quality teaching and learning can occur. Important functions of management include planning, organising, leading, and controlling.

Planning is regarded by Glanz (2006b:86) as integral to instructional success and hence the principal or school head should assist teachers to develop suitable and meaningful instructional activities and learning experiences. The organising function develops the structures needed to achieve instructional goals and involves prioritising the various resources available in a school system. Leading is growing as a management function. In a school setting, leading means developing and maintaining a COTL (Moloi, 2007, Department of Education, 2007, cited in Van

Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2009: 2). The controlling function of management deals with the establishment of standards for performance, measuring current performance against the current standards and dealing with deviations from established standards (Nduna, Nyamuda & Nyatanga, 2004: 9).

The task of management at all levels in education is believed to be that of creating and supporting conditions under which teachers and their students are able to achieve effective teaching and learning (The South African Task Team, cited in Bush, 2007:401).

### **3.2.4 Distinction between leadership and management**

Most writers who make the distinction between 'leadership' and 'management' recognise that the two concepts overlap and that both are essential for the success of an organisation (Earley & Weindling, 2004: 6). Davies (2005: 2) provides two important distinctions between the two concepts. Firstly, leadership is about direction setting and inspiring others, to make the journey towards a new and improved state for the school, whereas management is concerned with efficiency in the current set of circumstances and planning in the shorter term for the school. Secondly, leadership is the provenance of a group of people who provide leadership in the school rather than an individual, to provide support and inspiration to others to attain the best for students.

Earley and Weindling (2004: 4) hold the view that leadership tends to be more formative, proactive, and problem-solving, and deals with such things as values, vision and mission whereas management is concerned with the execution, planning, organising and organisation of resources or "making things happen". Another difference they give is that management is focused more on providing order and consistency in an organisation, whereas leadership is focussed on producing changes and movement. Although Gronn (2003: 6) argues that leaders may be managers and managers may be leaders, he still provides a distinction between the

two concepts. In his view, management has a legal contract basis whereas leadership is cognitive and grounded in the mental attribution of workplace peers. Nahavandi (2006:8) makes four distinctions between leadership and management. First, leadership focuses on the future whereas management focuses on the present. Second, leadership creates change whereas management maintains the *status quo* and stability. Thirdly, leadership creates a culture based on shared values whereas management implements policies and procedures. Fourthly, leadership establishes an emotional link with followers whereas management remains aloof to maintain objectivity.

Kotter (1990, cited in Davies, Ellison & Bowring-Carr, 2005: 94) provides a summary of important differences between leadership and management as shown in table 3. 1 below.

**Table 3.1: Distinguishing leadership and management**

	<b>Management</b>	<b>Leadership</b>
<b>Creating an agenda</b>	Planning and budgeting – establishing detailed steps and timetable for achieving needed results, and then allocating the resources necessary to make that happen.	Establishing direction – developing a vision of the future, often the distant future and strategies for producing the changes needed to achieve that vision.
<b>Developing a human network for achieving the agenda</b>	Organising and staffing – establishing some structure for accomplishing plan requirements, staffing that structure with individuals, delegating responsibility and authority for carrying	Aligning direction – communicating the direction by words and deeds to all those whose co-operation may be needed so as to influence the creation of teams and coalitions that

	out the plan, providing policies and procedures to help guide people, and creating methods or systems to monitor implementation	understand the vision and strategies, and accept their validity.
<b>Execution</b>	Controlling and problem solving – monitoring results versus plan in some detail, and then planning and organising to solve those problems.	Motivating and inspiring – energising people to overcome major political, bureaucratic, and resource barriers to change by satisfying very basic, but often unfulfilled, human needs.
<b>Outcomes</b>	Produces a degree of predictability and order, and has the potential of consistently producing key results expected by various stakeholders (for example, for customers, always being on time, for stakeholders, being on budget).	Produces change often to a dramatic degree, and has the potential of producing extremely useful change (eg. new products/services that customers want, new approaches to labour relations that help make an organisation competitive).

Despite the distinct differences between leadership and management shown in the above table, the reality is that it is almost impossible in discussions to distinguish leadership and management from each other because leaders may be managers, and managers may be leaders (Gronn, 2003: 6). In this present era characterised by extreme complexity and a high degree of change, Max Sawatzki (cited in Davies, Ellison & Bowring-Carr, 2005: 93) sees the need for high levels of both leadership and management to develop and maintain excellent organisations. Bush and Glover (2003: 10) are of a similar mind:

Given the now widely accepted distinction between leadership, an influence process based on values and a clearly articulated vision leading to change, and management, the effective implementation of decisions based mainly on notions of maintenance, it is vital that both dimensions of this duality are given equal prominence.

It has become clear to the researcher from the literature study that there is considerable confusion surrounding the concept of 'instructional leadership,' as authors and researchers such as Bush (2007:400) do not take the distinction between leadership and management into account. The framework provided in this chapter will therefore attempt to provide some conceptual clarity. Instructional leadership is leadership, and not management or any of the other management functions. This is the premise guiding the choice of the instructional leadership framework presented in this chapter, based on the leadership framework of Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2009). Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2009) derived their theoretical model from leadership models of prominent leadership theorists such as McGregor's Theory X and Y, the Likert model, the Ohio State model, Blake and Mouton's leadership matrix, Tannenbaum and Schmidt's leadership continuum, Fiedler's model, House's model, the Vroom model, the Hersey and Blanchard model, as well as other approaches like the attribution model, charismatic leadership, transformational leadership and institutionalisation of leadership (Van Niekerk 1995: 10-51). Therefore, the framework presented in this chapter should also be related indirectly to these models.

Although the emerging model of leadership underpins the current discourse from management to leadership, (Early & Weindling, 2004: 14), the challenge of modern school systems requires the objective perspective of the manager as well as the brilliant flashes of vision and commitment of a leader (Bolman & Deal, 1997: xii-xiv). In the light of this, the focus of the chapter will now be on a conceptual framework of instructional leadership and the school head's role in fulfilling this vital function.

### **3.3 THE LENS OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP**



### **3.3.1 The meaning of instructional leadership**

Instructional leadership has become an increasingly important aspect of reforming and improving schools (Hoy & Miskel, 2005:29). As stipulated in the Director's Circular Minute No. 15 of 2006, instructional leadership constitutes the core business of a school head in Zimbabwe. In this regard, the concept needs to be understood in the context of education management. However, the understanding of instructional leadership is obscured by certain misconceptions that need to be pointed out at this stage. According to Mamabolo (2002: 125), one of the major misconceptions is that the status of the school head (see paragraph 1.9.2) automatically ensures the existence of leadership. The truth is, however, that the changing face of leadership discussed in paragraph 2.2, requires the school leader to adopt a robust and dynamic leadership style in order to create a COTL. The other misconception cited by Mamabolo is the common fallacy that leadership in one situation applies to all other situations. It needs to be stressed that situational leadership theorists such as Fiedler, are opposed to this view (refer to paragraph 3.5.1.3). Although instructional leadership can mean different things to different people (Nkobi, 2008:490), its functional definition generally refers to school based leadership focused on assisting teachers in their classroom practice.

Instructional leadership is viewed by Joyner, Ben-Avie and Comer (2004: 93) as the critical element in improving student achievement. Glickman (1985, cited in Seifert & Vornberg, 2002 :166) describe instructional leadership as "working directly with teachers, group improvement, professional development, curriculum improvement and action research implementation".

Southworth (2002:79) states that "instructional leadership is strongly concerned with teaching and learning including the professional learning of teachers as well as student growth." Bush (2007:401) views instructional leadership as a very important dimension because it targets the school's core activities, teaching and learning. Spillane et al (2004:11) define instructional leadership as:

the identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination and use of the social, material resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of teaching and learning.

According to Greenfield (1987:60) instructional leadership refers to those actions which the principal takes in order to develop a productive and satisfying working environment for teachers and desirable conditions for the students. Thus, in instructional leadership the principal provides direction, resources and support to teachers and students so as to improve teaching and learning in the school. Daresh and Playko (1990, cited in DiPaola & Hoy, 2005:3) succinctly define instructional leadership as “direct and indirect behaviours that significantly affect teacher instruction and, as a result, student learning”. Importantly then, the principal should be sensitive to the needs of teachers and students to achieve quality teaching and learning. Direction to teachers and students can be provided by formulating school policies and procedures that are aimed at improving the COTL in the school.

Southworth (2002:77) makes a distinction between broad and narrow views of instructional leadership. The broad view takes cognisance of teacher cultures and school organisation, whereas the narrow view focuses on teacher behaviours that influence student learning. The two views are enshrined in the long and short term leadership dimensions propounded by Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2009) discussed later in this chapter.

Findings by Pellicer (2008: 75) have shown that the principal in America spends 50 percent of his or her time in instructional leadership. Although the importance of the instructional leadership responsibilities of the high school head is widely recognised, in reality, there is still muddled thinking about what constitutes good instructional leadership, how it is distinguished from leadership in its generality and what behaviours are closely linked to improving teaching and learning.

Writers such as Daresh (2001: 118-119) and Blase & Blase (2004: 11) acknowledge that there is no succinct definition of instructional leadership yet. Daresh and Playko (1995, cited in Gupton, 2003: 32) echo this sentiment when they say that:

Despite the amount of discussion about, as well as support for, the concept of instructional leadership, little has been done yet to define the concept operationally ...[W]e now recognise that individuals other than principals might engage in instructional leadership behaviours. Second, we have increasingly realised that instructional leadership can take forms that go well beyond direct intervention in classroom activities.

In this study instructional leadership is taken to be leadership applied to the field of instruction. In the view of the researcher this approach can assist in clearing up much of the misconceptions surrounding the concept of instructional leadership.

To present a complete picture of instructional leadership and add to its meaning and understanding, models of instructional leadership are briefly discussed below.

### **3.3.2 Models of instructional leadership**

Several models of instructional leadership have evolved over the past two decades (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008:3). As stated in paragraph 1.9.9, a model is a roadmap to success in what one wants to accomplish. According to Duke (1997:80), models of instructional leadership are a useful for describing the instructional leadership role in promoting teaching and learning.

A synthesis of the models of instructional leadership provided by the various authors shows that there are common elements in them. Instructional leadership models presented by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), Murphy (1990) and Peterson (1993) cited in DiPaola and Hoy (2008:6) all reflect that improved student academic performance is indirectly dependent on effective principal leadership. For instance, through the coordination of instructional dimensions such as the school's academic goals, time for instruction, staff development, and an orderly school environment,

just to mention a few, the principal as an instructional leader can enhance teachers' ability to teach.

Models of instructional leadership provided by the authors cited above consist of many tasks and duties that can be performed by a school head as an instructional leader. Some of the major tasks identified by Makombe and Madziyire (2002:10) are: ensure quality teaching and learning; monitor and advise teachers in professional and academic matters through class visits; supervise students' work; assist teachers in producing schemes of work, lesson plans and assessment guides; provide instructional materials and other resources. Table 3.2 Below shows two models of instructional leadership from the perspective of South African scholars.

**Table 3.2: Models of instructional leadership**

<b>Department of Education (2000:10)</b>	<b>Kruger and Badenhorst (1996:96)</b>
Setting up staff development programmes	Determining school objectives
Visiting classes and follow-up discussions	Coordinating school curriculum
Looking at students' work	Determining didactic direction
Assisting teachers with lesson planning	Determining enrichment programmes
Discussing students' academic progress	Monitoring students' academic progress
Moderating tests and examinations	Taking corrective actions
Inducting new teachers at school	Creating positive school climate

[Source: Department of Education, 2000:10]

The instructional leadership models investigated by the researcher do not entirely move away from the muddled thinking which confuses leadership with other management functions, and therefore do not provide for clear thinking on what leadership actually entails. They also do not incorporate all important aspects of

leadership discussed further on in this chapter applied to the field of instructional leadership. These are reasons why the researcher chose to derive his framework presented in this chapter from the comprehensive model of Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2009) which is aligned to prominent leadership models. This research applies this generic model of leadership to the field of instructional leadership; thereby attempting to make a contribution to the theory of instructional leadership and at the same time clearing up some of the confusion surrounding the concept of instructional leadership. In this way an attempt is made to provide a theoretical grounding for researching the perceptions of teachers, HODs, high school principals and parents on the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a culture of teaching and learning undertaken in the empirical investigation.

Leadership is not invested entirely in the school principal/head, but is an interaction of between “leaders, followers and the situation” (Spillane et al, 2004:3). The following conceptual framework by Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2009) was therefore found to be an appropriate model that attempts to clarify the confusion surrounding instructional leadership and management and to explore instructional leadership strategies related to the process of creating a culture of teaching and learning (COTL). The model consists of long-term and short-term leadership dimensions which dominate the school head’s instructional leadership process aimed at creating a COTL.

### **3.4. LONG-TERM EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP**

Leadership in a school setting is mainly concerned with the development and maintenance of a culture of teaching and learning (Van Niekerk Van Niekerk, 2009: 2). It therefore takes a long time for the instructional leader to build a school as an effective teaching and learning institution. The long-term dimension of effective instructional leadership considers the conditions under which it can occur and the actions of the instructional leader. Importantly too, the school needs to be managed on a day-to-day basis in order to achieve its long-term goals. The role that the

instructional leader has to perform to realise the long-term success in creating a COTL will include the development and actualising of a vision, effective communication of a vision, value management, staff development and empowerment. Thereby circumstances are created to enable followers to excel.

### **3.4.1 VISIONING**

Leadership experts have written a great deal about visioning because leadership and visioning are inseparable (Miller, Devin & Shoop, 2007: 28). According to Warren, G. Bennis (cited in Ramsey, 2003: 141), leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality. McEwan (2003: 67) defines vision as a driving force that reflects the instructional leader's image of the future, based on his/her values, beliefs and experiences. Robbins and Alvy (2003: 83) view a shared vision as a purpose that can or will be evident in the daily activities of the school. A vision is viewed by Duffy and Chance (2007: 130) as a journey from the known to the unknown. Leading an organisation is not like a game of *Blind Man's Bluff* where one lurches around blindly with the hope of stumbling into something by chance (Ramsey, 2003: 141), but requires a vision which encompasses all the activities of the school. King Solomon stated it succinctly, "*where there is no vision, people perish*" (Proverbs 29: 18).

A school vision is about instruction – in terms of the curriculum, teaching and learning and it is usually put in writing. Coetzee, Van Niekerk and Wydeman (2008: 52) assert that a visionless leader is one who is leading his/her followers nowhere, while McEwan (2003: 68) describes an instructional leader without vision as a chameleon leader who lacks definition, limits and parameters. In a school setting, a vision should be an uplifting long-term target that is self-fulfilling. According to Blase and Blase (2004: 182), a school vision refers to the overarching, consistent focus of work in schools, which is driven by empowered staff. Visioning is more than simply reciting a slogan or following empty platitudes (Goens, 2005: 81) and as such,

instructional leaders need vision to create a COTL. A vision is an expression of what the school wishes to be and not what it is (Naidu *et al.*, 2008: 60).

#### **3.4.1.1 The importance of visioning**

Glanz (2006: 33) contends that without a vision there is no direction or hope for the future. Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk (2009: 5) maintain that the creation of a positive environment in which followers can perform to their full potential requires the formulation of a vision that leads to direct inspiration. Although schools might have different visions, Coetzee, Van Niekerk and Wydeman (2008: 52) assert that the vision of the school will always relate to the function of the school as an organisation, which is the ideal for effective teaching and learning. A vision deals with the desired future state of the school and indicates the ideal that the instructional leader and the rest of school personnel are aiming to achieve. School vision can be compared to a trip that is undertaken with the destination in mind. Masitsa (2005: 212) posits that:

Vision and mission ensure that the school has an intended destination towards which it is moving. They therefore bring about the commitment of a purposeful journey, which the school undertakes.

The school vision uses descriptive words or phrases and sometimes pictures to illustrate what one would expect to see, hear and experience in the school at a specific time. A school vision helps students, teachers, school leaders, and parents have a sense of what is important in their particular school setting. It provides a structure within which the school functions that in turn, brings commitment through the school system as the various constituents work together to create a model in which they are personal stakeholders (Loughridge & Tarantino, 2005: 41; Duffy & Chance, 2007: 130).

A school vision usually refers to vital issues such as the curriculum, instruction and assessment, staff and parents. As such, it makes all members of the school community to believe in their roles in promoting an ideal culture of learning. While a

school vision should be developed collaboratively and should be reflective of the interests of all stakeholders it serves (Robbins & Alvy, 2003: 84), the instructional leader should play a pivotal role in transforming its fundamental values and beliefs that provide direction and purpose. Ramsey (2003: 142) considers a school vision as important because it directs the school actions and focus of the school afresh every day and provides guidance regarding the correct course of action. In a school, a vision also gives everybody a standard of measure to be applied in the present against the backdrop of the past for future purposes. In addition, it reveals missed opportunities and creates probabilities out of possibilities and it shapes plans, directs energy and focuses resources (Miller, Devin & Shoop, 2007: 28). For a school, a vision provides all constituents with a mental picture and a future orientation for which people are keen to work.

Murphy and Lick (2005: 50-51) also contend that a shared school vision (a) provides direction to resources allocation and management (b) indicates how personnel will be deployed (c) defines how schedules will be organised (d) indicates what the professional development priorities will be and (e) provides a guidepost in decision making about teaching and learning. For the school vision to achieve the above, the goals derived from it must be SMART. This means that the vision should be specific, measurable (in terms of money, time, input, quantity and so on), achievable within the given environment and circumstances, realistic and time framed.

In the light of the importance of vision in instructional leadership stated above strategies to develop a unifying school vision are discussed.

#### **3.4.1.2 Developing a unifying school vision**

A vision does not just look after itself, but should be revisited whenever the need arises, especially when new members join the organisation. According to Harris and Lowery (2004: 12), the first step in creating a vision is to develop a vision and the



process should be collaborative. If an idea or a proposed activity is incompatible with it, it is declined. The second step is to articulate the vision through talking about it with others. Once the vision has been articulated and developed, the final step is to implement it. Tolhurst (2006: 176) postulates that it is a good idea for the school leader to remind teachers and students continuously about what their core business at the school is before becoming bogged down with the planning and writing of the school improvement plan (SIP). The action plan of the SIP can be embedded in the school system if teachers and students know what they believe in and what the school values are. Sterling and Davidoff (2000: 94-104) identify some steps that are useful in building a vision. They include an understanding of the core function of the school, the understanding of the contextual factors that affect the school and its various departments as well as formulating a school vision of the anticipated quality of teaching and learning. Of great importance is the fact that both teachers and students should be assisted to develop meaning of what is expected of them. Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2008;6) post that schools' vision are basically similar in that they all focus on teaching and learning. However, the visions are formulated differently in accordance with the context within which the schools function.

Though the process of developing a unifying school vision may be long and challenging, the instructional leader should give all the people concerned the chance to provide input and be involved in creating the vision (Bush & Coleman, 2000: 11). To develop a vision statement that is consistent with the principles of teaching and learning, French, Atkinson and Rugen (2007: 162) provide six directions:

1. Forming a vision team to facilitate the process which includes students, teachers, administration, parents and people from the community.
2. Gathering ideas from students, teachers, parents and members of the community during special meetings to reflect on what they think their school should be like.

3. Drafting the vision: Ideas and views gathered from the various constituents to determine whether the vision statement promotes equity and is useful as a tool to develop the curriculum and assessment procedures
4. Reviewing and redrafting the vision statement to determine whether it reflects the principles of teaching and learning they cherished.
5. Approving the vision during a meeting so that all members develop a collective commitment to it.
6. Displaying, celebrating and keeping the vision alive.

To actualise the vision, Glanz (2006a: 33) provides certain suggestions culled from the best practices by successful principals who have articulated a meaningful vision. They include: meeting frequently with all school and community constituents to discuss the articulated vision for the school, soliciting the reactions and inputs of the various school constituents, challenging all members of the school community (teachers, students, and parents) to discuss ways they can contribute to make the vision a success, and using symbolic leadership to influence the stakeholders to become co-operative and show initiative so that the vision is accomplished.

To ensure that teachers are committed to the vision, they should be part of the vision-building process from the very beginning up to the end (Naidu *et al.*, 2008: 60). What this means is that the instructional leader should persuade his/her followers to share his or her dreams in order to inspire them to take ownership of the dreams. He or she should also show the followers how they could benefit from the vision by demonstrating enthusiasm and passion for the vision. Developing a school vision is a process that differs from school to school and requires continuous articulation. In some schools, it starts as soon as shared governance is viewed as a norm, whereas in others a common vision emerges later on after the establishment of shared governance. While it is generally agreed that the development of a school

vision succeeds under the visionary leadership of the school head, Kapur (2007: 242) argues that the school leader is only the catalyst that makes the vision to happen. In this regard, the school head as the instructional leader delegates the actual implementation of the school vision.

While the easy part of leadership is developing and sharing a vision, Gelsthorpe and West-Burnham (2003: 210) posit that the tough reality of it is ensuring that the vision materialises.

### **3.4.1.3 Communication of the school vision**

Effective communication of the school's vision is an important function that the instructional leader should perform in order to create a healthy COTL. A number of writers (Fullan, 1991; Speck, 1999; Wallace *et al.*, 1997, cited in Roberts & Pruitt, 2003:33), stress the importance for those in leadership positions to be able to communicate and express commitment to their school's shared vision. There are four audiences who should endorse and embrace the instructional leader's vision in order for them to be committed to the task of communicating a meaningful school vision, namely the teachers, students, parents and the community. The most effective way of communicating the school's vision is through role modelling (Harris & Lowery, 2004: 13) by means of which the school vision can be realised by spending time with students and teachers and knowing their problems and also acknowledging their achievements. As suggested by McEwan (2003: 68-69), the work of the instructional leader is to explain, teach, share, demonstrate, facilitate, and persuade on a continuous basis. Communication of the vision to teachers and students can be effective if the instructional leader does the following: establishes an open door policy where teachers and students are welcome at all times, utilises the informal communication network (grapevine), builds leadership teams which are organised in such a manner that teachers and students feel free to raise any concerns, holds meaningful whole school or departmental meetings with teachers

regularly to deal with instructional matters, and ensures a visible presence in the school during working hours.

The communication of the school vision needs to win the hearts of people who will be motivated to act in support of efforts aimed at making the vision become a reality. As argued by Pellicer (2008: 126), when people in an organisation share a vision, they tend to become more connected and committed to it. Thus, a school derives a unified sense of purpose from a connectedness established through communication. In this way, the shared vision becomes a powerful force capable of transforming almost any kind of school culture. Before implementing a vision, Naidu *et al.*, (2008:60) propose that the school leader needs to ensure that the vision is shared not only with the staff, but also with all the relevant stakeholders in the school. For a vision to inspire each of the stakeholders in the school community it needs to be meaningful and of value to them. However, Fullan (1992, cited in Bush, 2007:278) argues that emphasis on communication of the school vision can be misleading because principals can be tempted to manipulate teachers as well as the school culture in an attempt to conform to it. School communities have become so increasingly populated with families from diverse backgrounds that conversation pertaining to the vision needs to assume a special meaning. The school vision should be reiterated as often as possible, orally, in memos, during meetings and in classrooms with students to set the stage for meaningful change in the COTL. As argued by Peters (2008: 27), nobody rises to low expectations and as such, school leaders must set high expectations when communicating the overall vision and mission of their schools. Pursuit of the school vision requires the school leader to be proactive (Masitsa, 2005:213).

The long-term instructional leadership function of envisioning and communication of the vision discussed above requires the success of short-term leadership functions in creating a COTL. These will be discussed in paragraph 3.5.

### **3.4.2 VALUE MANAGEMENT**

The establishment of desirable values is an essential instructional leadership function in the creation of a positive working environment (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2009: 6). Values play an important role in building a specific school culture, which in turn, will facilitate the achievement of set goals. The importance of values has been examined in paragraph 2.3.1.5. In addition, the instructional leader's value system can be realised as he/she encourages followers to form and create productive teams. High school heads need to cope with the diversity of educational values so that they are able to notice even the slightest lapses in the value system and to take contingent intervention measures.

Strategies for instructional leadership in creating a COTL can be shaped by a set of values. Values are ideas about what is important or conceptions of what is desirable (Haydon, 2007: 9). Choice, equity, access, efficiency, harmony and economic growth are important values that Davies, Ellison and Bowring-Carr (2005: 191) believe can provide the basis for effective leadership. Choice reflects the rights of parents and students to choose a school of their own preference. Equity ensures that learners with similar needs and aspirations receive the same treatment during the teaching and learning process. Access is intended to ensure that all students receive the type of education that is commensurate with their needs and aspirations. Efficiency seeks to optimise the outcomes of the teaching and learning process using the resources available. Harmony as part of value management ensures commitment among all the stakeholders in efforts towards the realisation of the school's high expectations. Basic educational values provided by Coetzee, Van Niekerk and Wydeman (2008: 56) that can be useful when creating a COTL include that teachers should value enhancing the quality of the learning experience, promoting academic standards, educating students for the future and to the best of their abilities. Value management does not only promote a favourable school climate but also thrives under a positive instructional school climate.

Value management is concerned with the establishment of a desirable instructional climate.

### **3.4.2.1 The instructional climate**

For successful innovation and change in teaching and learning to be achieved, Makombe and Madziyire (2002: 85) contend that there is a need for the instructional leader to improve the school climate in which teachers work. Sullivan and Glanz (2005:39) hold the view that a conducive instructional climate is one where the atmosphere is characterised by acceptance, understanding, and appreciation of diversity. When all members of the school community (that is, teachers, students and parents) feel welcome, comfortable, respected, safe and secure and feel that they are valued, they can work cohesively as a team to enable students to reach their goals of academic excellence. Makombe and Madziyire (2002:87) have pointed out that the interpersonal climate needs to be appropriate for effective teaching and learning to take place. They proceed to say that an organisational climate that is conducive to change and innovation should be characterised by a collaborative approach to decision making. According to Rubin (2002: 17), collaboration is a purposeful relationship in which all parties choose to cooperate strategically in order to accomplish a shared outcome. Loock *et al.* (2002:55) state that collaboration implies negotiation, commitment, problem-solving and joint decision making. In addition, Rubin (2002: 17) posits that the success of collaboration depends on the leader's ability to build mutual relationships with followers.

Sullivan and Glanz (2005: 39) state that the school should be a place where there is mutual respect, trust, and honesty among all members of the school community. Values such as these underpin collaboration and a climate conducive to learning and teaching. As far as they are concerned, a conducive instructional climate is one in which teachers have a voice in developing the curriculum and resources, aligning assessment strategies with curriculum, evaluation of student performance and

school effectiveness, allocating instructional and non-instructional resources, and deciding general policy issues and any other matters related to them or students (see paragraph 2.9.2.5). As pointed out in paragraph 2.10, this facilitates the creation of school culture. Where a conducive climate prevails, teachers respect one another and work together as a team to develop resources, plan and evaluate lessons, and monitor student progress.

Clearly, schools with effective learning community characteristics offer a school climate in which students can perform to standard. They also offer a high quality-learning environment for teachers and students, which translates into greater learning and teaching opportunities (Hoadley, Christie & Ward, 2010). It is important to understand that while each high school and each person linked to it will have a different value system, and while values are fluid and flexible, there are certain values that are enshrined in Zimbabwe's education system that have to be observed. For instance, the overall vision and mission of the Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture (MoESAC) is the development of the total child in terms of the mental, physical, social, moral and cultural aspects. This study investigated how instructional leadership by high school heads complies with this when creating a COTL (see paragraph 2.9).

### **3.4.3 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF**

The need for quality, results-oriented staff development regarding initiating, implementing and sustaining school reform has been documented extensively in the literature (Guskey & Sparks 1996; Joyce & Showers 1998; Schmoker 2001, cited in Harris & Lowery, 2004: 26). Importantly, the effectiveness of a school depends on the quality of the learning that occurs (Riding, 2002: viii). To raise the standard of the teaching performance significantly, for the benefit of learners, it should be noted that the teaching strategies employed by teachers need to be improved. In research on instructional leadership behaviours, Shepherd (1996, cited in Blase & Blase, 2004: 11) learnt that promoting teachers' professional development was the most

influential instructional leadership function. DiPaola and Hoy (2008: 128) regard professional development as the sum total of both formal and informal learning experienced by a teacher throughout his/her career from pre-service teacher education to retirement. Professional development may take a variety of forms including *inter alia* short meetings at the end of the school day, half-day work sessions, weeklong seminars, inviting inspirational speakers from outside. Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2009: 7) consider the development of followers as an important dimension of effective long-term leadership. Thus, the instructional leader should organise staff development programmes for teachers in order to assist teachers on instructional aspects and to make the best use of their talents (Vacancy Announcement – Internal Director’s Circular Minute No. 3 of 2010).

Robbins and Alvy (2003: 180) posit that building school-based staff development and other professional growth activities provide opportunities for teachers to grow professionally in ways that will benefit students. According to Robbins and Alvy staff development consists of any activity that affects the attitudes, knowledge levels, skills and practices of individuals directly that will assist them in performing their present or future roles. In their opinion, staff development also makes teachers visible and responsive teachers that ultimately benefit the students who are the consumers of the skills acquired in this manner. Students learn better, from what they see modelled in the school.

Staff development is viewed by Young and Castetter (2004: 158) as the process of staff improvement, through both formal and informal approaches that emphasise self-realisation, self-growth, and self-development. It implies a change in the knowledge, behaviour, skills, understanding or attitude of groups of people for current and anticipated tasks (Young & Castetter, 2004: 158; Duke, 1997: 174). Joseph Rogus and Elizabeth Shaw (1987, cited in Cunningham & Gresso, 1993: 173) view staff development as primarily an attitude, a commitment to help individuals grow personally and professionally in a supportive climate. Staff development involves a broad range of activities designed to promote staff self-



renewal and, indirectly, more effective learning for young and experienced teachers. Chigumira (1999:2) defines staff development as “a planned and continuous educative process which is concerned with the professional growth of school personnel”. Staff development activities are long-range in orientation and place the individual staff at the heart of the growth planning process. Importantly, staff development implies a change in the knowledge, behaviour, understanding or attitude of groups of people (Duke, 1997: 174). Fullan (1990, cited in Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2006: 294) emphasises the importance of staff development in a work culture as follows:

The only way we're going to get from where we are to where we want to be is through staff development... When you talk about school improvement, you're talking about people's improvement... The school is the people, so when we talk about excellence or improvement or progress, we're really focusing on the people who make up the building.

The statement indicates that staff development is important in improving quality teaching and learning. Staff development in school systems focuses particularly on individual members learning to improve their teaching competence. It also supports organisational development focused on learning to know and learning to live independently. Not only do good leaders take their time to understand people, recognise their needs, acknowledge their contributions, but they also encourage them to reach their potential (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2009: 8). One of the assumptions of staff development is that it will change the on-the-job performance of teachers. Kwindu (2002: 20) contends that high school heads who are effective instructional leaders value their role as staff developers and have a high regard for their key roles as facilitators.

Staff development is intended to achieve a number of objectives which include; enabling teachers to identify the symptoms of behaviour disorders and describe them, providing instruction methods of teaching and practising new strategies suitable for students of different abilities, enabling teachers to develop classroom management plans and their related rules, consequences of breaking rules and

rewards for appropriate behaviour (Chigumira, 1999:3). Staff development is also intended to provide sufficient time so that teachers can describe the key elements of an effective school, and to enable teachers exhibit clear cognition about the purposes and uses of the new strategies acquired for the betterment of teaching. Training in the use of technology that is linked to teaching and learning is provided, such as computer training.

In order to achieve the above objectives of staff development, the instructional leader should work with a committee to plan and implement the staff development programme. Research evidence cited by Liberman and Millar (cited in Chigumira, 1999:127) emphasises the importance of the principal's role as an instructional leader in bringing about improvements in teaching. It is the intention of the study to explore the extent to which the staff development programmes conducted contribute to the process of creating a culture of learning and teaching in high schools. School heads as instructional leaders have to create an environment that is favourable for successful staff development programmes to take place. Providing teachers with opportunities to develop professionally is viewed by Chigumira (1999:128) as an important step in goal delivery. The development of teachers beyond their initial training is aimed at updating individual teachers' knowledge of a subject, skills, attitudes and approaches in the light of recent advances in the area, new circumstances, objectives and new research.

#### **3.4.3.1 Creating an environment for professional staff development**

In order to create an environment for successful staff development, the instructional leader can implement some of the guidelines proposed by Robbins and Alvy (2003: 189) which are discussed below.

Creating an environment for effective professional development requires the instructional leader to provide opportunities designed to create a purpose for it. Palestini (2003:122) perceives staff development as a form of human resource

management, a process that utilises development practices designed to achieve quality, greater productivity and an increase in job satisfaction. This involves keeping all individuals informed and inviting people to participate in supporting group activities. Collaboration and mutual respect among members of the school community should be encouraged and supported so that there is a common purpose towards realising the vision (see paragraph 3.4.1). There should be a provision for teachers to share professional growth goals and discuss the performance of students in the context of desired levels of achievement. Readiness-building activities and collaborative planning before the implementation of the staff development programme should be conducted.

An environment for successful professional development can also be cultivated by designing training for a variety of skills, such as awareness, knowledge skill development or application opportunities. Training is spread over time to allow for the integration of new ideas, approaches and behaviours into the workplace. As suggested by Robbins and Alvy (2003: 183), training activities reflect and model attitudes of good teaching that are to be promoted in classrooms. Active learning, a brain compatible approach, and time for reflection are emphasised. Besides involving the staff in planning for staff development, the instructional leader should also demonstrate support and ensure staff development programmes are voluntary. It is also important that teachers are to be encouraged to attend staff development organised outside the school so that a building-based system of support can be provided.

Wood, Thompson, and Russel (1981, cited in Robbins & Alvy, 2003: 182) suggest five stages for a staff development programme. It is illustrated in table 3.4 below.

**Table 3.3: Planning guide for staff development**

1. Readiness	Awareness, identification of broad goals, gaining commitment to innovation
2. Planning	Goals translated into comprehensive, detailed plans, planning

	team representative of staff
3. Training	Plans are translated into practice, effective staff development procedures followed
4. Implementation	Support provided for post training activities, adaptation, and assessment.
5. Maintenance	Continuous monitoring, assessment and adaptation of innovation

For staff development to have an overall effect, Earley and Weindling (2004: 158) suggest that it should be school-wide rather than geared specifically to the needs of individual teachers. Furthermore, an effective school development plan is needed which integrates staff development and instructional and curriculum development. Staff development activities should also be spread throughout the improvement process, which will assist in creating the right environment for staff development.

### **3.4.3.2 Teacher supervision and evaluation**

Burke and Krey (2005: 31) view supervision as instructional leadership that focuses on purposes, relates perspectives to behaviour, contributes to and supports organisational actions, provides for improvement and maintenance of the instructional programme and assesses goal attainment. Supervision entails the direct monitoring of instruction and the collection of data that may be useful in setting targets for improvement. The process of supervision calls for considerable personal contact between the teacher and the instructional leader. Conferences and classroom observations play a central role. To ensure effective teacher supervision and evaluation, they suggest that the instructional leader should involve all staff and people from the community in setting clear goals and objectives for instruction; work according to the belief that all teachers can teach and teach well, and hold conferences with individual teachers to renew their instructional plans. While the school head can delegate some supervisory activities to the deputy head or the HOD, the Director's Circular Minute No. 15 of 2006 stipulates that he or she is expected to continue assessing and examining reports on teachers and suggest innovations for the improvement of teacher-learner interaction.

Supervision by the high school head forms an integral part of staff development. A comprehensive, supportive and differentiated system of supervision consists of cooperative clinical supervision, collegial coaching which is an individualised and mediated entry programme, self-directed development activities and collegial study groups. According to Glanz (2006b: 57), clinical supervision is premised on the notion that teaching could be improved by a prescribed, formal process of collaboration between the teacher and the supervisor. It focuses on the improvement of instruction by means of systematic cycles of planning, classroom observation and analysis and feedback conference. As pointed out by Sullivan and Glanz (2005: 152), a supervisor of instruction must be a person who is seen by the teacher as a reliable source of assistance.

For clinical supervision to succeed, Sullivan and Glanz (2005:152) suggest that teachers must feel comfortable to share their teaching practices with their school head; supervision must be separated from evaluation and designed to promote instructional dialogue between the school head and the teacher in an open, collegial and trusting manner. Importantly too, the improvement of instruction must be viewed as a goal-oriented direction that combines the schoolwide needs with the personal needs of teachers. The supervisor must identify problems from the teachers' perspective and solicit information to clarify them to make their challenging task a bit easier.

The primary purpose of the evaluation of teachers' performance by the instructional leader is accountability (Mazibuko, 2007: 84). Davidoff and Lazarus (2002: 84) maintain that evaluation is intended to inform future planning and development. By virtue of their position, school heads are mandated to evaluate teachers either for purposes of promotion or salary advancement.

McEwan (2003: 36) contends that effective instructional leaders take personal responsibility to ensure that trustworthy research and proven practices are talked

about frequently and demonstrated in a proficient manner in their schools. In her view, effective instructional leaders read a variety of publications, attend all kinds of workshops, go to national conferences, present staff development programmes to their teachers, and are always searching for potential resources. Steyn (2007: 223) argues thus, “if we want to talk about school quality and school improvement, we need to focus on people improvement”. In order to facilitate quality teaching and learning in classrooms, Steyn (2003:223) maintains that the instructional leader should establish instructional priorities, believe that all students can learn and achieve at high levels and support teachers who implement new ideas.

Gupton (2003: 106) maintains that the principal’s role in providing a support system in which teachers can grow and further develop the complex skills of teaching is one of a coordinator and an integrator of many people to provide the best supervision. The process of supervision calls for considerable personal contact between the teacher and the instructional leader in which conferences and classroom observations play a central role.

Professional development can address teachers as whole persons, fostering their pedagogical, cognitive, emotional, social, and ethical development (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2004: 476). This study investigated the extent to which high school heads as instructional leaders provide teachers with opportunities to enhance their teaching skills through professional development. For successful implementation of professional development for teachers, it is paramount that the school head should consider the concept of empowerment.

#### **3.4.4 EMPOWERMENT**

It is vital that people discover their abilities to accomplish the potential they have. Much research has shown that teachers desire more formal power and freedom to use professional discretion as they work with colleagues (Maeroff, 1988, cited in Blase & Blase, 2004: 189). To develop a professional learning community, the

instructional leader should consider empowering teachers. Empowerment is defined by Conger (1989, cited in Goldsmith, Lyons & Freas, 2000: 155) as, “the process of enabling and motivating subordinates by increasing their personal efficacy.” Teacher efficacy has its roots in the social cognitive and self-efficacy theory proposed by Bandura (1997, cited in Adeyemo, 2007: 208). Self-efficacy represents the recognition that in order to function competently, one must have both the necessary skills and the confidence to perform a given task effectively. Perceived self-efficacy refers to the beliefs in one’s responsibilities to organise and execute the course of action needed to produce given attainment. According to Adeyemo (2007:208), self-efficacy is enhanced by empowerment, which helps mediate the relationship between knowledge and action. Botha (2004:241) sees empowerment as the collective effort of leadership in which people feel valued, where they know that their ability is vital, where sharing of ideas is encouraged and where choice is a possibility for everyone.

Cunningham and Gresso (1993: 193) state that empowerment means helping people to take charge of their lives, inspiring people to develop feelings of self-worth and a willingness to be self-critical and reflective of their actions. When the instructional leader empowers members of the school community, it means enabling them to discover what they have to offer to the school, which can enhance the COTL. In addition, Bowen and Lawler (1992, cited in Goldsmith, Lyons & Freas, 2000: 161) have this to say about empowerment:

Empowerment also necessitates sharing with employees information and knowledge that enable them to understand and contribute to organisational performance, rewarding them based on the organisation’s performance, and giving them authority to make decisions that influence organisational outcomes.

It has already been pointed out that research by Macroff (1988, cited in Blase and Blase, 2004: 189) has shown that teachers desire more formal power and autonomy to use their professional discretion in the teaching and learning process. School

principals or school heads who provide formal power and the freedom to their subordinates to use their professional discretion, accord them (subordinates) with the respect and dignity to make work-related decisions. Teacher empowerment means that a teacher believes that he/she has something valuable to contribute to the situation and that what he/she offers has a bearing on the outcome or decision. Wolfendale (1992, cited in Caltiz, Fuglestad & Lillejord, 2002: 117) maintains that empowerment provides people the opportunity to notice and express wants, needs, and rights, and to ensure that their voices are heard so that they can play a definite role in the process of creating a COTL. However, empowering followers is not always an easy task (see paragraphs 5.4.1.4 & 6.3.1.4). The greatest challenge for instructional leaders is to assess themselves and their readiness to give the decision-making authority up. The study will investigate how high school heads in Zimbabwe contend with this challenge as they try to create a COTL. Bolin (1989, cited in Blase & Blase, 2004: 189) contends that teacher empowerment requires:

Investing in teachers the right to participate in the determination of school goals and policies and the right to exercise professional judgement about the content of the curriculum and means of instruction.

James (2001: 25) states that the school principal has an added responsibility to empower educators with the skills to facilitate critical thought in classrooms so that they are able to promote effective teaching and learning. According to Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007: 40), empowerment means that teachers and other stakeholders are encouraged to do what they think is right provided that what they do embodies values and purposes that are shared, serves the common good, and strengthens the character of teaching and learning. Thus, through empowerment people can take charge of their lives, develop feelings of self-worth and a willingness to be self-critical and reflective of their actions (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993: 199).

Bolin agrees with Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk (2009: 8) that empowerment as a long-term dimension of instructional leadership means that teachers are endowed with the responsibility and authority to realise themselves in the school system.



Studies by Blase and Blase (2004: 189) have demonstrated that school leaders who embrace the concept of 'empowerment' in their leadership treat teachers and other members of the school community with respect and dignity, which facilitates decision-making. It is necessary then to examine the actions that instructional leaders can undertake to create a COTL through empowerment in their high schools.

#### **3.4.4.1 Instructional leadership actions to enhance teacher empowerment**

Blase and Blase (2004: 192) provide some important strategies to be employed by the instructional leader to empower teachers in the school. They include firstly, modelling, building, and persistently supporting an environment of trust among teachers, students, parents and members of the community. A systematic structuring of the school to promote mutual collaboration is essential and this can be achieved by establishing readiness and common goals and by responding to the school's unique characteristics. Shared governance must be supported by providing professional development and maintaining the focus on teaching and learning.

Supporting teacher experimentation and innovation, giving professional autonomy, and taking failure as an opportunity to learn ~~is~~ are another ~~strategy~~ strategies that can be employed by the instructional leader to enhance the empowerment of teachers. This means encouraging members to take risks without any fear of rebuke or punishment. Equally important is the need to exhibit a high degree of caring, optimism, friendliness, and enthusiasm, not forgetting the use of praise and symbolic rewards. In the process of enhancing teacher empowerment, Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2009: 10) posit that the school leader should support teachers and show empathy.

The above characterise a healthy school culture described in paragraph 2.4.1. However, while it is assumed school communities in democratic societies function best when individuals "trust" each other (Murphy, 2007: 24), prevailing political

divisions, hierarchical organisational structures and a restless social context often make the process of building trust to empower teachers and parents challenging. In order to empower teachers, Looock *et al.*, (2002: 54) posit that principals should decide what work they ought to do themselves and what work they should delegate. Principals should agree with teachers on performance objectives and standards and allow the teachers to act independently. An empowered state of mind includes control over actions and tasks, accountability for work output and an awareness of the context in which the various tasks are performed including the desired outcomes and applicable milestones. The link between leadership and empowerment is reflected by Binney and Williams (1997, cited in Goldsmith, Lyons & Freas 2000: 157) who conclude that:

The paradox of leaders is that as they give power away, they become more powerful! Rather than impose their will on others, they work through example and the evident authenticity of their words and actions. Their leadership becomes more compelling and the people with whom they are working are more likely to respond because they feel more responsible, more committed, and more fulfilled in their work.

As a way of overcoming the above dilemma associated with empowerment, Ford and Fottler (1995, cited in Goldsmith, Lyons & Freas 2000: 161) suggest that leaders should first assess themselves carefully before attempting to empower their followers. Importantly, leaders should consider whether they are ready to relinquish part of their decision-making authority or whether they are distrustful of their followers. Similarly, the leader also needs to ascertain whether the followers themselves are ready and eager to participate in empowerment programmes or whether they are disinterested.

The visions that members of the school community (teachers, students, and parents) are capable of achieving will demand a full complement of fully developed human resources. Building a commitment to values and long-term ambitions provides a vision and sense of direction that permits both the instructional leader and teachers to put short-term problems and challenges about teaching and learning into context.

Empowerment is vital in instructional leadership in as far as it promotes commitment, efficacy and high level of performance through collaborative decision making.

### **3.5 SHORT-TERM EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP**

The model of short term leadership on which the framework for short-term instructional leadership in this chapter is based, was derived from eminent leadership models such as McGregor's Theory X and Y, Lickert's model, the Ohio State model, Blake and Mouton's leadership matrix, Tannenbaum and Schmidt's leadership continuum, Fiedler's model, House's model, the Vroom and Yetton model, the Hersey and Blanchard model (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk 2009).

Short- term instructional leadership refers to the actions that are taken to handle specific situations (Coetzee, Van Niekerk & Wydeman, 2008: 50). Day-to-day school activities require effective short-term instructional leadership. The discussion below will focus on the characteristics of the instructional leader, the characteristics of followers and the characteristics of the situation with an impact on the effectiveness of situational leadership provided by the instructional leader.

#### **3.5.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER**

In paragraph 2.9.2.8 leadership is discussed as an important element in promoting an effective culture of teaching and learning (COTL). Important characteristics of the instructional leader needed in the creation of a COTL include the way he/she views people, his/her task versus people orientation, his/her personality, values, knowledge and experience, and trust (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk 2009).

##### **3.5.1.1 The instructional leader's perception of stakeholders**

Leadership requires a high level of care and concern on the part of the leader for those who prefer to follow (Pellicer, 2008:20). Thus, if a leader fails to exercise the

level of care and concern required to maintain intimate ties with his or her followers, the implied contact between the leader and the followers is at risk. Contrary to the popular opinion that sees leaders as persons who are far ahead of others, Pellicer thinks the best leaders are those who are in the middle of the beliefs, dreams and values of those whom they lead. It is important that as the leader moves forward, he or she should constantly look to his or her left and to his or her right and occasionally look behind him or her to make sure that he or she is still at the centre of the group under his or her leadership. The capacity to lead can become invalid the moment the leader loses contact with his or her followers' beliefs, goals and dreams.

Makombe and Madziyire (2002: 34) advise instructional leaders to keep in mind that the school belongs to the community and that it serves to educate the children of the community. In this vein, they advise instructional leaders to strive to maintain sound relations with the community. The rationale behind a mutual relationship between the instructional leader and the stakeholders of the school is that it enables the former to get support for school projects aimed at enhancing teaching and learning. Cotton (2003:18) concurs and notes that there is a significant relationship between parents' active participation in their children's learning and the children's academic performance. Therefore, principals should interact with parents and the community to communicate the vision of the school. This study investigated the extent to which this is practised in high schools in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe (see paragraph 1.4).

The quality of relationships that teachers develop with students is a critical factor in instructional leadership (Busher, 2006: 116). Students tend to appreciate teachers who take a personal interest in them and their development. Positive relationships between teachers and their students are crucial in that they enable teachers to develop trust between themselves and students and shape students' attitudes towards their school work. However, such a relationship can only be built when students recognise a sense of justice in the moral codes and the practices of their

school and in the manner in which lessons are conducted. Empowering students' voices is yet another important aspect of constructing the social curriculum. According to Busher and Saran (1992, cited in Busher, 2006:117), empowering students' voices is intended to allow them to help shape the policies of the school. School policy and practice are contested arenas for all members of the school community. To encourage reflection among teachers, Roberts and Pruitt (2003:17) suggest that the instructional leader should look for opportunities to discuss classroom issues of importance openly such as test scores and student motivation, invite a guest facilitator to engage in dialogue with teachers on issues of importance to them, and participate where appropriate, with teachers and others within the school system in a reflective practice group.

In order to maintain a strong positive COTL, it is important to ensure that the culture is transmitted to new teachers and students. The instructional leader's perception of all members of the school community determines whether he or she will adopt the right balance between a task orientation and people orientation.

### **3.5.1.2 The instructional leader's task or people orientation**

Implicit in the definition of leadership provided in paragraph 3.2.1, is the amount of task behaviour (direction) and the relationship behaviour (support) given by a leader (Goldsmith, Lyons & Freas, 2000: 249). Fiedler (1997, cited in Earley & Weindling, 2004: 4) identifies two key features associated with leadership. The first is establishing a sense of purpose and confidence that is engendered in the followers and the other is influencing followers and guiding them in the process of goals or task achievement.

The most challenging human relations role of the instructional leader is therefore to find a balance between task and relationship behaviour. One principal (cited in Robbins & Alvy, 2003: 46) provided a list of things that could be done to balance attention to task – getting the job done – with relationship-oriented behaviour –

taking care of people. Elements of this are shown in the table below in relation to how meetings are conducted by leaders.

**Table 3.4: Elements of task versus relationship orientation**

Task orientation	Relationship orientation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin meeting on time.</li> <li>• End meetings on time.</li> <li>• When asking for behaviour change or products/services, give concrete examples of what is expected.</li> <li>• Request feedback on agenda construction and coverage at the end of meetings.</li> <li>• Take written notes on request and follow up on them.</li> <li>• Assign time limitations to agenda items and if additional discussion time is needed, request for it from the faculty.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocate time for congenial activities.</li> <li>• Plan interactive activities during staff meetings.</li> <li>• Protect staff members from verbal attack when ideas are discussed.</li> <li>• Ask for input regarding decisions to be made, schedule time for discussion.</li> <li>• Schedule time for staff members to work together (sharing ideas, trading lessons, integrating curriculum, developing curriculum and teaching one another instructional approaches)</li> <li>• Follow up staff development experiences with opportunities for staff members to share how they have applied recently acquired knowledge and skills.</li> </ul>

When undue emphasis is placed on task behaviour as a measure of success, this may result in excess pressure and stress on members (Robbins & Alvy, 2003: 45). According to Chakanyuka (2004: 121), a production emphasis (task orientation), refers to the principal's behaviour characterised by close supervision of the teachers. This means that the instructional leader is directive and plays the role of a straw boss. In addition, communication tends to be one-way which means that there is minimum emphasis on feedback. Task orientation also means that the

instructional leader attempts to “move the school” by motivating followers (teachers and students) through exemplary behaviour. Coetzee, Van Niekerk and Wydeman (2008: 63) agree with Chakanyuka (2004:121) that a task-oriented leader will want the job done and will emphasise activities such as planning, directing and problem solving. However, when emphasising task accomplishment it should be remembered that followers can be at several different task-relevant readiness (ability and willingness) levels for the various tasks that make up their jobs (see paragraph 3.5.2.1).

Unlike task orientation, people orientation refers to the instructional leader’s behaviour that is characterised by treating teachers and students humanely. Coetzee, Van Niekerk and Wydeman (2008: 63) agree and contend that people oriented educators seek to establish sound relationships and emphasise the expression of feelings, teamwork, harmony and reaching a compromise when there is a difference of opinion.

Robbins and Alvy (2003: 45) argue that if most emphasis is placed on relationship behaviours members may become complacent at the expense of quality performance. To maintain a balance between task orientation and people orientation, Makombe and Madziyire (2002: 41) recommend that the instructional leader should reinforce school goals on the one hand and empathise with the members on the other hand. In dealing with certain (problem) situations, the instructional leader should show consistency, take time to interact with followers, treat them with dignity, keep sight of the school vision, and accommodate the diversity of opinion. Furthermore, the instructional leader needs to have a strong personality to be successful in maintaining a balance between task and people orientation in order to create a COTL.

### **3.5.1.3 The instructional leader’s personality**

A good school's most important requirement is to have an inspiring, highly respected leader (Taylor & Ryan, 2005: 30). Throughout the last century, the literature has chronicled some interesting fluctuations in the study of leadership theories on the leader's personality. In this regard, the personality of the instructional leader is pivotal in the creation of a COTL. According to the American Heritage Dictionary, personality can be perceived in three distinct ways. Firstly, it can be perceived as the totality of qualities and traits and those pertaining to character or behaviour, that are peculiar to an individual person. Secondly, as the pattern of collective character, behavioural, temperamental, emotional and mental traits of an individual. Thirdly, as the distinctive qualities of an individual, especially those that make one socially appealing.

The trait theory of leadership, which subscribes to the notion that leaders are born, suggests that successful leaders' behaviours can be attributed to a set of unique personality traits such as forcefulness, intelligence and the need for achievement. However, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the work of Frederick Taylor and others gave rise to another school of thinkers in the field of leadership studies based on behavioural theory. Behavioural theorists such as Argyris, Black Monton, Getzels, Guba, Likert and McGregor (cited in Pellicer, 2008:14) believed that what leaders do is far more significant than any set of traits they might possess.

Behavioural theorists were cognisant of the fact that people within rigid organisations have needs that must be satisfied first so that the organisation can be successful in its endeavours. The study of behaviourists on the leader's personality paved the way for a series of leadership models, assessment tools, and motivational theories that have had a significant influence on the study and practice of leadership in the present day. Situational or contingency leadership emerged from the work of behavioural theorists such as Fiedler, Hersey and Blanchard who questioned whether there is one best way for a leader to lead in all situations (Matanda & Gwete, 2005:72). The situational leadership theory maintains that effective leadership behaviour is dependent on the situation in which the leader functions.



This means that the leader must be cognisant of variables such as the nature of the task to be performed, the maturity of the group and operative time constraints. To realise optimal results, the contingency theorists emphasised the need for leaders to change their approaches in accordance with the circumstances in a particular situation (Jubenkanda, 2006:20).

Effective instructional leadership is associated with trustworthiness, caring and respectfulness, emotional literacy and cultural awareness. According to Goldsmith, Lyons and Freas (2000: 329), leaders are viewed as dependable, sincere and non-deceptive promise keepers. Therefore, the instructional leader should also possess important traits such as integrity and moral fabric. To succeed in creating a COTL, the instructional leader should demonstrate a high regard for the dignity, worth, well-being, and autonomy of all the members of the school community as well as for himself or herself. The instructional leader must be prepared to learn from other cultures so that he/she may have a broader perspective of his or her role. Emotional awareness, resilience, and persistence on the part of the instructional leader are also important in creating a COTL. Under stressful and difficult situations these assist the instructional leader to sense, understand, and respond effectively. The trust he or she inspires in teachers for instance serves as an impetus to the attainment of quality education (see paragraphs 2.9.2.4 & 3.5.1.6).

To be successful, the instructional leader should be a sincere and down-to-earth person. In addition, if the instructional leader is to be effective, he or she must like people, be willing to try to understand where each member of the team is coming from, and be willing and keen to find out why the individual behaves in a particular manner. Without a people-oriented personality, Simon and Newman (2004:45) contend that a school leader would be ineffective because members of the school community are quick to realise that he or she does not care about them. Consequently, the members will be reluctant to identify with the school leader's goals and objectives to create a COTL. The school leader uses micro-political strategies in various arenas to achieve instructional goals and some arise from his

or her personality. Constructing the future through working positively with people requires a leader who is approachable and develops trust with colleagues and students, negotiates carefully with other people and shows care for them, makes the school a pleasant place in which to work, enhances social cohesion, and organises the instructional programme by emphasising teamwork and collaboration (Busher, 2006: 145).

#### **3.5.1.4 The instructional leader's value system**

Successful school leaders are driven by personal, moral and educational values and are able to articulate these with total conviction to create a clear institutional purpose and direction (Gold, Evans, Earley, Halpin & Collarbone, 2003:73). Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2009: 7) assert that a desired COTL, including meaningful change can only be created, provided the school leader adopts the function of nurturing desired values that are essential for improving the quality of education. Often when people are bound to shared ideas, values, beliefs, and frameworking, bonds of fellowship emerge which can empower the membership as a whole (Leithwood & Beatty, 2008: 106).

Values and beliefs form the framework for guiding the behaviour and actions of followers (see paragraph 2.3.1.5). Rokeach (1971, cited in Daresh, 2001: 32), defines values as “types of beliefs, centrally located within one’s belief system, that addresses how one ought or ought not to behave, or about some end state of existence worth or not worth attaining.” Van der Westhuizen (1994, cited in Naidu *et al.* 2008: 58) is of the opinion that community values have a powerful and continuous influence on the educational expectations of schools where a person’s philosophy is formed. In many ways, values represent a leader’s permanent view of reality that is formed and fashioned out of his or her temporary beliefs and attitudes as well as the beliefs and attitudes of the followers. Coleman and Earley (2005:30) point out that people make judgements about what to do in any given situation according to the way their value system has been programmed.

Copra (2002: 9) postulates that a system of shared values and beliefs creates an identity among the members of a social network, which is based on a sense of belonging. Leaders of schools must therefore define a set of clear organisational values, encourage the expression of different opinions, respect all individuals, provide joy, communicate effectively and as far as possible, take full advantage of the opportunities that leadership provides to make a meaningful impact when lobbying for an improvement in the COTL. De Pree (1989, cited in Pellicer, 2008: 15), holds the view that effective leadership largely depends on a symbiotic and covenantal relationship between leaders and followers, which is based on a common core of shared values. This implies that there should be extensive communication between the school leader and his/her followers that can lead to a clear understanding and adoption of shared values. Bennis and Goldsmith (2003:4) emphasise that a leader should be a person of integrity with values that are commensurate with his or her actions.

People choose to follow their leaders not because of what they say, know, or do, but because they can readily identify with the leader's core values (Pellicer, 2008: 16). While it is agreed that there is a profound ethical base to educational leadership for community development, Gelsthorpe and West-Burnham (2003: 9) consider socio-economic and cultural poverty to be potential barriers to the educational opportunities available. Oftentimes when people are bound to shared ideas, values, beliefs, and frameworking, bonds of fellowship emerge which can empower the membership as a whole.

Hodgkinson (1991, cited in Haydon, 2007: 101) has offered a framework that categorises several sources of values. At the one end of the framework are values based on preferences. The second category consists of values based on consensus and consequences. Consensus is often viewed as adequate backing for values because once the school community has agreed collectively that something should be done in a certain way that will be sufficient reason for doing it that way. Thus,

once norms have been established within the school community it becomes imperative for everyone to conform (see paragraph 2.3.1.7). The point about consequences in educational leadership is crucial because education is always expected to be mindful of the effects it will have on students. Thus, the instructional leader should always be aware of the consequences of his or her decisions for all the members of the school community. At the end of his framework, Hodgkinson has values that are matters of principle. These express a commitment that goes beyond the possibility of rational grounding and include justice, dignity, and equality. Values that are matters of principle are ethical and therefore often outweigh the other two categories discussed above.

Educational values focus on how teachers, students and parents should interact to promote learning and sustain order (Busher, 2006: 76). The values that should be promoted by the instructional leader include statements of appropriate relationships among people who hold different formal positions in the hierarchy of the school community, for example heads of departments (HODs) and members of the School Development Committee (SDC). The provision of members' self-fulfilment involves nurturing the well-being of every member of the school community in ways that allow both individuals and the school as an organisation to benefit as people work toward shared aims. O' Toole (1996, cited in Collinson & Cook, 2007: 181), has noted that effective leadership is grounded in values that embrace students, teachers and parents. As suggested by Busher (2006: 76-79), students should be perceived as important in the process of constructing the school's culture of learning and teaching so that they can be motivated in their work and also enjoy their lessons, have a sense of achievement and feel wanted by their teachers. As Instructional leaders, school heads should also have values for effective teaching. This means that they should perceive themselves primarily as part of a community of teachers. They should also have a belief about effective teaching, which is manifested by a passionate enthusiasm or desire for teaching and learning in order to sustain and enhance the performance of teachers and students (see paragraph 2.3.1.6. Another important value system required of the instructional leader to create a COTL is to

allocate resources equitably and according to the needs of students and the budgetary framework available.

Studies of high performing teachers and principals have mentioned some important values and practices that are characteristic of high-performing leaders (in Collinson & Cook, 2007: 181). Firstly, high performing leaders emphasise the values of learning, they are knowledgeable and skilled, have a network of reach and influence that go beyond their immediate boundaries, attend to human relations, assist others and they are respected for their sound judgement. Secondly, effective leaders are other-centred and compassionate. This means that they possess the required knowledge about students and colleagues, are able to identify strengths and weaknesses of their followers, use their knowledge to find ways to assist and encourage others and contribute to professional growth. Thirdly, high-performing leaders are future-oriented and optimistic about the high expectations of themselves and others.

Christopher Hodgkinson (1991, cited in Gupton, 2003: 3) writes:

The educational leader as practical idealist [acts] ... according to personal ideals, to prevent the bad from being born and the good from dying too soon. The leader is not tossed upon the seas by every wave of political opinion, but feels the honour, obligations that go with that honour, to participate in an intensely moral vocation.

One of the core values of a school leader is valuing what people can offer in a non-patronising manner. As guiding principles of the instructional leader, Michael Fullan (1997, cited in Gupton, 2003:3) posits that effective school leaders adopt independent stances on matters of importance and decide what they do not want to do. This implies that instructional leaders do not only reflect on their values and principles, but they are also open to their organisation. Creating and sustaining a compelling personal and school vision and modelling the core school values and

personal principles constitute the value system in instructional leadership. The importance of values was discussed in chapter 2, paragraph 2.3.1.5.

### **3.5.1.5 The instructional leader's knowledge and experience**

Keeping the school performing is a constant battle for the instructional leader because the school should continually try to overcome inertia, to gain momentum and to be productive. The battle with inertia means that there is a constant change in instruction and this is often resisted by teachers. Therefore, the instructional leader's knowledge and experience help overcome any possible resistance to changes in the school's COTL. In fact, Onguko, Abdalla and Webber (2008:723) maintain that the execution of leadership practice requires a sound knowledge base and leadership skills on the part of the principal to enable him or her to coach teachers. According to Tolhurst (2006: 98), there is a continuum in the leadership approaches; which are discussed in paragraph 3.2.2 of this study. On one extreme end is the leader as an expert and on the other is the leader as a coach. Bennis and Goldsmith (2003: 4) contend that the foundation of leadership is built on the belief that the leader has the capacity to perform his or her role. Knowledge and skills are regarded by Pellicer (2008: 163) as prerequisites for assuming a leadership role.

The idea that people in positions of leadership should have the relevant knowledge and skills is an idea that goes as far back as to the days of Plato (Haydon, 2007: 48). In the present times, the relevant knowledge can be taken to be regarded as a kind of authority. The instructional leader needs to possess the knowledge and skills needed to develop a budget, hire and assign staff, and plan and implement a curriculum. These qualities should be manifested in terms of honesty, integrity, caring, and commitment to a set of widely accepted values. For the school head to be effective in guiding change, Murphy and Louis (1999, cited in Datnow, Hubbard & Mehan, 2002: 64) propose that he or she should have the knowledge and skills to create and maintain a sense of trust in the school. Importantly, the school head as

an instructional leader is expected to use micro-politics to negotiate between managerial, technical, and institutional arenas, and create a professional community and networks within the school.

The micro-political strategies that can be used by the school head in various arenas to attain instructional objectives often arise from his/her work-related knowledge and skills. Busher (2006: 146) suggests that the school head could firstly ensure the availability of symbolic resources such as a vision for the curriculum, which incorporates core values for teachers and students, the prioritisation of actions and the manner in which school development plans are mapped to achieve a coherent set of educational and social values. Secondly, it ensures the accessibility to technical knowledge of curriculum subjects, of subject pedagogy and how to become an effective instructor. Thirdly, it ensures the availability of organisational resources, which entail the school head's knowledge about how the school system works and how people work in organisational systems.

The instructional leader as an expert takes pride in knowing about almost everything occurring in the school. Teachers see such an instructional leader as having all the solutions to problems concerning teaching and learning. Thus, when problems arise, the instructional leader takes a solution-focused approach. The instructional leader who relies on expertise as a source of power likes to maintain tight control over the delivery of instruction. Usually teachers prefer such a leader because he/she can concentrate on the teaching and learning process more than attending to administrative responsibilities. Instructional leadership that includes coaching, maintains an overview of what takes place in the different parts of the school and its departments. Coaching refers to the methodology for shifting a culture of 'power over' people to one in which the 'power within' is unleashed (Goldsmith, Lyons & Freas, 2000: 150). Tolhurst (2006: 3) maintains that coaching is a way of working alongside someone, giving him/her an opportunity to set goals and the support needed to achieve them. The instructional leader who is a coach tends to have a good work-life because he/she delegates work.

Although general knowledge over a broad area and specific skills are prerequisites for assuming the instructional leadership role in creating a COTL, Pellicer (2008: 162) argues that they are not the final arbiters of success. Of equal importance is who the instructional leader is both as a human being and as a leader. Nevertheless, the instructional leader's knowledge and experience of instruction will have a definite impact on attempts to improve the COTL.

The instructional leader's knowledge and experience about leadership is critical because of the widespread notion that the quality of leadership has an impact on school and student outcomes (Bush, 2007: 391).

#### **3.5.1.6 Expectations and trust in followers**

Successful leaders have high expectations, both of themselves and of their constituents or followers (Goldsmith, Lyons & Freas, 2000: 94). Instructional leaders are mandated to establish a standard of excellence in teaching, define benchmarks of instructional effectiveness and help teachers meet the required standards and attain the benchmarks. The expectations are not merely fluff that a leader uses to help followers to maintain a positive outlook on their work, but the expectations that the leader holds provide the framework into which followers fit their realities (see paragraph 2.9.2.4). Setting high expectations means "knowing what a good one looks like" (McEwan, 2003: 83). Today's workplace realities are that followers are hungry for purposeful leadership. It is important to note that purposeful leadership has purpose, vision and courage. Also purposeful leadership demands trust which relies on character. According to Goldsmith, Lyons and Freas (2000: 85), subordinates do not follow blindly because they are not only educated, street smart and globally wise, but they are also aware of their options. This means that followers' engagement on the job depends on the trust they have in their leader. Roberts and Pruitt (2003:38) regard trust as an essential factor in building the high



quality needed to foster collaboration in schools. On the same token, Duffy (2003: 9) posits that trust is needed to improve the quality of education for students, the quality of life for teachers, and the quality of community relationships. Education is viewed by Davies (2005: 46) as a co-operative, behavioural activity in which mutuality should be enhanced. Importantly, wholesome school communities are often built on a culture of trust and respect that pave the way for internal harmony and cooperation.

French, Atkinson and Rugen (2007: 9) regard high expectations, mutual trust, respect and caring as essential components of successful schools. Teams, a shared vision, collegiality, diverse perspectives, personal development, long-term focus, access to information, empowerment and a parent-school partnership in a school can be achieved if trust exists. Leaders' high expectations as well as their low expectations have an influence on followers' performance, though the former tend to have a positive impact on people's actions and on their feelings about themselves. Austin Holowenzak (1985, cited in Gupton, 2003: 57), notes:

...expectations about achievement and social behaviour held by the principal, other administrators, and teachers strongly affect student achievement and social behaviour... Teachers, administrators, and others involved in the school social system communicate their perception of appropriate and proper achievement and expectations and assessments of students through informal interaction with students and with each other... This interactive process significantly affects the nature of student achievement.

The ability to communicate and support high standards of behaviour for school teams in every aspect of the school operation is regarded by Joyner (cited in Joyner, Ben-Avie and Comer, 2004: 95) as the key to instructional leadership. Holding high expectations helps teachers feel that the instructional leader has faith in their ability to achieve quality work. Importantly, high expectations must be held with the support of the instructional leader so that they can be met. High expectations can only bear fruit when the instructional leader holds himself or herself to the high expectations and when he/she provides the necessary support for both students and teachers.

The way people communicate with each other and the degree of trust among members of the school community impact on the school culture. Trust develops as individuals hear others present their own ideas, beliefs and philosophy about a phenomenon. Trust is important as it enables the team to value individuals for their strengths and encourages the members to be willing to work through conflict, permits a rich COTL to develop and allows teachers and students to attain their full potential, often reduces fear of dependence and minimises potentially dysfunctional conflict among members of the school community. Where trust exists, teachers tend to demonstrate greater willingness to collaborate with the school head on school reform strategies and curriculum issues (Roberts & Pruitt, 2003: 38).

People's perceptions of one another are very important determinants of the manner in which they communicate with and trust one another. Thus, if teachers perceive their instructional leader (the school head) as controlling, autocratic, insensitive and aloof, it will not be conducive for the development of mutual trust. Developing trust in the instructional leader requires him/her to take personal responsibility for treating all members of the school community equitably and consistently.

Ramsey (2008: 89) regards trust as the adhesive that glues the organisation together. Therefore, it means that the school leader must be trusted. In their perspectives on what they call the "trust factor," Bennis and Goldsmith (1997: 5; cited in Gupton, 2003: 66), write:

You must create an environment where people feel free to voice dissent. You do this through behaviour. You do not fire people because they are goofed, and you actually encourage dissent. You have to reward people disagreeing, to reward innovation, and to tolerate failure. All these are connected with creating a trusting atmosphere – but most of trust comes not from a particular technique, but from the character of the leader.... If you are an effective leader, what you say is congruent with what you do, and that is congruent with what you feel, and that is congruent with your vision.

Blase and Blase (2003: 66) are of the opinion that trust through positioning paves the way for internal harmony, cooperation, and smooth functioning, which in turn make it possible for the best instruction and learning to take place. For the same reason, Coetzee, Van Niekerk and Wydeman (2008:66) maintain that the leader's degree of trust in the followers and the expectations he/she has of them greatly affects the quality of leadership provided. In their argument, a leader who trusts followers and has realistic, but high expectations of them employs a democratic leadership style (see paragraph 3.2.2). High expectations are believed to satisfy a psychological need in followers and instil confidence in them.

School leaders earn the trust and respect of their followers to the extent that they are able to demonstrate their allegiance to a set of widely accepted values as they execute their daily responsibilities in an instructional leadership role. Thus, the school head's actions in the instructional leader's role serve as confirmation of the determination to create a culture of learning and teaching. Kouzes and Posner (1999: 85) argue that leaders can become worthy of the trust of their followers if they maintain an open door policy and are honest in all their dealings with them. As contended by Pellicer (2008: 140), an open door policy is a physical demonstration of the leader's willingness to let other people in and by being frank and open about him or herself. Expectations and trust in followers are developed by instructional leaders who possess specific attributes, put themselves on the line, and are willing to assume responsibility when and where needed. As stipulated in the Director's Circular Minute No. 41 of 2006, high schools should have high expectations for both teachers and learners and create an atmosphere and belief that every student can succeed given the right curriculum and motivation.

### **3.5.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF FOLLOWERS**

As the instructional leader strives to realise the long-term vision of an ideal school, he or she is confronted with specific situations involving followers on a day-to-day basis that need attention. Important characteristics of followers that affect

instructional leadership include their readiness for responsibility, their level of motivation to excel and their level of knowledge and experience. These are explained below.

### **3.5.2.1 Level of responsibility**

Members in school systems have a joint responsibility to ensure that the system works and to safeguard democratic principles so that organisational learning can take place (Collinson & Cook, 2007: 141). Goldsmith, Lyons and Freas (2000: 152) maintain that leaders can be effective over the long-term if they emphasise issues associated with responsibility. According to Dixon (1999: 184), responsibility suggests “a willingness to be accountable.” Responsibilities include; individual and collective learning, questioning, participating, taking a leadership role when one’s knowledge and skills are appropriate for a particular task, practising democratic principles, assisting other members, and contributing to the improvement of the entire organisation. Thomas and Bainbridge (2001: 55) assert that the teacher is the primary instructional force in schools:

Instructional effectiveness is the responsibility of teachers. The principal may be a leader, but accountability for effective instruction belongs to teachers. Principals may understand instruction and support it, but they do not teach curriculum...Teachers are the heart and soul of any school system. They are the models we remember as adults. We must give teachers the instructional authority and the freedom to make individual decisions for each boy or girl in their classrooms.

The statement above calls for personal responsibility on the part of educators, which is critical if they are to manage their weaknesses and develop their strengths.

The manner in which teachers execute their responsibilities in the school can have a profound effect on the decision making process. Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2009: 14) regard the readiness of followers to accept responsibility as crucial in the effectiveness of a specific leadership approach (see paragraph 3.2.2).

Table 3.3 in paragraph 3.4.3.1 reflects the importance of the readiness of followers to accept responsibility in staff development programmes. Readiness refers to the follower's ability and willingness to perform (Goldsmith, Lyons & Freas, 2000: 249). Goldsmith, Lyons and Freas (2000: 250) identify four levels of followers' readiness for responsibility.

The lowest level is described as the unwilling and unable to perform a task and the appropriate leadership approach is to provide a high amount of direction or task behaviour (see Table 3.3). The leader's approach matched to this follower readiness includes a clear communication of expectations and goals; defining role as both means and ends; informing and instructing. The second level is described as the willing but unable to perform and the appropriate leadership approach is that of high amounts of both task and people orientation (see Table 3.3). The leader's approach matched to this follower's readiness includes a discussion of goals to improve performance; reaching an agreement on the best course of action to be taken; guiding, persuading, explaining and training. The third level is described as the able but unwilling to perform where an individual lacks confidence and the appropriate leadership approach is that of a high amount of relationship behaviour or person-orientation. The leader's approach matched to this follower's readiness includes reinforcing the individual's self-worth and self-esteem; assessing understanding and commitment; encouraging, supporting, motivating, and empowering.

The highest readiness level is described as the willing and able to perform and the appropriate leadership approach is low amounts of assistance in both task behaviour and relationship or people-orientation. The leader's approach matched to this follower's readiness for responsibility includes document session in performance record. However, although the initial intervention leadership approach matched to follower's readiness is selected, the leader's ultimate goal is to develop the follower. Teachers can become colleagues, leaders, learners, and pedagogues. As colleagues, teachers should become aware of their obligations and be determined to make meaningful and long-lasting change in their instructional practice.

Furthermore, the capacity to accomplish leadership roles is strengthened by an understanding of goals set.

A responsibility-driven approach to leadership tends to produce a more effective balance of the interests of the respective stakeholders unlike a power-driven approach, which is preoccupied with short-term issues only. Schools can hardly improve and operate a responsibility-driven policy unless the school head as the instructional leader sets an example by reflecting good practice in teaching and learning (Bush, 2008:284). Importantly, the good practice has to be communicated. If there is to be a responsibility and learning focus, there should be a sympathy for processes such as an upward appraisal of performance rather than a power culture which applies traditional appraisal systems bureaucratically in an attempt to exercise control ( refer to Table 2.1).

As stated by Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2009: 14), the contingency theory of leadership indicates that the leadership approach adopted by a leader should be matched with the existing situation and this also includes the followers' level of maturity. Justifying the importance of followers' readiness for responsibility, the authors argue further that the success or failure of change in education is determined at the educator's level where it is implemented.

Holbeche (2006: 384) maintains that an individual's level of motivation is influenced by his or her willingness to carry out a given task. Thus, when an individual is eager to be involved in work, his or her motivation tends to be high and the opposite is also true. School heads who consider the readiness of staff to introduce changes in the instructional programme are more likely to raise the level of motivation to excel.

### **3.5.2.2 The motivation of followers**

Research evidence demonstrates that the quality of leadership determines the motivation of teachers and the quality of the teaching in the classroom (Harris *et al*, 2006: 121). Thus, there is no substitute for effective teacher motivation. Kapfunde (2000: 93) also declares that organisational goals are unattainable without the enduring commitment of the members of the organisation. Kapfunde views motivation as a human psychological characteristic that contributes to an individual's degree of commitment. Motivation includes the factors that cause, channel and sustain human behaviour in a particular commitment direction. The motivation to excel in followers influences the behaviour of teachers, students, parents and members of the community towards the realisation of the school vision. It is important to point out that regulations, resources, technical innovation and programme reorganisation, cannot change school performance significantly if the teacher motivation to excel fails to energise and shape behaviour.

Brower and Balch (2005: 83) postulate that leaders who can create an environment effectively where everyone is valued can win the heart and support of his/her followers. They go further by saying that creating a culture and climate of importance and worth tends to create motivating sources that encourage stakeholders to accept challenges, establish high expectations and strive for individual and institutional success. According to Richard Barrett (1999, cited in Kaser, Mundry, Stiles & Loucks-Horsey, 2002: 89), motivation has four dimensions, namely the physical, emotional, mental and the spiritual dimensions respectively. The physical aspects of motivation are satisfied by external incentives such as financial rewards. They can also be satisfied by satisfying the lower needs stated by Maslow in his hierarchy of needs. The emotional aspects of motivation can be satisfied by open channels of communication. Both physical and emotional aspects can be fulfilled by either positive incentives or negative reinforcement. Positive incentives would include promotion; whereas fear of loss of job/status could be used to inspire followers to improve their performance.

While all four aspects of motivation can satisfy members, Kaser, Mundry, Stiles and Loucks-Horsey (2002:89) state that the most sustainable levels of commitment are

attained when mental and spiritual needs are catered for. The mental dimension is achieved through opportunities for professional and personal growth or opportunities to use new knowledge and skills to solve problems. Thus, professional development discussed in paragraph 3.4.3 is critical. The spiritual dimension of followers' motivation is satisfied through having work that is meaningful and challenging.

The motivation of followers is based on assumptions about people. McGregor believed that leaders tend to behave towards their followers in terms of two assumptions known as Theory X and Theory Y. Theory X assumes a negative view of subordinates. Assumptions made are that people do not like working and would prefer to avoid it; consequently, people need to be bribed to put an effort into their work, people prefer to be told what to do or to be directed, people may avoid taking responsibility, people are motivated by fear of job loss or financial rewards. In an organisation where followers are confused, uncertain and untrained, members become demotivated, they feel unable or unwilling to perform effectively (Holbeche, 2006: 9). Furthermore, absenteeism and 'presenteeism' abound. In general, low morale among followers can result in underperformance. Followers possessing such characteristics would need motivation, a sense of responsibility, knowledge and experience to make democratic principles of leadership work (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2009: 14).

In contrast, McGregor's Theory Y is based on the assumptions that people need work for their psychological well being, they want to be stimulated to be interested in their work and enjoy it (Cooper,2003:27). In addition, people can push themselves towards attaining their agreed targets and can be motivated by the desire to realise their personal potential and accept responsibility in a positive environment. The motivation of dedicated and peak performers is strengthened in an environment in which followers are free to motivate themselves. In such work environments, the followers are eager to achieve their full potential. Moreover, followers who have attained their optimum performance tend to commit themselves to the set goals and also tend to choose the thoughts, feelings and behaviour that allow them to perform



in the way they want. The motivation of followers is a problem that instructional leaders will always face at some point in their lives. This is because people go to work for various reasons; the foremost of which are financial rewards. As one goes higher up the motivational ladder, each individual becomes more intrinsically focused and extrinsic rewards become less important (Matanda & Gwete, 2004:25).

Durable motivation can be sustainable and carefully orchestrated. Motivation does not merely entail a pep talk or an inspirational speech by the instructional leader, but is systematic and requires the leader to implement many variables that can establish higher levels of motivation in classrooms or in the whole school. Tellier (2007: 7) contends that durable motivation is action-oriented and hence associated with such actions as task accomplishment and the acquisition of new skills. It is important to point out that desire, hope and action are prerequisites for sustainable motivation among members of the school community. Desire is influenced by the direction provided by the leader as well as his/her value perceptions. Direction includes those things the individual would like to achieve. Tellier (2007:7) further argues that if followers are presented with a direction that is not of interest to them, they may not be committed to it. Hope is the belief that it is possible to achieve a given task. Teachers' and students' hopes for an improvement in the COTL are influenced partly by self-efficacy and partly by the support given by the instructional leader. The study will discuss the kind of support and motivation instructional leaders in high schools provide to create a COTL in paragraph 5.4.2.2.1.

### **3.5.2.3 Knowledge and experience**

The level of followers' work-related knowledge and experience will have a great effect on the approach employed by the instructional leader to implement change. According to Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2009: 14), knowledge and experience do not only exert great influence on the effectiveness of any one of the leadership approaches (discussed in paragraph 3.2.2), but they also determine the measure of followers' maturity. Effective instructional leaders endeavour to establish an effective

team of followers with the requisite skills, knowledge and maturity who can contribute well towards the creation of a COTL. Limitations in teachers' skills and knowledge are often evident in failing or toxic schools (see paragraph 2.4.2). According to Mintrop and Trujillo (2005: 263), teachers in such schools are often inadequately prepared for classroom teaching and this has a negative effect on instructional leadership.

### **3.5.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITUATION**

Situational instructional leadership can be used as a framework within which the needed guidance can be given to followers to perform their work (Goldsmith, Lyons & Freas, 2000: 249). The underlying principle behind situational instructional leadership lies in adjusting the leadership approaches discussed in paragraph 3.2.2 to suit the followers' readiness to perform a task within a specific situation. In order to provide good situational or short-term leadership, the instructional leader needs to be aware of the situational factors affecting his or her leadership. They are discussed below.

#### **3.5.3.1 Prevailing school climate and culture**

The concepts 'school culture' and 'school climate' have been discussed in paragraphs 1.9.10 and 2.3 respectively. School climate was defined as the tone or atmosphere within a school; whereas school culture was defined as the way things are done within a school. It was pointed out that culture is made up of feelings, beliefs, values, norms and assumptions. Climate was seen as a psychosocial phenomenon that develops over time. School climate and culture are almost inseparable and are sometimes used interchangeably to describe everything that goes on in a school including how teachers interact and dress, what they talk about, what goes on at meetings, their expectation of students, how students behave and how parents interact with teachers. Thomson (1993, cited in Wilmore, 2003:33) makes a distinction between climate and culture. While climate refers to the way

things feel in an organisation, culture is the way things are actually done. Combined climate and culture help a school create a conception of what the school values and its expectations. Both climate and culture emanate from the school vision (Dean, 2002:12). In a school culture where student achievement and healthy school improvement are nurtured, the school is a cooperative community, instruction is given top priority and all school personnel are goal-oriented.

Cultural leadership is concerned with sustaining a positive organisational culture and climate. Glanz (2006a: 23) suggests that an instructional leader can achieve this by building relationships with all members of a school community as well as an ethic of caring. This entails treating them with respect, listening to their ideas and suggestions, providing positive feedback, inviting them to share problems, and believing in the importance of their advice and input.

Makombe and Madziyire (2002: 85) assert that there is a need for the instructional leader to improve the school climate in which teachers work to achieve successful innovation and change in teaching and learning. According to Sullivan and Glanz (2005:39), an ideal instructional climate is one where the atmosphere is characterised by acceptance, understanding and appreciation of diversity. When all members of the school community (that is, teachers, students and parents) feel welcome, comfortable, respected, safe and secure and feel that they are valued, they can work cohesively as a team to enable students to reach their goals of academic excellence. Freinberg and Stein (cited in Hughes, 2005: 295) maintain that school climate is the heart and soul of the school that draws teachers and students to love the school and want to be part of it.

Makombe and Madziyire (2002:87) point out that the interpersonal climate needs to be conducive for effective learning and teaching. They add that an organisational climate that is conducive to change and innovation should be characterised by a collaborative approach to decision making. According to Rubin (2002: 17), collaboration is a purposeful relationship in which all parties make a strategic choice

to cooperate in order to accomplish a shared outcome. Loock et al (2002:55) contend that collaboration implies negotiation, commitment, problem-solving and joint decision making.

To create and sustain a COTL, school heads should ensure that teachers, students, parents and the community are educated regarding the importance of a climate conducive to learning and teaching (see paragraphs 1.9.10 & 2.4.1). Chapter 2 was devoted to a conceptual framework for understanding COTL.

### **3.5.3.2 Relationships between leaders and followers**

One of the most important keys to the success of a school leader is the relationship he or she establishes with his or her staff. Importantly, relationships are the lifeblood of the school community; and help translate aspirations into experiences and are the single most powerful signifiers of communication and culture (Gelsthorpe & West-Burnham, 2003:16). In fact, judgement about social interactions and membership of school communities are usually expressed in terms of relationships. Displaying effective and ethical human relations is a critical aspect of instructional leadership at every level. One principal (cited in Robbins & Alvy, 2003: 45) has this to say:

You must be able to deal with people and communicate with them, or just bag it... that's the crux of the whole thing.

Naturally, people want to feel that they are liked and appreciated; hence, it is essential for the instructional leader to ensure that his/her relations with all members of the school community are healthy. The apostle Paul in Romans 13 verse 1 stresses the importance of relations:

If I had the gift of being able to speak in tongues, and could speak in every language there is in all of heaven and earth, but didn't love others, it would be of no value whatever. I would only be making a lot of noise.

In the above statement, the apostle Paul articulates a principle to which effective instructional leaders should pay attention when striving to create a culture of learning and teaching in their schools. According to Coetzee, Van Niekerk and Wydeman (2008: 70), the leader-follower relationship refers to the extent to which followers trust and respect their leader and are prepared to follow his/her commands. Instructional leaders can promote a culture of respect by being visible within the school, asking meaningful questions of followers, listening empathically and gathering information about learning and teaching from a variety of sources.

Relations are vitally important for the well-being of every person in the school community that consists of students, teachers, parents and community members (Andrews & Anfara, 2003: 328). McEwan (2003: 121) contends that morale in a school is an integral part of the school culture. When relationships are mutual and collaborative, teachers can go an extra mile for each other and for students amidst an atmosphere of trust. In addition, relationships between teachers and students help mediate the teaching and learning process. On the other hand, relationships between staff and parents help define the quality of a school culture. Elbot and Fulton (2008: 81) have also posited that parents who feel welcomed by and connected to the school tend to support school activities and collaborate with teachers regarding the academic and social development of their children. Conversely, parents who feel intimidated or marginalised rarely come forward to discuss matters concerning the education of their children.

Therefore, to create a well functioning school, school leaders must have the necessary interpersonal skills to interact successfully with all constituents of the school community. Dunne (2004, cited in Nkobi, 2008:477) posits that parental involvement in children's education enhances student academic achievement as well as parents' understanding of their school and education. Lethoko, Heystek and Maree (2001:316) also argue that disharmonious relationships between members of the school community can adversely affect their levels of dedication, discipline and

motivation. Relations can either promote a collaborative work culture within the school or inhibit the development of a collaborative work culture. At its most basic level, the school leader's relationship with members of the school community is because he or she is the leader. Frequently, the instructional leader does not get the real picture of events in the school due to distortion of the actual situation in practical terms. Many a times, teachers, students as well as parents try to please the school head as much as possible. Teachers for example, tend to let their school head know what they want him/her to know and possibly filter out information that reflects negatively on them. According to Shockley-Zalabak (2000, cited in Tate & Dunklee, 2005: 76), partial or distorted information does not only keep the school leader from getting the full picture regarding events in the school, but also prevents him/her from solving instructional problems as they arise.

Relationships are at the core of learning and development, yet in many schools, teachers' relationships with each other take place by chance and can have a negative effect on the process of creating a COTL. In a school development programme (SDP), relationships among the various members of the school community have to be nurtured and guided effectively so that they can be as generative and productive as possible. Coleman and Earley (2005:30) maintain that a leader's success depends on human relationships.

Collaboration among all members of the school community should be the glue that keeps the school system together.

### **3.5.3.3 Instructional leadership authority issues**

Educational leaders need some sort of authority in order to be able to assert their preferred choices over followers (Haydon, 2007: 45). Relations between the student, the teacher and the teacher-instructional leader are an integral part of school culture and are influenced significantly by authority. However, DiPaola and Hoy (2008: 60) point out that authority is frequently misconstrued. It is important to point out that

there is a popular belief that authority entails coercion. Mertz (1978, cited in Pace & Hemmings, 2006: 37), define authority as the right of a person in a specific role to give commands to which a person in another specific role is duty bound to offer obedience. Both the right and the duty rest upon the instructional leader's recognised status as the legitimate representative of a moral order to which teachers also owe allegiance. Goens (2005: 117) makes a distinction between being an authority and having authority. In his view, being an authority has a rational aspect to it, because it is based on competence and assumes that the leader is wise enough for the position he/she holds and has expert power. On the other hand, having authority is based on a hierarchical position and social status. Thus, the instructional leader's authority refers to the hierarchical relationship governing the school's moral order, the educational values, norms and purposes shared by all members of the school community. The principal's formal authority and status render him or her responsibility to plan, make decisions, delegate, monitor, coordinate and solve problems (Steyn, 2003:333).

Authority relations between teachers, students and the instructional leader always influence teaching and learning notwithstanding whether they are ambivalent, unclear and shifting. Roberts and Pruitt (2003: 86) state that authority works best in situations where a decision has to be made quickly, when long-term commitment from the entire group is not required or when only one person or a few people have the expertise to make the decision. Weber (1947, cited in Busher, 2006: 36) divides authority into three types. The first is formal authority, which is related to the organisational or hierarchical structure. This type of authority confers legitimacy on the school leader to perform certain actions. The second type is functional authority, which arises from the leader's technical knowledge. The third type of authority is derived from the leader's charisma. While admitting that the idea of charisma would be difficult to define, Haydon (2007: 51) points out that charismatic leaders may be able to get other people to follow them readily wherever they lead and where the destination is of less importance. While Masitsa (2005: 211) agrees that the school principal has authority, he argues that staff should be involved at all levels of the

decision making process by encouraging participative management (see paragraphs 2.5.3, 2.7.3, 2.9.2.8, 2.10 & 3.4.2). This study will therefore investigate the impact of the school head's authority as an instructional leader in creating a COTL since this issue will influence the instructional leader's leadership approach.

#### **3.5.3.4 Teamwork**

As the traditional, hierarchical school of leadership declines in importance, a new focus on networked team leadership is emerging to replace it. Instructional leaders are ~~finding themselves~~ members of all kinds of teams, including autonomous teams, cross-functional teams and action-learning teams. Creating an effective team committed to improving student, team and school performance is considered by French, Atkinson and Rugen (2007: 154) as a necessary but complex undertaking. Steyn and Van Niekerk (2005, cited in Coetzee, Van Niekerk and Wydeman, 2008: 154) view a team as a group of people with common objectives, which can tackle relevant tasks effectively. Tolhurst (2006: 195) contends that a team is a group of people who work together so that the sum of the work is greater than that of separate individuals. In a school, teamwork serves as an emotional building block for teachers and it often satisfies their social needs. Teamwork is the ability of people to work together in a genuinely cooperative manner so that people can achieve uncommon goals.

Teamwork is beneficial if there is open communication, trust and openness, a shared purpose and agreed ground rules. Teams must also have common goals, meet regularly and members have to know and utilise each other's strengths. An effective team must have specific characteristics for it to be effective. Murphy and Lick (2005: 177) agree with French, Atkinson and Rugen (2007: 155) that an effective team must have a clearly defined purpose that serves as a guideline and specifies the goals to be achieved. Measurable goals lead the team towards attaining its purpose and making an impact on the school or students. Often school teams fail to achieve measurable results in spite of the planning done. This can be



attributed to a lack of a culture of discourse at the centre of all operations. In a culture of discourse, team members discuss and think about pertinent issues that are related to improving teaching, learning and assessment.

Members of an effective team demonstrate respect for each other, are bound together by a common vision, have energy and enthusiasm and value differences of opinion (Magaramombe & Shora, 2004:71). They also employ a wide range of potential learning resources that include research literature, internal and external expertise, related experience and several learning models. Another important characteristic of an effective team is that it is committed to the norms that guide how it operates. Norms are common in every learning community and they assist members of the team to be more thoughtful and productive (see paragraph 2.3.1.7). As team members formally establish norms, they identify the ways they wish to work together. Effective teams are also characterised by internal communication. Team members apply new knowledge acquired for the benefit of the whole team. It is important to note that an effective team is also progressive and focused in terms of the realisation of the vision (Matanda & Gwete, 2005:63).

Glanz (2006a: 23) mentions the vital characteristics of an effective team that the instructional leader should cultivate so that a culture of learning and teaching can be created. Within an effective team, there should be a valued diversity of ideas about instruction, conflict management and resolution mechanisms, cooperative relationships fostered through positive comments and constructive feedback, provision for accountability, and an open and clear communication.

The characteristics of effective teams discussed above can be inculcated if the instructional leader facilitates teacher collaboration. A common challenge faced by today's instructional leaders is the need to establish effective teams in an environment of rapid change with limited resources (see paragraphs 2.2 & 3.6). Thus, the study investigated how high school heads cope with the challenge as they try to create a COTL.

Teacher collaboration is viewed by Davies, Ellison and Bowring-Carr (2005: 89) as a dynamic process that requires awareness of the potential of forming and reforming relationships. Collaboration means that the instructional leader accepts that everyone's contribution will be promoted and valued. However, collaboration does not always mean that everyone will agree. Robbins and Alvy (2003: 137) posit that moving towards collaboration may be resisted by teachers who may not perceive it as beneficial. To them the move may be an invasion of privacy. A critical question regarding the notion of facilitating teacher collaboration is that it cannot be imposed. Conditions necessary for collaboration need to be created so that followers can change the way they think and relate to each other. Areas in need of improvement should be acknowledged and there must be effective communication. Importantly, the focus of collaborative work must be on its impact on the COTL. The core values reflected in the practices, reward structures, rules, sanctions and traditions of the school must be accompanied by a desire for improving teaching and teamwork.

Schools that are organised into effective teams and that work together for the improvement of the school are more cohesive, have a higher morale and staff are more amenable and responsive to each others' initiatives and also to school leadership. In the Director's Circular Minute No. 41 of 2006, schools are urged to ensure that teachers, students, parents and all other stakeholders feel to be part and parcel of the school system and have a role to play in instructional leadership for academic success.

#### **3.5.3.5 Structuring instructional programmes**

The instructional programme should be the primary focus of all the principal's energy, passion, and commitment (Wilmore, 2002: 34). A school is unique in as far as the curriculum and instruction are structured by the staff. Every aspect of the instructional programme should emphasise quality so that teachers, students and

parents feel proud as individuals and as part of the group. Structuring the instructional programme has an impact on members of the school community, especially teachers and students (Makombe & Madziyire, 2002:60). For instance, if the school structure is modified, the behaviour of both teachers and students are also modified. This would mean that they inevitably have to acquire new patterns as the new structure changes their directional patterns of behaviour. Furthermore, structuring the instructional programme implies changing expectations and goals and this ultimately changes the behaviour pattern of teachers and students. Consequently, this simply means that changing the instructional programme results in changing the situation.

Structural features of the school include organisational arrangements such as the track structure, the governance structure, the scheduling of time and rules and regulations (Datnow, Hubbard & Mehan, 2002: 62). Structuring the instructional programmes refers to the manner in which the school is organised in terms of the distribution of resources. Structuring the instructional programme should focus on the culture of excellence and school effectiveness. The process of structuring the instructional programme requires the development of collegiality, trust, understanding and support, the broad involvement of members of the school community, and knowledge and skill on the part of the instructional leader. Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2009: 15) posit:

The less structured a task is, the more uncertain the expected outcome and the more difficult it becomes to provide leadership, such as when change to outcomes based education was introduced.

Concerning the structure, there are aspects such as agency and culture and in this regard, the actions of the instructional leader and teacher agents are recognised. Datnow, Hubbard and Mehan (2002: 63) suggest that at school level, structure and culture should be translated through the teachers' agency and with the structure and culture at the school level. The three authors believe that this can reduce the problem of diverting from the micro level of teachers' actions to the macro level of

societal forces. Roberts and Pruitt (2003: 179-180) provide some tips for school leaders to use to maintain instructional structures that support a COTL. They suggest that teachers should be provided with training in ~~the~~ group process skills to participate effectively in teams and committees, with-be given the time needed for conversation and group reflection around instructional issues in regularly scheduled meetings, and with-be given adequate instructional support to sustain a COTL. Structuring and adhering to a schedule that allows teachers to observe each other's teaching and demonstrating the importance of structured instructional activities through regular visits to team and committee meetings are other strategies that the instructional leader can use to effectively structure the instructional programme in the school.

Competing ideologies are evident in some schools when educators who emphasise efficiency and productivity and adhere to an authoritarian structure, are at loggerheads with those who advocate a "community of learners" structure (Datnow, Hubbard & Mehan, 2002: 128). Therefore, this calls for ongoing, daily attention to the elements that support the instructional programme focused on student outcomes, collaborative learning, shared leadership and commitment to a common vision. The present study attempted to establish whether the structuring of instructional programmes assists the school head in guiding members of the school community towards achieving instructional goals set (see paragraphs 3.5.3.5 & 6.3.2.3.5). Schools must protect instructional time and school heads should encourage teachers to maximise teaching time in order to improve students' performance in their academic work. According to the Director's Circular Minute No. 41 of 2006, an effective school with effective students is one which promotes quality, effective teaching and learning in a structured, but friendly learning atmosphere.

### **3.6 CHALLENGES TO EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP**

School leaders are currently facing particularly difficult and challenging times in their efforts to build nurturing and supportive school cultures where teachers can teach and students can learn without the threat of fear or intimidation (Pellicer, 2008: 97). Current economic, social and political forces in Zimbabwe have combined to create a climate in which high schools experience mounting pressure to change. Simon and Newman (2003: xiv) have noted that leading schools in times of socio-economic and political pressure on schools to achieve more with less in the form of resources and freedom can generate incredible stress and strain on school principals. According to Datnow, Hubbard and Mehan (2002: 18), there is a persistent and growing sentiment that public schools are failing to meet societal expectations, especially with regard to students' academic achievement. In *The Herald* of 13 June 2006, a case is reported where parents at one school in Zimbabwe incited their children to boycott classes in protest against poor standards of teaching. Elmore (1996, cited in Datnow, Hubbard & Mehan, 2002: 18), postulates that public schools tend to be deficient in certain respects for all the students. This current study investigated this observation in relation to instructional leadership in the context of Zimbabwe's high schools.

Most schools in developing countries face a challenge of making sense of the chaotic complexity of the world in which they operate and those that are effective have a strong sense of context. According to Bush and Oduro (2006:359), principals in Africa in particular face the challenge of working in poorly equipped schools with inadequately trained staff. However, the schools can be successful in creating a culture of learning and teaching, if they are nurturing and caring places where people willingly work together to promote the best interests of students. Schools should be places where people are able and willing to make themselves vulnerable in order to experience intellectual, social and emotional growth. However, being vulnerable is what many leaders fear, perhaps because they view it as a limitation. Goens (2005: 10) argues that being vulnerable is an important part of leadership if the leader is to trust followers and put a human face on his or her responsibilities and obligations.

Although research clearly shows that instructional leadership behaviours make a difference in creating a COTL (Joyner, Ben-Avie & Comer, 2004: 93), there seems to be a gap between the ideal and the actual because of potential barriers. According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2004: 4), a barrier is any internal or external factor that causes a hindrance to a person's ability to maximise his/her efforts in an endeavour. McEwan (2003: 12-14) cites a lack of skills and training, a lack of teacher cooperation, a lack of time, a lack of support from the various stakeholders such as superintendents, school boards and the community. A lack of vision, will or courage and the distrustful attitudes of teachers are other barriers. McEwan posits that inexperienced principals tend to be hesitant to talk with veteran teachers about teaching. She points out that schools operate within time constraints. Moreover, educational reforms often challenge the most fundamental beliefs of education, which force educators to wrestle with age-old cultural beliefs. Frustration and discouragement due to real or a perceived lack of support from superintendents, school boards, and the community, is a possible barrier to instructional leadership. Importantly, some instructional leaders lack the vision as well as the will and courage to play their roles for various reasons best known to them.

The above challenges manifest themselves in a number of ways and only become obvious when there is a breakdown in the teaching and learning process (Mazibuko, 2007: 107). In *The Herald*, Monday 13 October 2008, Sasa comments thus:

Parents must accept the fact that the economic situation is affecting the educational sector as badly as it is affecting other sectors and it is time they applied the same ingenuity and survival strategies towards the education of their children that they have applied elsewhere.

Oplatka (2004:427) notes that principalship is so fast changing that some of the insights raised in this literature study on instructional leadership are rapidly changing. Therefore, the current study investigated the various ways high school heads in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe cope with the challenges of instructional leadership in specific schools as they try to create a COTL. The current

situation in Zimbabwe impacts on schools and it was therefore important to consider this in the empirical study.

### **3.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter was concerned with a literature study on instructional leadership and its impact on teaching and learning. From the literature study it emerged that instructional leaders are the chief agents and role models for school improvement in terms of teaching and learning. The study of instructional leadership is just but one aspect of the complex web of activities and behaviours that reflect the ever changing nature of educational leadership. The literature study in this chapter has shown that instructional leadership helps people to move from rigidity to flexibility, allows them to adapt in an uncertain environment and urges them to take responsibility. Therefore, the study of instructional leadership represents the essence of all who work in the field of education as teachers, leaders and researchers. School heads as instructional leaders, need to encourage their colleagues including teachers to think critically about the current situation with regard to creating a COTL.

This chapter has focussed specifically on the leadership role and characteristics of the school head/principal that can have a positive effect on classroom instruction. The literature study has revealed that school heads have a responsibility to develop themselves, their teams and their schools in order to create a culture of learning and teaching. In this chapter, the concepts 'leadership' and 'management' were discussed and the distinction between them was clarified. A theoretical framework regarding instructional leadership was presented in this chapter that will serve as a theoretical grounding for the empirical research.

The next chapter deals with the research methodology and design that will be adopted in the empirical study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

According to Briggs and Coleman (2007: 19), methodology provides a rationale for the ways in which the researcher carries out research activities. This chapter focuses on the research methodology and research design used in the study. It begins with a discussion of conceptual issues of qualitative research, followed by a description of the research design and data collection methods, sampling strategies, and research instruments namely participant observation, qualitative interviewing and documentary analysis used in the study to collect data. In addition, ethical considerations are discussed. The last part of the chapter explains how the findings were validated and also spells out the manner in which data gathered was processed, analysed and interpreted.

#### **4.2 CONCEPTUAL ISSUES IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

##### **4.2.1 Research methodology and design**

O'Donaghue (2007: 12) views research methodology as the strategy, plan of action, the process or design behind the choice and the use of methods to reach the desired outcomes. Methodology refers to the ways of discovering knowledge, systems and rules for conducting research.

Research methods commonly denote a specific procedure, tool or technique used by the researcher to generate and analyse data (Schram, 2003:31). Cohen and Manion (1994: 38, cited in Mhlanga and Ncube 2003:15), define methods as the range of approaches used in research to gather the data that are used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction.



The research methodology included a specific design to assist the collection of the data needed to answer the research questions raised in chapter one. Importantly, a research design is the overall plan for collecting and analysing data to find answers to research questions (Slavin, 2007: 9). Suter (2006: 411) defines a research design as a “blueprint.” According to Conrad and Serlin (2006: 377), the research design concerns the assumptions underlying the manner in which the study is constructed to pursue inquiry about the phenomenon. In addition, the design of a research study determines whether the research question(s) can be answered adequately by means of certain procedures and methods used to collect the data.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 85) state that a research design provides the overall structure for the procedures that are followed by the researcher, the data that are collected and the analysis of data that is carried out. The choice of a research design for this study was influenced by the purposes and circumstances of the researcher as well as the strengths and limitations of each approach. It must be pointed out that the methodology of this study was the qualitative approach drawing from ethnographic studies which impacts directly on the research design which is described in paragraph 4.5.

#### **4.2.2 The qualitative research paradigm**

Qualitative research is viewed by Suter (2006: 41) as research aimed at explaining complex phenomena through verbal descriptions rather than testing hypotheses with numerical values. Denzin and Lincoln (1994:21; cited in Mhlanga and Ncube, 2003:12), maintain that qualitative research is an interpretive and naturalistic approach. The researcher studied phenomena in their natural settings and attempted to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them. Mason (2006: 3) notes that qualitative research is characterised by holistic forms of analysis and explanations. The qualitative paradigm was designed to give real and stimulating meaning to the instructional leadership role of the high

school head and to ensure the researcher was involved directly and/or indirectly in the process.

In order to generate and synthesise the multi-voiced and varied constructions, the qualitative researcher engaged at some level in the lives of the people in the settings. The study concentrated on the qualitative form since it aimed at elucidating what the participants themselves had to say with regards to the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a culture of teaching and learning. Importantly then, a methodological perspective was adopted so that the findings could be derived from the data itself rather than from preconceived, rigidly structured and highly quantitative strategies. The researcher's own purposes determined the nature and scope of the settings and groups that yielded the most insights. Schram (2003:33) explains that a qualitative researcher operates from the belief that all constructs are equally important and valid when undertaking a qualitative study. Mertens (2005:229) regards qualitative research as a situational activity that locates the researcher in the real world. Rudestam and Newton (2001:3) identify three dimensions that seem important in qualitative research. They include the problems and concerns of the researcher, the nature and characteristics of the research participants and the relationships between the researcher and the subject matter. In this study, the researcher was flexible in investigating how high school heads and teachers think and act in their everyday lives as questions are posed on the process of creating a culture of learning and teaching through instructional leadership..

#### **4.2.3 Distinction between the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms**

Qualitative and quantitative research represent two distinct approaches to understanding the world or the phenomenon under study. Table 4.1 below summarises the major distinctions between the two research paradigms.

#### **Table 4.1: Contrasting characteristics of qualitative and quantitative research**

Item	Qualitative paradigm	Quantitative paradigm
<b>Assumptions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reality is socially constructed.</li> <li>• Emphasises primacy of subject matter.</li> <li>• Variables are complex, interwoven, and difficult to measure.</li> <li>• Focuses on insider's point of view (Emic).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social facts have an objective reality.</li> <li>• Emphasises primacy of method.</li> <li>• Variables can be identified and relationships measured.</li> <li>• Focuses on outsider's point of view (Etic).</li> </ul>
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contextualisation.</li> <li>• Interpretation.</li> <li>• Understanding participants' perspectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generalisability.</li> <li>• Prediction.</li> <li>• Causal explanation.</li> </ul>
<b>Approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ends with hypotheses and grounded theory.</li> <li>• Emergence and portrayal.</li> <li>• The researcher is the primary instrument.</li> <li>• It is naturalistic.</li> <li>• It is inductive or "bottom-up."</li> <li>• Searches for patterns.</li> <li>• Seeks pluralism and complexity.</li> <li>• Makes minor use of numerical indices.</li> <li>• Uses a descriptive write-up.</li> <li>• Personal involvement and partiality.</li> <li>• Empathic understanding.</li> <li>• Holistic inquiry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begins with hypotheses and theories.</li> <li>• Manipulation and control.</li> <li>• Uses formal instruments.</li> <li>• Relies on experimentation</li> <li>• It is deductive or "top-down."</li> <li>• Involves component analysis.</li> <li>• Seeks consensus and the norm.</li> <li>• Reduces data to numerical indices.</li> <li>• Uses abstract language in the write-up.</li> <li>• Detachment and impartiality.</li> <li>• Objective portrayal.</li> <li>• Focused on individual variables.</li> </ul>
<b>View of human behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour is fluid, dynamic, social, situational, contextual, and personal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour is regular and predictable.</li> </ul>
<b>Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide-angle and "deep-angle" lens, examining the breadth and depth of the phenomenon to learn more about it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrow-angle lens, testing specific hypotheses.</li> </ul>

<b>Item</b>	<b>Qualitative paradigm</b>	<b>Quantitative paradigm</b>
<b>Sampling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-probability, purposive. Actors are chosen to illuminate emerging understanding and/or to check theories or hypotheses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determined prior to data collection and can only be added as the need arises.</li> </ul>
<b>Data analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Context is extremely important.</li> <li>• Analysis is often done as data are collected.</li> <li>• Analysis seeks to search for patterns, themes and holistic features.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis is done after data are collected.</li> <li>• Emphasises the “figure” rather than the “ground.”</li> <li>• Concentrates more on hypothesis.</li> <li>• Identifies statistical relationships.</li> </ul>
<b>Demerits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too involved, the phenomenon is observed from an egocentric point of view.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fails to accommodate unanticipated behaviours.</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Moyo *et al.*, 2002: 23-25.

Some of the characteristics of the above exposition of qualitative research will now be discussed briefly in relation to this study.

### **4.3 CRITICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PARADIGM**

#### **4.3.1 The naturalistic inquiry perspective**

Qualitative research has actual settings as the direct source of data and the researcher as the key instrument (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007:4). This means that it occurs in the natural setting with the researcher as the primary instrument. Johnson and Christensen (2008:338) state that qualitative research is a naturalistic inquiry, which involves studying real world situations as they unfold naturally. The researcher entered and spent a considerable time of 9 months at the sites, learning about the prevailing COTL in this study. Wiersma and Jurs (2005: 203) contend that

qualitative researchers do not manipulate or intervene in the situation, but operate in a non-manipulating and uncontrolling manner with openness to whatever emerges in the natural setting. This implies that the researcher adopted strategies that parallel the manner in which participants act in their course of daily life.

#### **4.3.2 Emergent design flexibility**

Qualitative research is emergent rather than prefigured (Creswell, 2003: 181). For this reason, the researcher started with a tentative design (or in some cases, none at all) and developed the design as the study progressed. Mason (2006: 24) states that decisions about design in qualitative research are grounded in the practice, process and context of the research itself. In a qualitative study, meanings and interpretations are negotiated with human data sources because it is the participants' realities that the researcher tries to construct. Design flexibility stems from the open-ended nature of the naturalistic inquiry and also from the pragmatic considerations involved. Emergent design flexibility means openness to adapting inquiry as understanding deepens or as situations change (Johnson & Christensen, 2008: 398). During the study, the researcher adjusted the method and design to suit the circumstances. The researcher was for example particularly open to these possibilities during the interviews on issues related to incentives (refer to paragraph 5.4.5).

#### **4.3.3 Purposeful sampling**

Krathwohl (2004: 229) considers purposive sampling as the most fashionable technique in qualitative research because it involves selecting participants who are information rich and provide special access. According to Patton (2002: 46), "information rich" cases are those cases from which the researcher can learn a great deal about issues that are important to the study. In this study, the researcher selected participants purposefully and sites that best assisted him to understand the problem and the research questions. In identifying the sample the researcher made

use of the background information about the high schools provided by the local District Education Officer (DEO) and his own experience to select participants who were representative of the population under study.

#### **4.3.4 Development of grounded theory**

One of the major characteristics of qualitative research is its emphasis on “grounded theory.” As pointed out by Creswell (2003: 14), grounded theory means that the researcher tries to derive a general, abstract theory of a process, action or interaction grounded in the views of participants in a study. During this study, theory emerged as the researcher observed and interviewed participants in their real world. In this study, grounded theory began with a basic description of the setting under study and was followed by conceptual ordering, which involved organising data into discrete categories in accordance with their properties and dimensions. Importantly, the aim of the researcher was to generate alternative theory for the phenomenon under study (see paragraphs 5.4.4 & 5.4.5).

#### **4.3.5 Direct personal experience and engagements**

Data collection techniques in qualitative research involve observations and interviewing that brings the researcher into close contact with the participants. The qualitative researcher asks broad research questions designed to explore and interpret data. In this study, the researcher tried to reconstruct reality from the viewpoint of the participants through direct contact with them and observation.

#### **4.3.6 Qualitative data**

Qualitative data consists of quotations, observations and excerpts from documents (Patton, 2002:47). The data often reflected an attempt to capture the perceptions of participants from the inside (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008: 50). Data from observations consisted of detailed descriptions of people’s activities, behaviours,

actions and the full range of interpersonal interaction and organisational processes that are part of observable human experience. The data that emerged from this study yielded detailed, thick description obtained from observations, in-depth inquiries, interviews that captured direct quotations about peoples' personal feelings, perspectives, experiences and opinions and document reviews. This has already been discussed in paragraphs 4.2.1 and 4.2.2.

#### **4.3.7 Empathic neutrality and insight**

Schwandt (2000: 100) postulates that the idea of acquiring an “inside” understanding of the participants' definitions of their situation is a powerful central concept for the understanding of the purpose of qualitative research. Patton (2002: 52) posits that empathy develops from personal contact with the people interviewed and observed during fieldwork. In this study, an empathic stance in interviewing sought vicarious understanding without judgement (neutrality) by showing openness, sensitivity, and respect, awareness for and through participant observations. The researcher included personal experience and empathic insight as part of the relevant data for the study.

#### **4.3.8 The holistic perspective**

Qualitative research involves a holistic inquiry carried out in a natural setting. The holistic perspective means that the specific phenomenon under study is understood as a complex system that is more than the sum of its parts (Johnson & Christensen, 2008: 393). The focus is on complex interdependencies and system dynamics that cannot be reduced in a meaningful way to a few discrete variables and linear, cause-effect relationships. Qualitative research is viewed as holistic in its concern with the process and context rather than outcomes or focussing on differences and comparisons. It is described as empirical, because it occurs in natural settings, centering on work in the field. Describing the holistic perspective, Jacob (1987, cited in Wiersma & Jurs, 2005: 202) has this to say:

Holistic ethnographers seek to describe and analyse all or part of a culture or community by describing the beliefs and practices of the group studied and showing how the various parts contribute to the culture as a unified, consistent whole.

In this study, the emphasis was on studying the entire setting in order to comprehend reality.

#### **4.3.9 Inductive analysis and creative analysis**

Qualitative research is oriented particularly toward exploratory, discovery, and inductive data analysis (Patton, 2002: 55). Rather than engaging in deductive analysis, which focuses on testing a preconceived hypothesis, the qualitative researcher studies the data inductively to reveal unanticipated outcomes. He first collected the data before developing an understanding and drawing generalisations. In this study, inductive analysis began with specific observations and gradually develops general patterns that emerge from the cases under study. Data collection and data analysis took place simultaneously.

#### **4.3.10 Unique case orientation**

The unique case orientation of qualitative research assumes that each case encountered is special and unique (Johnson & Christensen, 2008: 393). Thus, the first level of analysis was considered true to, respecting and capturing the details of individual cases that were under study. Cross-case analysis emanated from and depended on the quality of individual case studies. The aim of this research was to develop a body of knowledge that was unique to individual participants and their settings.



#### **4.3.11 Utilisation of insights**

In qualitative research the researcher places more emphasis on tacit or intuitive knowledge. In this study, the researcher relied on the utilisation of tacit knowledge because this is how the nuances of the multiple realities can be approached (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, cited in Creswell, 2003: 119).

#### **4.3.12 Context sensitivity**

Smith (1987, cited in Wiersma & Jurs, 2005: 14), indicates that qualitative research is based on the notion of context sensitivity. This is the belief that a particular physical and social environment has a significant influence on people's behaviour. Thus, the researcher tried to preserve the natural context by placing findings in a social, historical and temporal context. Regarding the context, Lightfoot (1997, cited in Patton, 2002: 63), refers to the physical, geographic, cultural, temporal, historical and aesthetic setting within which action occurs. The contextual aspect of this study refers to the framework, point of reference, the map and the ecological sphere that will be used to place people and action in time and space as a resource for understanding what they say and do.

### **4.4 THE RATIONALE FOR USING THE QUALITATIVE PARADIGM IN THE STUDY**

Research designs differ because of the context, purpose and nature of the research (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005: 201). The qualitative research paradigm was preferred for this study because:

- It is grounded in a philosophical position, which is broadly "interpretivist" in the sense that it is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constructed. Thus, the researcher was able to obtain a clearer conception about the reality of the phenomenon he investigated.

- It was based on methods of data generation, which are both flexible and sensitive to the social context; hence the phenomenon under study was easily understood.
- It was used to explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and events of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of research participants.
- It was aimed at producing a complete and contextual understanding of a phenomenon based on rich, nuanced and detailed data.
- It focused on the occurrence of events, products and outcomes as well as the participants' perceptions and experience regarding the process of creating a COTL.
- It emphasised participant observations, in-depth interviews and document analysis.
- It humanised problems and data, provided a holistic view of the phenomenon being studied and helped to attach emotions and feelings to it.
- The researcher was interested in the diversity among, idiosyncrasies of and unique qualities of persons and processes involved in the study.

The above reasons and advantages for choosing the qualitative research paradigm seem rational because this paradigm emphasises the value of the study as well as its influence and impact on the readers. This study was conducted following the specific steps outlined below.

## 4.5 STEPS IN CONDUCTING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Slavin (2007: 124-125) outlines the following six steps that were followed when conducting this qualitative research:

- Identifying what was to be studied. In the process, decisions were made about the nature of the interaction, the role of the researcher and ethical considerations. During this preparatory phase a written application for permission to carry out the research study was submitted to the education offices of the Midlands province. The phase also included the identification of the five high schools to be included in the study according to the set criteria stated in paragraph 4.8.2 as well as the logistical arrangements of the fieldwork.
- Identifying whom to study. Decisions were made about the participants or sites to be studied, the length of time for data collection, and the possible variables to be considered. During this second phase of the empirical investigation, focus group interviews were organised with heads of departments (HODs), teachers and parents included in the study.
- Collection of data. Data collection was done in a period of nine months and the main focus was on participant observations, a basic form of data such as the field notes taken during interviews and analysis of documents. In addition, a tape recorder was used for recording the interviews. Observations were made in the form of visits to each of the five high schools on specific days agreed upon. Fieldnotes were recorded during the observations and documents provided were studied.
- Analysis of data. Data analysis consisted of synthesising the information obtained from the observations, interviews and other data sources such as documents. The researcher works with the data, organises and breaks them into manageable units, codes them and searches for patterns. Data analysis involved

identifying categories, recurrent themes and sub-themes that emerged from the individual and focus group interviews conducted with respective participants. The analysis of data also involved the interpretation of the meanings and actions of the high school heads' instructional leadership. Verbal descriptions and explanations were taken.

- Generation of findings as the data collection process proceeded.
- Making data interpretations and conclusions. Data interpretation refers to developing ideas about the findings and relating them to the literature and to broader concerns and concepts (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007:159).

The steps stated above were implemented in the context of certain guiding assumptions.

#### **4.6 GUIDING ASSUMPTIONS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

Assumptions of the study refer to pertinent conditions that must prevail for it to proceed (Mhlanga & Ncube, 2003:29). In this regard, Scham (2003: 7-8) provides five important guiding assumptions underlying qualitative research that are vital to this study.

First, the study sought to gain an understanding of the social world through the direct personal experience in the actual setting of the phenomenon under investigation. Sheppard (2004:162) posits that the aim of social research is to capture the character of naturally occurring human behaviour through first-hand contact with it. In this regard, the researcher strived as much as possible to minimise his effect on the behaviour of the participants. The second assumption is that the researcher acknowledged the quintessentially interactive and intersubjective nature of constructing knowledge. Importantly, the qualitative researcher engaged in personal encounters and exchanges between himself and others to develop a qualitative understanding. To be able to effectively explain human actions, Sheppard

(2004:167) suggests that there is need to understand the cultural perspectives on which they are based. In this regard, the researcher had to first learn the culture of the participants at each of the five high schools under study before collecting data. This process was rather easy because the researcher is a local resident and a lecturer for the Zimbabwe Open University, in the Midlands Region. The third assumption was that the investigation into the social world called for sensitivity to the socio-economic and political context prevailing in the country. In this regard, the researcher secured documents from the Midlands Regional Education Office to allay fears. The fourth assumption was that the investigation into the social context called for attentiveness and patience with participants so that findings could be both specific and circumstantial. For instance the researcher had to be flexible in his programme to suit the convenience of parents, high school heads, teachers and HODs in terms of time and venue for the interviews. The fifth assumption of the qualitative research was that the empirical investigation was fundamentally interpretive. The interpretation or presentation constructed of people's lives and behaviour was based upon the points of the understanding and misunderstanding that occurs. Importantly, the researcher was mindful of the challenges that were intrinsic to the above assumptions.

#### **4.7 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER IN THE STUDY**

As mentioned previously (see paragraph 4.2.2), qualitative research is interpretative research where the inquirer as the primary data collection instrument is typically involved in a sustained and intensive experience with participants. Patton (2002:53) refers to the fact that a qualitative research strategy entails that the researcher assumes an active and involved role. This means that the researcher became immersed in the situation and the phenomenon being investigated rather than being an objective bystander who Mamabolo (2002: 244) describes as an "invisible anonymous voice of authority." During the empirical study, the researcher made descriptive and reflective notes based on the observations, interviews and document analysis. According to Wiersma and Jurs (2005: 254), descriptive notes describe the

situation and events as they unfold; whereas reflective notes include inferences and interpretations. As the primary data collection instrument, the researcher had to identify personal values, assumptions and biases. These could assist the researcher with understanding and analysing the data collected and also with interpreting of the data.

Gaining entry into the research sites/schools and the ethical considerations that might arise (see paragraph 4.10) were critical aspects of the researcher's role. As the primary research instrument, the researcher included the information which he considered important in the phenomenon under study in his interpretation. The researcher's role included making observations and taking down field-notes, asking interview questions and interpreting responses from documents.

Neuman (2000:355-356) cites two implications that are a result of the researcher's role as the primary instrument in qualitative research. First, it exerts pressure on the researcher who has to be vigilant, alert and sensitive to whatever transpires during fieldwork. Therefore, self-discipline in recording data was critical. Second, there are personal consequences associated with this role. Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2006: 264) add that the researcher should assume an interactive role where he/she gets to know the participants and the social contexts in which they live. During his visits to the sites, the researcher interacted with school heads, HODs and teachers and in some cases with parents who visited the schools.

The role of the researcher also included taking a holistic stance, by looking at the overall cultural context of each high school to obtain and guide his/her understanding of the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL. The researcher tried to enter the world of the participants to know them, be known and trusted by them.

The researcher's role therefore entailed spending a great deal of time in the research setting for an extended period of nine months with the research

participants in order to build a relationship of reciprocal trust and collegiality with them before the collection and interpretation of data. Burns and Grove (2003: 375) also emphasise the need for the participants' support and confidence when undertaking qualitative research. It was not only necessary to build rapport with the participants, but also imperative for the researcher to maintain it from start to finish.

The role of the researcher involved gathering data directly from participants. As pointed out by Bodgan and Biklen (2007: 49), the qualitative researcher embarks on the study as if he knows very little about the participants, the environment of the setting and the subject matter under study. This means that the researcher remained open to all alternative explanations given by the participants. Gay and Airasian (2003: 13) contend that the qualitative researcher strives to maintain a lengthy physical presence at the chosen site(s) where he/she maintains the role of an observer as well as that of an interviewer. In this study, the researcher engaged in the empirical study for a prolonged period of nine months with the aim to discover and understand more about the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL. Although the researcher could not stay in the setting as long as he actually desired because of the volatile political and economic situation in Zimbabwe at the time the empirical investigation was undertaken, he was able to conclude the investigation even in the challenging circumstances alluded to in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.7.

## **4.8 QUALITATIVE DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION**

The purpose of the literature study given in chapters 3 and 4 was to identify and understand the theoretical perspectives of the problem (see paragraph 1.3) to gain insight into ways of shaping the research design which is described below.

### **4.8.1 The ethnographic research design**

A good research design must be appropriate to the research question being asked and must also minimise or avoid biases that can distort the results. The research design adopted in this study was the ethnographic research design. According to Wallen (1990, cited in Creswell, 2003: 200), the intent of the ethnographic research design is to obtain a holistic picture of the subject of study with emphasis on portraying the everyday experience of individuals by observing and interviewing them. According to Sheppard (2004:160), the ethnographic research design involves the researcher participating openly or overtly in people's daily lives for an extended period of time during which he or she will be listening to what is said by the participants and asking them questions as well. The researcher preferred this strategy so as to be in a better position to examine the social world of instructional leadership as it is perceived by the HODs, teachers, parents and the high school heads. The researcher studied an intact cultural group in a natural setting over an extended period of time collecting data by observing and interviewing participants, and also through document analysis. The approach to data collection was unstructured in that it did not follow a determined plan set up at the beginning.

Creswell (2003: 140) notes that ethnographic research is flexible and typically evolves contextually in response to the realities encountered. This means that the ethnographic researcher will not draw conclusions or make interpretations during the early stages of the study. Instead, the researcher enters the setting cautiously, learning to become accepted by the participants and establishing rapport with them over time. Two forms of ethnographic data are identified by Slavin (2007: 142-143). The first are field notes, which contain both descriptive and reflective notes. The second is phenomenology where the researcher interprets the meaning of the experiences encountered. The method included studying the behaviour of the participants in the everyday context, gathering data using an unstructured approach. In this study, an ethnographic research design was used to find out how the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a culture of teaching and learning is perceived by heads of departments (HODs), teachers, parents and high school heads in selected schools of the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe and to



determine whether the conceptual framework of instructional leadership (Chapter 5) would be of use in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe.

#### **4.8.2 Sampling techniques**

Sampling is important in qualitative research because it is often neither possible nor desirable to collect data from the entire population, which may often be infinite (Mhlanga & Ncube, 2003: 55). Before conducting the empirical study, the researcher firstly decided whom or what he would want to study. Babbie (2001: 176) regards sampling as the process of selecting observations. Mason (2006: 120) maintains that sampling and selecting are principles and procedures used to identify, choose and gain access to relevant data sources from which to generate data using chosen methods. In this study, the population consisted of high school heads (or principals), teachers and parents. A population refers to a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events that conform to specific criteria and to which the researcher intends to generalise the results of the study (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh & Sorensen, 2006: 167).

The study made use of a small sample size of five high school heads, ten heads of department (HODs), ten teachers, and twenty five parents drawn from each of the five public high schools selected on the basis of proximity to the researcher. The parents included in the study were selected from the School Development Committee (SDC), which represents parents and which included the chairperson, the secretary, the treasurer and two committee members. The researcher opted for these on the understanding that they are more conversant with the activities of the school as members of the School Development Committee (see paragraph 1.9.12). Individual interviews were held with the high school heads. In addition, two focus group interviews were conducted with the HODs from the five high schools selected (five HODs per focus group). The other two were carried out with teachers from the same high schools (five teachers per focus group). Each of the high schools were thus represented in each focus group for both HODs and teachers. Focus group

interviews were also held with the parents at each of the five high schools. A smaller sample was used to minimise costs and to allow an in-depth study. The high schools were selected on the basis of their academic performance, geographical location, proximity to the researcher and historical background (see paragraph 5.2). District Education Officers (DEOs) helped provide this information for selection purposes. In selecting HODs and teachers, gender and area of specialisation were used. An attempt was made to ensure a balance in these characteristics (see paragraphs 5.3 to 5.6). High school heads included in the study were selected on account of their school being chosen. The rationale behind this criteria of selection was largely purposive.

The researcher sought to ensure that observations made of persons, events and places were typical. Thus, the researcher did not aim to observe every type of event, or situation, but sampled only those that were most integrally related to the emerging theoretical ideas. Sampling was therefore an ongoing procedure throughout the life span of the empirical research study. High school heads, HODs and Chairpersons of the SDC kept on assisting the researcher in the selection of participants for the interviews. Although the aim of sampling was to locate information rich individuals or cases, decisions about participants were also influenced by logistical constraints such as the availability of suitable participants and their accessibility, the costs of locating the participants in terms of money and time and their enlisting.

#### **4.8.3 The logic of qualitative sampling**

Mason (2006: 121) provides two reasons why qualitative research involves some form of sampling or selection. The first are practical and resource-based reasons. The second has to do with the important question of focus. As Mason puts it, qualitative research is about depth, nuance, complexity and understanding of how people work. The process of sampling enabled the researcher to draw valid inferences or make analytical generalisations on the basis of careful observation of variables within a relatively small proportion of the population. This study made use

of purposive sampling as described in paragraph 4.3.3 to determine the settings and the participants. Patton (2002: 230) identifies several sampling techniques for purposefully selecting information rich cases. Only those relevant to this study are described briefly below.

#### **4.8.3.1 Maximum variation sampling**

This sampling strategy seeks to capture and describe the central themes that cut across a great deal of variation. As suggested by Creswell (2008: 216), the researcher samples cases that are different in certain respects, for example, in terms of gender, status, qualification, experience and so on. Patton (2002: 235) states that a small sample of great diversity should be selected in order to yield high quality, detailed descriptions of each case and important shared patterns that cut across the cases. In this study, a wide range of cases including individuals, groups and setting were selected purposefully from the high school heads, teachers and parents in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. This was done on the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the high schools (refer to Tables 5.1 to 5.7).

#### **4.8.3.2 Opportunist or emergent sampling**

It involves on-the-spot decisions to take advantage of new opportunities that arise during data collection. The researcher was open to whatever direction the data took him to allow the sample to emerge during fieldwork.

### **4.9 DATA COLLECTION AND FIELDWORK TECHNIQUES**

Fieldwork was the central activity of this qualitative inquiry. It was assumed that fieldwork would give the researcher direct and personal contact with the participants under study in their own environments in order to gain a personal understanding of the realities and minutiae of daily life. In this study, the researcher was concerned with life as experienced by the participants through physical proximity and through

the development of closeness in the social sense of shared experience, empathy and confidentiality.

According to Creswell (2008: 10), data collection means identifying and selecting individuals for a study, obtaining their permission to study them and gathering information by asking people questions or by observing their behaviour. Data collection reflects the frequency of types of behaviour, and/or words in the form of responses, opinions or quotes. Participants and sites were identified on the basis of places and people that could best assist with understanding the central phenomenon under study. The data collection strategies used in the study included a minimum of thirty to sixty minutes fortnightly recorded interviews with individual participants. To facilitate data collection, the researcher used a field log to provide a detailed account of how time was spent when he was at the research site. Pertinent details pertaining to the researcher's observations and interviews were recorded in a field notebook or field diary. Data collection and analysis strategies took place in the five phases described by McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 322-323):

**Phase 1** was the planning stage. At this stage the researcher analysed the problem statement and the research questions and then described the kind of setting, sites, or interviews that would yield valid and reliable information about the study. Data collection instruments were constructed and validated before the field study. The research instruments used to generate data had some theoretical bases and were tested in a pilot study. Initial familiarisation visits were made to each of the five high schools prior to the empirical investigation.

**In phase 2**, the data collection began. During this initial stage, the researcher established rapport, trust, and reciprocal relations with the individual participants and groups.

**Phase 3** entailed basic data collection. At this stage, tentative data analysis commenced because the researcher was mentally armed with ideas and facts about the study.

During **phase 4**, the data collection process was brought to a close. This was the stage when the researcher wound up his fieldwork and conducted the last interviews. During this phase, the researcher focussed on possible interpretations and verification of the emergent findings with key informants.

**Phase 5** involved the completion of the active data collection process. During this phase, the researcher reconstructed the data collected to obtain a holistic synthesis of the relationship of the different parts to make the whole.

As stated in paragraph 1.8, data collection was both interactive (observations and interviews) and noninteractive document analysis. The various fieldwork techniques employed in the study will be discussed below.

#### **4.9.1 Naturalistic qualitative observations**

In order to understand the complexities of many situations more completely, Patton (2002: 21) recommends the use of direct participation in and observation of the phenomenon of interest. Rossman (1995, cited in Mokoena, 2003: 140) define observation as “the systematic description of events, behaviours, and artefacts in the social setting chosen for the study”. In this regard, qualitative observation provides a firsthand account of the actual situation through the action of watching carefully the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL so as to notice things scientifically.

In paragraph 4.3.1, it was pointed out that qualitative research involves observing all the relevant phenomena in their natural settings and taking field notes without predetermining what is to be observed. Field notes are the written accounts of what

the researcher will hear, see, experience and think in the course of collecting and reflecting on data. Field notes consisted of descriptive notes meant to provide a picture of the setting, people, actions and conversations observed as well as reflective or analytic notes meant to capture more of the researcher's frame of mind, ideas and concerns about the research study. Observation also consisted of a detailed notation of behaviours, events and the contexts surrounding instructional leadership. The observations made at each of the five high schools involved social interaction, physical activities, non-verbal communication, planned and unplanned activities and interactions with the participants.

Conrad and Serlin (2006: 381) view observations as a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction as it occurs. Through observations, the researcher was able to establish a link between reality and his/her theoretical assumptions (see paragraph 4.6). As posited by McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 346), observations refer to an active process that includes *nonverbal* cues including facial expressions, gestures, tone of voices, body movement and other unverballed social interactions that suggest the subtle meanings of language.

Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003: 116) regard observations as a research method that is characterised by a prolonged period of intense social interaction between the researcher and the subjects or participants, in the milieu of the latter, during which time data, in the form of field notes are collected unobtrusively and systematically. Being a participant observer as a "resident" in the setting helped provide both breadth and depth of information. Observations were planned and recorded systematically to achieve the formulated research purpose and were subjected to the checks and controls pertaining to the validity and reliability of findings. Furthermore, the researcher was interested in the participants, especially the high school heads and teachers with regard to the way they acted in, interpreted and understood the complex process of creating a COTL through the instructional leadership of the high school head.

The role of the researcher during observations was that of a participant observer. Participant observations, according to Conrad and Serlin (2006: 381), involve gaining access into a setting and getting close to the members of a group or organisation so that the researcher can observe and interview them to determine how they participate in and find meaning in their social and cultural situation. The researcher explained his role as a researcher to the participants. In addition, observational data was contextualised and details of the circumstances in which the observations occurred, were collected together with the data.

To get 'inside knowledge' of perceptions on the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL, the researcher joined the participants as an ordinary member, but with an aim to obtain their feelings, opinions and actions with regards to the phenomenon under study. As a participant observer, the researcher was guided by a checklist that included the physical setting, the activities and interactions of participants, conversations, and even subtle factors of a less obvious nature. The researcher's observations were carried out as outlined in paragraph 1.8.2.1).

#### **4.9.1.1 The rationale for the adoption of qualitative observations**

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

- Direct observations will enable the researcher to understand and capture the context within which people interact.
- Participant observations will provide the researcher with first-hand experience of a setting and this permits the researcher to be open, discovery-oriented and

inductive because the researcher does not have to depend on prior conceptualisation of the setting. Getting close to the people in a setting through first-hand experience will allow the researcher to draw on personal knowledge during the formal interpretation stage of analysis.

- Observational fieldwork will give the researcher the opportunity to see things that may routinely escape awareness among people in the setting. Direct observations will also give the researcher the chance to learn things that participants would otherwise be reluctant to talk about in an interview due to their sensitivity. According to Sheppard (2004:209), observation enables the researcher to have a 'direct line' with the processes and outcomes of an intervention.
- Participant observations will enable knowledge or evidence of the social world to be generated by observing, or participating in or experiencing "natural or real" life settings or interactive situations. The assumption behind the adoption of observations is that meaningful knowledge will be generated by observing phenomena since not all knowledge can be articulable, recountable, or constructible in an interview.

#### **4.9.1.2 Limitations of qualitative observations**

Gay and Airasian (2003: 198) list the five limitations associated with using participant observations that the researcher should take into consideration: First, the researcher as the main instrument may lose objectivity and become emotionally involved with participants. Second, the researcher may have difficulty participating and taking detailed field notes simultaneously. Third, the researcher may not be there at the time of a spontaneous occurrence, which may be of interest. Fourthly, observations are limited to the duration of the event and therefore, life histories cannot be obtained through observations. Finally, there are situations that are taboo for observations. The latter two are of particular importance to this study because the researcher could not stay in the schools for as long as he would prefer to



because of the prevailing instability referred to earlier. The researcher nevertheless found a lot of relevant information on the theme of the research utilising this method.

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

#### **4.9.2 Qualitative interviewing**

Interviews are one of the most commonly recognised forms of the qualitative research method (Mason, 2006: 63; Krathwohl, 2004: 285). Fontana and Frey (2000: 645) assert that interviewing is one of the commonest and most powerful ways a researcher can use to understand human behaviour. Some of the interviews were on-the spur-of-the moment interchange, whereas others were planned carefully and highly structured. Interviewing is defined by Berg (2004: 75) as a conversation with the purpose of gathering information. Interviews are regarded by Glanz (2006a: 66-67) as the most suitable data collection method often used to understand the experiences of others and the meaning they make of them. Interviews were particularly useful in this study because the researcher was engaged in constructing a version of the participants' world. Meanings were constructed by the participants regarding the ways they engaged with the world they were interpreting (Creswell, 2003: 9). Interviews included informal conversations, which were completely open-ended as well as semi-formal and formal and structured conversations during which questions were asked in a standardised manner. Fontana and Frey (2000: 645) point out that interviews yield direct quotations from the participants about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge. The first interviews were held with high school heads at their respective schools. Each interview lasted at least one hour. Individual interviews were followed by separate focus group interviews with HODs, teachers and parents on specific dates and venues agreed.

The qualitative semi-structured interviews used to gather data consisted of open-ended questions which were set to the participants to obtain realistic data regarding how a COTL is created in high schools through the school head's instructional leadership (refer to Appendices C, D & E). As posited by Wiersma and Jurs (2005: 25), this helped clarify what was actually happening and also captured the feelings of teachers, HODs, school heads and parents, who made up the participants.

#### **4.9.2.1 The rationale for interviewing**

Patton (2002: 342) presents an argument in favour of interviewing when he says that we cannot observe everything such as the feelings, thoughts, intentions and behaviours that have occurred at some previous point in time. Glanz (2006a: 67) is of the opinion that interviews enable the researcher to learn about the complexities of participants' experiences from their points of view. The goal of an interview is to understand the participants' experiences and perceptions related to a given situation in a nonthreatening way so that the meanings emerge, develop and are shaped by and in turn, shape the discourse.

The purpose of qualitative interviewing is to find out what is on someone else's mind. The following reasons given by Mason (2006: 63) have influenced the researcher's choice of employing qualitative interviewing to gather data:

- The researcher wanted to talk interactively with participants, ask questions, listen to them, gain access to their accounts and circumstances and analyse their use of language and construction of discourse on the phenomenon researched.
- Using interviewing enabled the researcher to conceptualise himself as active in data generation, which is preferable to trying to remain neutral in data collection. Qualitative interviewing permitted the verbatim recording of responses.
- Interviews allowed the researcher to clarify certain issues and probe further for more information.

- Qualitative interviews will be appropriate for issues that lend themselves to open-ended questions.
- Qualitative interviews allowed non-verbal cues to be read, consequently, the data generated could easily be cross-checked for authenticity.

Having justified the use of interviews in this study, the specific types employed are discussed briefly below.

### **4.9.3 Types of qualitative interviews used in the study**

Individual interviews were conducted with high school heads, while focus group interviews were conducted with teachers, heads of department (HODs) and parents to collect data for this study. The informal conversational interview, the interview guide approach, and focus group interviews are discussed below, as all these types were used in this study.

#### **4.9.3.1 Informal conversational interviews**

In this type of interview, most of the questions flow from the immediate context and no predetermined set of questions or topics are used. Data gathered from informal conversational interviews are different for each participant interviewed. The same person may be interviewed on different occasions with questions specific to the interaction or event at hand (Patton, 2002: 342). Informal conversational interviews were used because they are built on and emerge from observations, they increase the salience and relevance of questions, and they can be matched to individuals and circumstances and can be personalised. These took place during the researcher's visits to the high schools in the staff room and at the sports fields. Informal conversational interviews also offered opportunities for flexibility, spontaneity and responsiveness. Informal conversations were built on and emerged from observations and were also matched to individuals and circumstances. Besides

being personalised, informal conversational interviews were also intended to enhance the salience and relevance of the research questions.

#### **4.9.3.2 The interview guide approach**

An interview guide was prepared to ensure that the same basic lines of the investigation are pursued with each interviewee. Importantly, the guide provided topics or subject areas within which the researcher was able to explore, probe and ask questions to shed further light on how high school heads as instructional leaders create a COTL. Questions were decided upon by the researcher in advance and in outline form. The researcher also made decisions on the sequence and wording of questions in the course of the interview process. According to Patton (2002: 343), the following are the advantages for using the interview guide to collect the data:

- It ensures that the researcher decides carefully how to make the most use of the limited time available in the interview situation.
- The interview guide delimits the issues to be explored in advance.
- The interview guide helps to keep the interactions focussed; while at the same time permitting individual perspectives and experiences to emerge.
- The interview guide serves as a basic checklist during the interview to ensure that all relevant topics are covered.

In the light of the advantages mentioned above, the interview guide was used during the interviews with high school heads and in the focus group interviews (see Appendices B,C, & D).

#### **4.9.3.3 Focus group interviews**

Focus group interviews were held with teachers and parents. For the purpose of clarifying this concept, a 'focus group interview' can be defined as an interview with a small group of about 6-12 people on a specific topic (Thomas & Nelson, 2001:

336). Morgan (2002: 141) defines a focus group interview as a technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher. As proposed by Anderson (cited in Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003: 90), the focus group interviews were planned and moderated carefully so that participants' ideas bounced off one another, thereby creating a chain reaction of information dialogue. The purpose of focus group interviews was to concentrate on the specific topic in depth in a comfortable environment to elicit a wide range of opinions, attitudes, feelings or perceptions from a group of individuals who shared some common experience relative to the dimension under study.

Focus group interviews were characterised by flexible conversational themes (Flick, Von Kardorff & Steinke, 2004: 285). In terms of their design, focus group interviews were free and open to the associative reactions of the participants in the conversation. Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003: 90) state that focus group interviews are used to elicit rich, descriptive data from participants who have agreed to focus on a topic of mutual interest in a small group format. Focus group interviewing in this study were undertaken following the four stages posited in Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003: 98). The first was establishing the focus group. The second involved developing questions (refer to Appendices B, C, & D). The third involved constructing the focus group. The final stage involved the analysis of group data. During the focus group interviews, the researcher ensured that each participant was given an opportunity to listen to others and to be heard by others as well.

#### **4.9.3.4 Strengths of focus group interviews**

Focus group interviews have a number of advantages when used to collect qualitative data. According to focus group expert, Richard Kruger (1994, cited in Patton, 2002: 386), the advantages of focus group interviews are as follows:

- Data collection is cost effective in terms of time and money.

- Interactions among participants enhance data quality because participants tend to provide checks and balances regarding the discussions, and these weed out false or extreme views.
- Focus group interviews are often enjoyed by participants because they build on the gregarious nature of human beings.
- Focus group interviews are useful when the topic to be explored is general and the purpose is to stimulate talk from multiple perspectives by the group participants so that the researcher can learn what the range of views is about the study.

Mazibuko (2007: 140) has also noted that focus group interviews provide the researcher with insights about what to pursue in individual interviews with high school heads. Patton (2002: 386) contends that focus group interviews enable participants to hear each other's responses and to make additional comments beyond their own original responses to hear what other people have to say. Wimmer and Dominick (2000: 119) point out that focus group interviews have the advantage that responses by participants tend to be more complete and less inhibited than is the case with other types of interviews. A pilot study was conducted to detect ideas to be investigated further using document analysis and observation. Heads of Department (HODs) and teachers engaged in a focus group interview afterwards stimulated into further discussion about the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL. As suggested by Anderson (2009: 200), focus group interviews were used as a cue to the language used by the researcher later. As pointed out in paragraph 4.12.9 data obtained were used to triangulate with individual interviews held with high school heads, observation and document analysis. In the light of the above advantages, the researcher held the focus group interviews with the intention of eliciting opinions and views from the HODs, teachers and parents about the high school head's instructional leadership role in creating a COTL.

#### **4.9.3.5 Limitations of focus group interviews**

In spite of the advantages of using focus group interviews discussed above, there are some limitations with which the researcher has to contend in order to collect valid and reliable data. Patton (2002: 386-387) lists the following disadvantages in this respect:

- The number of questions that can be asked will be greatly restricted in the group setting because the available responsive time will be limited in order to hear the viewpoints of everyone involved.
- Confidentiality will not be guaranteed, hence controversial and highly personal issues will not be very suitable in focus group interviews. In this regard the prevailing political climate of suspicion and distrust could have exercised an inhibiting effect on the participants.
- During focus group interviews, those who realise that their viewpoint is a minority perspective may not be inclined to speak and risk a negative reaction from other group members.
- Focus group interviews are only beneficial for the identification of major themes, but not really for the micro-analysis of subtle differences and hence were triangulated strictly.
- Focus group interviews do not take place in natural settings where social interactions normally take place (Madriz, 2000: 836). Thus, the power of focus group interviews lies in their being focused.
- Topics are narrowly focused, and usually seek reactions to certain phenomena; instead of exploring complex life issues in depth and detail. In this study, individual interviews are also used to overcome this limitation.

Due to limitations stated above, the researcher also made use of document analysis to collect data.

#### **4.9.4 Document analysis**

Documents are an important source of data common in most schools and provide evidence and details of personal and professional lives of school personnel (Briggs & Coleman, 2007: 278). Bogdan and Biklen (2007: 136) contend that schools like other organisations produce documents for specific kinds of consumptions. These include internal documents such as memos, external communication documents such as newsletters, news releases and yearbooks to mention a few. Other documents available in schools include personal documents such as diaries, personal letters and autobiographies. Popular cultural documents and photographs were also used as sources of data to provide information about the content and culture of the school. They were also used to provide an opportunity for the researcher to read between the lines of official discourse and then triangulate this information through interviews and observations.

According to Best and Kahn (2006: 257), document analysis serves to add knowledge to research and explains certain social events. In this study, sources of documentary data included the Director's circulars, statutory instruments, minute books, letters, diaries and bulletins. Document analysis included studying excerpts, quotations or entire passages from organisational, memoranda and correspondence and open-ended oral and/or written responses. Document analysis was concerned with the explanation of the current nature and state of instructional leadership in high schools. This data collection strategy helped the researcher to gather more knowledge for the study and to explain certain events pertaining to the high school head's instructional leadership. Since data contained in documents can be distorted and irrelevant (Best and Kahn, 2006: 257) the researcher ensured that the documents used were subjected to a thorough scrutiny. Document analysis was



used to triangulate where possible what emanated from the interviews with the various participants and from the researcher's observations.

Patton (2002:307) observes that document analysis provides a behind-the-scenes look at the phenomenon that may not be directly observable and about which the interviewer might not ask questions without the leads provided through documents. The researcher tried to access all routine records pertaining to clients, all correspondence from and to organisational members, rules, regulations, memoranda and any official or unofficial documents generated by or for the institution. Document analysis was aimed at augmenting data obtained through observations and interviews. Data obtained from documents were required to reveal those aspects of the study that would have occurred prior to the investigations and the goals or directions that might have been taken. The researcher also believed that documents acted as some form of expression or representation of relevant elements of the social world on which he /she could focus. Using documentary analysis gives the researcher an epistemological position, which suggests that texts, written records, visual documents, artefacts and phenomena can provide or count as evidence of the ontological properties.

Document analysis was used to verify, contextualise or clarify personal recollections and other forms of data derived from interviews and observations and for purposes of triangulation.

#### **4.9.4.1 Limitations of document analysis**

The use of document analysis as a data collecting instrument may have some limitations with which the researcher has to contend. The documents may be unreliable, inaccurate and unavailable. In some cases, the documents may be complex, badly filed and disparate to the extent that retrieving them might be problematic (Mason, 2006:110; Patton, 2002:499). The limitations of document analysis in this study relate to availability and accessibility. The head at school 1 and

the Chairperson of the SDC at school 5 were not eager to give the researcher important documents such as minute books and the Check-in/Check-out register recommended in the Director's Circular Minute No. 35 of 2008. The researcher was limited in his document analysis to those sources that were available and to which the researcher was granted access. They are the ones referred to in Chapter 5.

#### **4.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN DATA COLLECTION**

Developments in the field of the social sciences have been accompanied by an increasing concern about the ethical aspects of behavioural research. McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 334) warn that qualitative researchers in particular need to be sensitive to ethical principles because of their research topic, face-to-face interactive data collection, an emergent design and reciprocity with participants. Accordingly, the emergent design adopted in the study required the researcher to observe ethical principles. Ethics are the principles of right and wrong that can be used by individuals acting as free moral agents to make choices to guide their behaviour (Masiwa & Kabanda, 2006: 104). According to Gomm (2008:365), research ethics refer to "rules of morally good conduct for researchers". In a research study, ethics are concerned with respect for human rights and involve considerations such as fairness, honesty, respect for the integrity of the individual and confidentiality of certain information. The researcher observed the ethical issues discussed below.

##### **4.10.1 Confidentiality and anonymity**

In this study, participants' right to privacy will be protected ensuring confidentiality. Confidentiality refers to control of access to information and the guarantee that data will not be shared with unauthorised people (Krathwohl, 2004: 215; Anderson, 2009: 75). Confidentiality exists when only the researcher is aware of the participants' identities and has promised not to reveal their identities to others. Gay and Airasian (2003: 194) concur with Creswell (2008: 11-12) that participants have the right to have their answers kept in strict confidence. In addition, settings and participants

will not be identifiable in print. Therefore, while the researcher knew the names of the participants, he would not divulge them. Instead, imaginary locations and disguised features of settings would be used in such a manner that they appeared similar to several possible sites. Linked to this right of confidentiality, is the right to anonymity. Anonymity refers to keeping the identity of the participants from being known (Anderson, 2009: 74; Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008: 190). Participants' identities were kept confidential and anonymous by assigning numbers to all the returned instruments used to collect data shown in Tables 5.1 to 5.7.

#### **4.10.2 Informed consent**

The principle of informed consent arises from the participants' right to freedom and self-determination. According to Mokoena (2003:146), informed consent means informing the participants about the research study in a way that is clear to them. Informed consent was secured by visiting the participants at their respective schools to explain the purpose of the study. A letter from the Provincial Education Director for the Midlands Region was also used. Participants were assured of confidentiality and the aims and objectives of the study. Diener and Crandall (1978, cited in Cohen & Manion, 2002: 350), agree with Johnson & Christensen (2008: 109) who point out that informed consent refers to the procedures by means of which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation. They make their decision after being informed of the purpose of the study, procedures of the study, the risks and the right to ask questions, the benefits of the study that will accrue to the participants, alternative procedures and limits of confidentiality prior to participation or non-participation at all.

#### **4.10.3 Access and acceptance**

The stage of access and acceptance in a research study offers the best opportunity for the qualitative researcher to present his credentials as a serious investigator with respect to his study. The researcher respected the individual participants' freedom to

decline participation or to withdraw from the research study at any time. Gaining official permission to undertake this qualitative study was the first task before securing access and acceptance. In addition, participants were contacted personally and by means of a letter written by the researcher's promoter (Appendix A) to explain the purpose of the study as well as the terms of the agreement.

#### **4.10.4 Treatment of research participants**

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

#### **4.11 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

The fieldwork, observations and interviewing undertaken to collect data was followed by the interpretation of the data through the process of qualitative data analysis. Data analysis refers to the process of bringing order, structure and interpretation to the large volume of data collected (Marshall & Rossman, 1999:180). Bogdan and Bilken (2007:159) explain that data analysis is the process involved in systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other materials that are accumulated by the researcher so that he/she can make the findings. Analysis of qualitative data is concerned with organising and working with the data, breaking them into manageable units, coding and synthesising them and searching for patterns. According to Burns and Grove (2003:46), data analysis is conducted to reduce, organise and give meaning to the data collected. Mazibuko (2007:160) views data analysis as a dynamic and creative process through which the

researcher continuously tries to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study and to refine the interpretation of data continually. As pointed out by Creswell (2003: 190), data analysis involves making sense of both the texts and images. This means that the researcher has to prepare the data for analysis, conduct different analyses and move deeper and deeper into understanding the data. Data analysis was done in two stages, that is during the process of gathering data and after completing the process. During data collection, analysis of data involved checking of recurrent themes. Responses were tabulated in their original wording. Initial research activities were by the steps of analysis outlined below.

Creswell (2003: 191-195) outlines the six generic steps applied in data analysis in qualitative research that were useful for this study.

**Step 1:** Data collection, which involved organising and preparing the data for analysis.

**Step 2:** Data entry and storage, which involved reading through all the data to get a general sense of the information to reflect on its overall meaning.

**Step 3:** Segmenting, coding and developing category systems where the researcher embarked on a detailed analysis of the data with a coding process.

**Step 4:** Identifying relationships between the data collected through the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people including categories or themes, which were analysed for each individual.

**Step 5:** Construction of diagrams, tables, matrices and graphs to convey the findings of the analysis by using figures, tables and matrices as adjuncts to the discussion.

**Step 6:** Coordinating and validating results.

In chapter five, the findings based on the above responses will be discussed.

#### **4.11.1 Types of qualitative data analysis**

Patton (2002: 442- 494) has listed many different types of qualitative data analysis approaches. However, only those used in this study will be described below.

**Phenomenological data analysis:** This type of data analysis seeks to grasp and elucidate the meaning, structure and essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon, of a person or of a group of people. The researcher made use of this as he interacted with the participants of the study.

**Pattern, theme and content data analysis:** This type of data analysis involves searching text for meaning, words or themes. Content analysis was used to reduce data and make sense of them during data analysis.

**Inductive data analysis:** Inductive data analysis involves discovering patterns, themes and categories in the data. Findings emerge from the data as the researcher interacts with the data. The researcher identified, defined and elucidated the categories developed and articulated by the participants.

#### **4.11.2 Presentation of data**

As this is a naturalistic study, the results were presented in a descriptive narrative form. In this study, thick descriptions were used to communicate a holistic picture of the experiences, values, feelings and beliefs of high school heads, teachers and parents with regard to creating a COTL. The presentation of data included examples of raw data and original discourse. In addition, the researcher organised data into readable, narrative descriptions with major themes, categories and illustrative cases extracted through content analysis.

## **4.12 ISSUES OF VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

Issues of validity are vital in establishing the truthfulness, credibility or believability of findings (Neuman, 2000: 164). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 324), validity refers to the degree to which the explanations of the phenomena match the realities of the world. Teddli and Tashakkori (2009: 248) maintain that validity refers to the extent to which a test measures whatever it is supposed to measure. Simply put, validity refers to how sound or effective the measuring instrument is. Likewise, Briggs and Coleman (2007: 97) contend that validity is used to judge whether the research accurately describes the phenomenon that it is intended to describe. Bell (2005: 104) argues that if an item is unreliable, then it must also lack validity. Therefore, the research design, the methodology and the conclusions of the research all need to have regard to the validity of the research process. Common types of validity that are important in qualitative research, namely descriptive validity, interpretive validity, theoretical validity, internal validity and external validity are described briefly below, followed by other relevant matters on reliability.

### **4.12.1 Descriptive validity**

According to Johnson and Christensen (2008: 277), this type of validity refers to the factual accuracy of the accounts as reported by the researcher. In this study, the researcher tried to ensure that he reported what had taken place in the settings under study.

### **4.12.2 Interpretive validity**

This type of validity refers to portraying the meaning attached by participants to the phenomenon under study accurately. According to Johnson and Christensen (2008: 277), interpretive validity refers to the extent to which the research participants' viewpoints, thoughts, feelings, intentions and experiences are grasped accurately by the researcher and portrayed in the research. To attain this type of validity, the

researcher tried to get into the heads of the participants, look through participants' non-verbal actions, to elicit what they saw and felt. This means that the researcher attempted to understand everything from the participants' perspectives to provide a valid account. Importantly, participant feedback and low-inference descriptors were used as strategies to enhance this type of validity.

#### **4.12.3 Theoretical validity**

Validity refers to the congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 324). Theoretical validity refers to the extent to which a theoretical explanation developed from the research study fits the data and is therefore credible and defensible (Johnson & Christensen, 2008: 278). Strategies that were employed to increase theoretical validity included revisiting the sites and the participants to verify certain aspects and also through triangulation (see paragraph 4.12.9).

#### **4.12.4 Internal validity**

Internal validity relates to the degree to which research findings accurately represent the phenomenon under study (Briggs & Coleman, 2007: 98). This type of validity relies on the logical analysis of the results as the researcher develops the description of the phenomenon being studied. In this study, the risk of interview bias was minimised by respondent validation where the results and conclusions were verified by two or more sources.

#### **4.12.5 External validity**

External validity refers to the extent to which the results can be generalised to the wider population, cases or situation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002:109). Briggs and Coleman (2007: 99) add that external validity relates to the extent that findings may be generalised to the wider population that the sample represents or to other



similar settings. The available data in this study consisted of a detailed description of the events, situations, and behaviours as well as direct quotations of what the participants said. The researcher ensured that the research design was appropriate for the situation(s). Clear and relevant questions were formulated for the interviews to obtain valid data that is free from measurement error (see appendices B,C, & D). Threats to external validity in this research study included selection, setting and construct effects which were attended to in paragraphs 1.8 & 4.8.2).

#### **4.12.6 Internal reliability**

Internal reliability refers to consistency in the research process and relies on the logical analysis of the results as the researcher develops the description of the phenomenon being studied (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005: 215). The use of multiple data-collection procedures, in conjunction with triangulation were applied to enhance internal validity (see paragraph 4.12.9). Verification of results from observations, interviews, site documents and other supporting sources such as minute books, notices and circulars were used to achieve internal reliability.

#### **4.12.7 External reliability**

External reliability involves the degree to which independent researchers working in the same or similar contexts would obtain consistent results (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005: 264). Mutual understanding was developed with the participants so that they could be willing to provide data that is valid and reliable. From the above discussion, it is clear that meticulous attention was given to make the research as reliable and valid as possible.

#### **4.12.8 Validation of the research findings**

Researcher bias is regarded by Johnson and Christensen (2008: 275) as one potential threat to the validity of qualitative research that the researcher has to keep

in mind. Research bias means obtaining results that are consistent with what the researcher wants to find and results from selective observations and the selective recording of information. As suggested by Creswell (2003: 195), validation of the findings of the study will occur throughout the various stages spelt out in paragraph 4.3.5. Creswell (2003: 196) and Johnson & Christensen (2008: 276) identify some strategies that were employed by the researcher to check and validate the accuracy of the research findings. They include:

- Triangulation of different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes (paragraph 4.12.9). Thus, information and conclusions are cross-checked through the use of multiple procedures or sources.
- Using member checking to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings.
- Using rich, thick descriptions to convey the findings.
- Clarifying the bias that the researcher brings to the study. In Creswell's (2003:196) view, this self-reflection creates an open and honest narrative report.
- Presenting negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes.
- Spending an extended period of time of about six months in the field of study with the participants to develop an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied and to convey details about the site and its participants.
- Using debriefing to enhance the accuracy of the account.
- Participant language and verbatim accounts will be used.
- Low-inference descriptors, which include concrete, precise descriptions from field notes and interview elaborations were the hallmarks of the study. Rival

explanations were eliminated by developing an understanding of the data through careful consideration of potential causes and effects.

In addition to the above, the researcher provided an accurate account of the information in the interpretation of data to enhance validity and reliability.

#### **4.12.9 Triangulation**

Triangulation is regarded by Wiersma and Jurs (2005: 256) as a part of data collection that cuts across two or more techniques or sources. Neuman (2000:124) sees triangulation as a better way of looking at a phenomenon from different angles. Gay and Airasian (2003: 246) are of the opinion that triangulation is a powerful approach used to establish credibility. They view it as a form of cross-valuation that seeks regularities in the data by comparing different participants since each of the data collection techniques has strengths and weaknesses. Importantly, triangulation can take many forms to assess the sufficiency of the data according to the convergence of the multiple sources or procedures. The following types of triangulation cited by Patton (2002: 556) were used:

- Methods triangulation. It involves checking for the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods. The data collected are compared and integrated through some kind of qualitative methods. In this study, the data obtained from observations were compared with data obtained from the interviews and document analysis to assess the same aspect of a phenomenon.
- Triangulation of sources. It involves checking for consistency of different data obtained through observation, individual and focus group interviews and document analysis. The consistency of information derived was also compared and cross-checked. In this study, triangulation of sources involved the following:
  - Comparing observations with interviews and/or the data obtained from document analysis.

- Checking for the consistency of what participants say about the same phenomenon over time.
- Comparing the perspectives of participants from their points of view.
- Checking interviews against programme documents and other written evidence that corroborate the data obtained.

The use of triangulation helped the researcher to overcome the problem of 'method boundedness' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002: 113). The kinds of triangulation discussed above offer strategies for reducing systematic bias during data analysis. Triangulation had special relevance in the study because the researcher sought a more holistic view of the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL and the complex phenomenon required elucidation. The researcher tried to provide triangulation using multiple data sources and data collection strategies which included observation, interviews and document analysis. Data collection was undertaken over a prolonged period of time which stretched for about six months. In spite of the challenges caused by the prevailing harsh socio-economic and political environment triangulation helped the researcher to bridge issues of validity and reliability discussed in paragraph 4.12 in data collection.

#### **4.13 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has described the research methodology and design used in the current study. The nature and characteristics of qualitative research, its rationale in the study of the instructional leadership role of the school head in creating a COTL in high schools in the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe were discussed. In addition, this chapter outlines the role of the researcher in the study and describes the research design used as well as the research instruments for gathering data. The strengths and limitations of participant observations, qualitative interviews and document analysis were discussed. In addition, ethical issues considered in undertaking the study and issues pertaining to reliability and validity were

addressed. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the process of triangulation.

The next chapter will deal with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter four contained a description of the research design and methodology used in the research to collect data. A description of all the activities and procedures that were undertaken during the course of the empirical study were outlined. The purpose of this chapter is to present, analyse and discuss the data generated during the field study which consisted of: qualitative observations, individual interviews with high school heads, focus group interviews with teachers, HODs and parents; as well as document analysis (see paragraphs 4.9.1; 4.9.2; 4.9.3; & 4.9.4).

This study, whose main research question was, “*What is the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL, with specific reference to high schools in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe?*” employed a qualitative research design (see paragraph 4.2.2). Findings of this research study are given as follows: First, each of the five schools involved, is described and discussed in terms of the location, learners’ and teachers’ information and its infrastructure. Secondly, the characteristics of the participants are described. Thirdly, the chapter tries to address the central research question and the relevant sub-question raised in paragraph 1.3. The ensuing paragraphs present significant themes, which emerged from the empirical study and from the questions structured in the form of individual and focus group interviews with the participants (school heads, heads of departments, teachers and parents).

Individual interviews conducted with school heads and focus group discussions with teachers and HODs were conducted in English, while focus group interviews with parents involved the use of both English and their first language, namely Shona. The researcher used the participant’s own words *verbatim* and no alterations were made

to correct the language in quotations. Responses from the parents had to be translated by the researcher.

## 5.2 HIGH SCHOOLS INCLUDED IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

This paragraph provides important data captured during the site visits at each of the five (5) high schools included in the study. All five high schools used in the study are public schools and were selected on the basis of their geographical location, academic performance and their historical background. This information was obtained from the local district education officer (DEO).

Before each of the schools is described, a checklist of the infrastructure in these schools, obtained via observations, interviews and document analysis as research instruments, is shown in table 5.1 below.

**Table 5.1 Checklist for the schools' infrastructure**

<b>The school's characteristics</b>	<b>School 1</b>	<b>School 2</b>	<b>School 3</b>	<b>School 4</b>	<b>School 5</b>
<b>Medium of instruction</b>	English	English	English	English	English
<b>Number of teachers</b>	68	79	64	34	45
<b>Number of students</b>	1084	1640	1375	750	1211
<b>Number of classrooms</b>	35	20	17	22	23
<b>Number of staff rooms</b>	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Number of strong rooms</b>	4	1	1	3	1
<b>Head's office</b>	1	1	1	1	1

<b>The school's characteristics</b>	<b>School 1</b>	<b>School 2</b>	<b>School 3</b>	<b>School 4</b>	<b>School5</b>
<b>Number of support staff</b>	4	4	2	2	2
<b>Deputy head</b>	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Number of HODs</b>	9	12	8	8	9
<b>Telephone</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Library</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Laboratory</b>	6	6	2	2	4
<b>Hall</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Fax</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Toilet facilities</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Photocopier</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Computers</b>	12	18	10	11	14
<b>Security at school</b>	Fenced	durawalled & fenced	durawalled	durawalled & fenced	Fenced
<b>Number of security guards</b>	3	0	3	2	3
<b>Electricity</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Running water</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Number of sport fields</b>	9	4	4	8	5
<b>Tuck shop</b>	2	1	1	1	1
<b>General cleanliness</b>	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Good	Excellent
<b>School bus</b>	1	0	0	1	1
<b>School truck</b>	1	0	0	1	1
<b>School bicycle</b>	1	1	1	1	1



### **5.2.1 Characteristics of the high schools**

Schools function as a system, hence they are influenced by the community as well as their environments. As a resident of the community in which the five high schools are located, the researcher was not a stranger. The data presented below were obtained through observations, informal discussions with school personnel and document analysis of the inventory.

- **High school 1**

The school was built before the country achieved its independence and is located close to the city centre about 600 metres away from the town house. It is a former group A school meant for white children before the country's independence. At the time of this study, there were no white students studying at the school. This school caters for both day scholars and boarders. According to the school head, the school is one of the oldest and largest boarding schools in the country. It has two male hostels and two female hostels accommodating more than 400 students. The school is completely surrounded by a high intact durawall, security fence with barbed wire on top. There is only one entrance into the school, which is always manned by a security guard. At the time of this research study, the school was experiencing a decline in enrolment because of its catchment area that is in a low density suburb. Students from the high density areas have transferred from the school to those in the high density suburbs where they live due to the high transport costs.

The high level of academic excellence in the school is evident in the merit awards displayed in the school head's office. Students are not allowed to attend lessons if they are not in full school uniform. According to the school head, the school is the centre of all sporting activities in the Midlands Province because of its sporting facilities (see table 5.1). It is the policy of the school to enrol all students regardless of their performance. All the students attend lessons in the morning and engage in

supervised studies in the afternoon. Table 5.1 shows some of the facilities available in the school.

- **High school 2**

Unlike school 1, school 2 is located in a high density suburb and it was built after the country had gained independence. The school is surrounded by a security fence and barbed wire which is no longer intact because of vandalism. The many openings in the security fence enable students who arrive late to sneak in or those who play truant to sneak out during lessons. Due to the limited number of classrooms, the school operates on a double shift system where the first group of students (forms 3 to 6) attends lessons in the morning (7.30 am – 12.30pm) and the other group (forms 1 and 2) attends lessons from midday to late afternoon (12.30pm - 5. 30pm ). The two groups are taught by different teachers. The double shift system practised in the school means that teaching and learning time is shortened and the duration of each lesson is reduced. The double shift system does not only compromise quality in the teaching and learning process but it also causes social problems because students are occupied for relatively short periods only; consequently, they may be exposed to various kinds of harmful activities such as drug abuse.

Just as is the case with school 1, uniforms are compulsory for all students. Every morning, the teachers on duty waited at the gate to monitor whether students are properly dressed and to check on those who arrived late. During one of his visits to the school, the researcher found students busy picking up litter in the school grounds. Although the school is relatively new in comparison with schools 1, 4 and 5, the state of the classrooms is deplorable because of the broken windows. Some of the classrooms had no doors and the floors had holes in them. Furniture in the classrooms was far from adequate considering the teacher-pupil ratio of 1:40. A large amount of broken furniture piled outside the classrooms awaiting repair, was seen by the researcher. On the walls of most classrooms, as well as on the doors of the toilets and teachers' offices a lot of vulgar and derogatory statements were

written. It was also a cause for concern to find that most of the water taps were not working and this caused students to crowd around the only tap that was providing water. There were times when there was no water supply at the school. Next to the gate female vendors could be seen selling super cools and sweets to the students. Table 5.1 shows some of the infrastructure and facilities in the school.

- **High school 3**

Similar to school 2, this school is located in a high density suburb close to a busy road. It was built after the country's independence and just as is the case in school 2, it operates on a double shift system. The school is completely surrounded by a durawall that is still intact. There is a dual carriageway to the school where there is always a security guard at the gate to ensure that no students leave before the school closes. The tall gum trees and orchard form part of the beautiful scenery at the school. Every time the researcher visited the school, there were teachers on duty at the gate to ensure that students were punctual for lessons and properly dressed in full school uniforms. Security guards were also empowered to make sure that no student left the school yard before the end of lessons unless the student had special permission from the school administration.

Due to the erratic supply of water in the school, the flowers had withered at the time the research was undertaken. The critical shortage of support staff in the school was manifested by the tall grass on the premises and the litter all over the school. Most classrooms had broken windows and some were without doors. In this regard, during a visit to the school on a parents' consultation day held at the school, some parents complained about the state of the school. Refer to table 5.1 that shows the infrastructure and facilities of the school.

- **High school 4**

High school 4 is located in a medium density suburb. Before independence, the school was meant for students from the coloured community only. At the time of this study, the school had fewer than twenty coloured students. The school is completely surrounded by a durawall and high security fence with barbed wire on top. Similar to schools 1 and 5, this school caters for both boarders and day scholars and operates on a single shift system where all students attend lessons in the morning. There are multi-storey buildings which serve as classrooms and hostels for students. The buildings appeared to be old and in need of attention at the time when the research was carried out. For example, the paint on the walls was fading.

Unlike schools 1, 2 and 3, this school selects and enrolls students with the best results at grade 7 and form 4 for places in forms 1 and 5 respectively. This criterion is perhaps the reason why the school's academic record in public examinations is good. However, student discipline at this school leaves a lot to be desired. During one of his visits to the school, the researcher learnt that one of the students had committed suicide when he was disciplined for drug abuse by a relative. Although the researcher was informed that two security guards were employed by the school, he never met one of them during his visits. Later on, the researcher learnt that the security guards were used as grounds persons during the day because of a shortage of support staff. The infrastructure and facilities available at the school are shown in table 5.1.

- **High school 5**

High school 5 is located close to a low density suburb and about fifty metres away from the highway linking the two largest cities in the country. Like school 1, it is a former group A school that was meant for white students before the country's independence. However, at the time of the research, there were no white students at the school. The school was surrounded by a security fence with barbed wire on top.

There are two gates, one for motorists and the other one for pedestrians. The former is always manned by a security guard. School buildings are still in a good condition and the classroom doors and windowpanes are intact. In addition, the school premises are clean most of the time and there are sufficient water taps that are in a working condition.

As in other schools, the school uniform is compulsory. Furthermore, the school operates on a single shift system where all students come to school at the same time. This school has the reputation for producing some of the best results in the Midlands Province. This could be attributed to the criteria used by the school in selecting and enrolling new students as it only selects and enrolls high achievers. In addition, this school offers boarding facilities as well as places for day scholars. As a way of maintaining a high standard of discipline among students, day scholars had to walk into town to get transport to their respective homes. What was impressive at this school is that the students greeted visitors and showed a great deal of respect for their teachers. When the researcher visited the school, he always found a business-like atmosphere conducive to effective teaching and learning. The school also had executive parking areas for the top school management and for the visitors. Another impressive aspect regarding this school, was its excellent infrastructure (see table 5.1 in this regard) .

### **5.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS**

This paragraph presents important characteristics regarding the participants in the study. These characteristics were revealed by the data collected by distributing forms to participants for them to fill in their personal details (see appendices F, G, H & I).

#### **5.3.1 The high school heads**

Five high school heads were interviewed in this study and their characteristics are depicted in table 5.2 below.

**TABLE 5.2: The high school heads**

School head's characteristics	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Female	Male
Age	61	57	51	48	51
Highest academic qualification	BA(general)	BA(Hons)	"O"Level	"A" Level	BA(Admin)
Highest professional qualification	GCE	GCE	B.Ed (Admin)	B.Ed	B.Ed
Years of experience as a teacher	42	29	27	25	25
Years of experience as a school head	6	2	15	15	10
Years as school head at present school	6	2	2	1	5
Further study	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Number of lessons taught per week	Nil	10	8	12	5
General training for school headship	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

**Key:**

- BA : Bachelor of Arts
- BA (Hons) : Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
- BA (Admin) : Bachelor of Arts (Administration)
- B.Ed : Bachelor of Education
- B.Ed (Admin) : Bachelor of Education (Administration)
- GCE : Graduate Certificate in Education

“O” Level	: Ordinary Level
“A” Level	: Advanced Level
NA	: Not applicable

As reflected in table 5.2 above, three of the high school heads who participated in this study were females and the other two were males. Importantly, the increase in the number of females in leadership positions could be attributed to the government’s policy on Women Advancement. All five heads involved in the study were mature in terms of age (ranging from 48 to 61 years) and well qualified. This is to be expected, since the post of a high school head can only be held by someone who holds the relevant degree. None of the high school heads was currently pursuing further studies due to the harsh economic environment prevailing in the country. Of great importance to the study, all the five school heads were highly experienced as teachers, the least number of years ‘experience was twenty five years. With the exception of the head of school 2, all four the other heads were fairly experienced as substantive school heads. Importantly too, Table 5.2 shows that four of the school heads did teach five or more lessons per week in their areas of specialisation and this provided them with firsthand experience of both the teaching and learning process as well as its challenges. As stipulated in the Director’s Circular Minute No. 15 of 2006, school heads are expected to have teaching loads which depend on the enrolment of the school. In high schools with an excess of 960 students as is the case with the five included in the study, school heads teach at least twelve periods per week. Appendix E was used to collect demographic data about the high school heads considered important to the study.

### **5.3.2 Heads of departments and teachers**

Altogether, ten HODs and ten assistant teachers participated in the focus group interviews conducted during the empirical study. There were two focus group interviews for HODs and two with assistant teachers. Each focus group had one participant from each of the five high schools included in the study. The assistant

teachers and HODs were selected to ensure that the various subjects offered in the school curriculum were catered for. There was also a deliberate attempt to maintain the gender balance.

**Table 5.3 Heads of departments in the first focus group**

<b>HOD's Characteristics</b>	<b>School 1</b>	<b>School 2</b>	<b>School 3</b>	<b>School 4</b>	<b>School 5</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Female	Male	Female	Female	Male
<b>Age</b>	42	37	31	30	48
<b>Highest academic qualification</b>	"A" Level	BA	"A" Level	"A" Level	"A" Level
<b>Highest professional qualification</b>	B.Ed	PGDE	M.Ed	BSc	M.Ed
<b>Further study</b>	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
<b>Subject taught</b>	History	Shona	Religious Studies	Mathematics	Geography
<b>Subjects of specialisation</b>	History	Shona	Religious Studies	Mathematics	Geography
<b>Level taught</b>	"O" & "A" Level	"A" Level	"O" & "A" Level	"O" & "A" Level	"O" & "A" Level
<b>Number of years of teaching experience</b>	16	15	10	6	26
<b>Number of years at present school</b>	12	9	7	4	15
<b>Number of years as HOD</b>	10	4	5	2	25
<b>Number of periods taught per week</b>	24	24	24	24	24
<b>Number of members in the department</b>	6	6	9	9	5



**Table 5.4 Heads of departments in the second focus group**

<b>HOD's characteristics</b>	<b>School 1</b>	<b>School 2</b>	<b>School 3</b>	<b>School 4</b>	<b>School 5</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	Female	Male	Male	Female
<b>Age</b>	36	34	42	30	34
<b>Highest academic qualification</b>	"A" Level	"A" Level	"A" Level	"A" Level	"A" Level
<b>Highest professional qualification</b>	B.Ed	B.Ed	M.Ed	BSc	B.Ed
<b>Further study</b>	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	MA
<b>Subject taught</b>	Divinity	Accounting	Geography	Mathematics	English
<b>Subjects of specialisation</b>	Divinity	Accounting	Geography	Mathematics	English
<b>Level taught</b>	"O" & "A" Level	"O" & "A" Level	"O" & "A" Level	"O" & "A" Level	"O" & "A" Level
<b>Number of years of teaching experience</b>	12	11	14	6	13
<b>Number of years at present school</b>	6	2	7	4	7
<b>Number of years as HOD</b>	4	1	3	2	3
<b>Number of periods taught per week</b>	24	28	20	24	22
<b>Number of members in the department</b>	9	6	7	9	7

An analysis of tables 5.3 and 5.4 reveals that HODs included in the two focus group interviews were of medium age, ranging from 30 to 48 years. The highest academic qualification for nine of the HODs was an Advanced Level certificate and one from school 2 (Table 5.3) had a Bachelor of Arts degree. Interestingly, the highest professional qualification for two HODs from school 3 (Table 5.3) and one from school 5 (Table 5.3) was a masters degree, a qualification which none of the five school heads possessed. Only one HOD from school 5 (Table 5.4) was currently

pursuing further studies. According to information provided by the HODs, they taught the same subjects in which they had specialised. The teaching experience of the HODs who participated in the focus group interviews ranged from 10 to 26 years. Appendix G was used to collect demographic data about HODs considered important to the study.

**Table 5.5 Teachers in the first focus group**

<b>Teachers' Characteristics</b>	<b>School 1</b>	<b>School 2</b>	<b>School 3</b>	<b>School 4</b>	<b>School 5</b>
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Male	Female
Age	30	32	51	42	48
Highest Academic qualification	"A" Level	"A" Level	"A" Level	"A" Level	"A" Level
Highest Professional qualification	Dip Ed	B.Ed	B.Ed	B.Ed	B.Ed
Further study	Accounting	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Subject taught	Accounting	English	Shona	English	Mathematics
Subjects of specialisation	Accounting	English	Shona	English	Mathematics
Level taught	"O" Level	"O" & "A" Level	"O" & "A" Level	"O" & "A" Level	"O" & "A" Level
Number of years of teaching experience	3	4	25	16	22
Number of years at present school	8 months	1	25	3	1
Number of periods taught per week	24	24	24	26	30

**Table 5.6 Teachers in the second focus group**

<b>Teachers' Characteristics</b>	<b>School 1</b>	<b>School 2</b>	<b>School 3</b>	<b>School 4</b>	<b>School 5</b>
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female
Age	36	44	42	46	34
Highest Academic qualification	"A" Level	"O" Level	"A" Level	"A" Level	"A" Level
Highest Professional qualification	B.Ed	BSc	C.E	B.Ed	B.Ed
Further study	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	MA
Subject taught	Geography	Science	English	F&N	English
Subjects of specialisation	Geography	Science	Geography	F&N	English
Level taught	"O" Level	"O" Level	"O" Level	"O" Level	"O" & A" Level
Number of years of teaching experience	15	18	18	26	13
Number of periods taught per week	30	8	24	24	24

**Key:**

- Dip Ed : Diploma in Education
- BSc : Bachelor of Science
- C.E : Certificate in Education
- MA : Master of Arts
- F & N : Food and Nutrition

As reflected in tables 5.5 and 5.6 on the previous pages, assistant teachers are qualified and most of them have got degrees. Importantly too, the teachers offer the subjects in which they have specialised. The teachers are of medium age ranging from 30 to 51 years and their teaching experience ranges from 3 to 26 years.

### 5.3.3 The parents

Altogether twenty five parents were involved in the focus group interviews conducted. Five executive members of the school development committee (SDC) participated from each of the five high schools involved in the study. They included the chairperson, the secretary, the treasurer, and committee members. While gender was initially considered in the selection of the committee members, domestic commitments made it difficult to achieve a gender balance in the end. Table 5.7 shows their distribution by gender according to the schools.

**TABLE 5.7: Demographic characteristics of the parents by gender**

<b>School</b>	<b>School 1</b>	<b>School 2</b>	<b>School 3</b>	<b>School 4</b>	<b>School 5</b>
Females	1	0	2	2	1
Males	4	5	3	3	4
Total	5	5	5	5	5

In school 2, the focus group interview consisted of males only because of the time at which it was held. As the interview was held in the evening after an executive meeting at the school, females could not attend due to their domestic commitments. The underrepresentation of females at the focus group interviews at other schools can also be ascribed in part to the same reason, but it was also due to their smaller numbers in the SDCs.

Information gathered from the parents regarding their personal details (see appendix I) revealed that the members of the SDC were mature people within the age range

of 36 to 63 years. A few parents were hesitant to provide information about their ages, perhaps because culturally, some considered it to be a confidential matter. As required by their school constitution, members of the SDC have at least one child at the school. This requirement helps to make them committed to the process of improving their schools as interested parties. Their experience as members of the SDC ranged from one to five years. An analysis of the occupations of the parents involved in the study reveals that those holding the three top executive positions such as chairperson, secretary and treasurer were professional people in various disciplines and this had an impact on their effectiveness and contribution to the development of their respective schools. It appears no formal training had been given to the members of the SDC with regard their work and the reason for this could be attributed to the short term of office, namely one year.

#### **5.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS FROM THE QUALITATIVE STUDY**

As stated in paragraph 4.2, a qualitative approach was used to address the research questions raised in paragraph 1.3.1 and those in the interview protocols for high school heads, HODs, teachers, and parents (see appendices B, C, & D). The literature study provided the theoretical framework regarding instructional leadership that served as a theoretical grounding for conducting the empirical research (paragraph 3.7). The discussion of the findings from the qualitative observations, qualitative individual and focus group interviews and document analysis is therefore treated in the context of the long term and short term instructional leadership dimensions presented in Chapter 3.

##### **5.4.1 LONG - TERM INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP DIMENSION**

The long term instructional leadership dimension refers to those actions that high school heads as instructional leaders take to steer their schools towards a particular vision as discussed in chapter three (see paragraphs 3.4.1, 3.4.2, 3.4.3, & 3.4.4). In

this paragraph the discussion will focus on visioning, value management, professional development and supervision of teachers, and empowerment of teachers and parents as indicated in the framework in chapter three.

#### **5.4.1.1 Building and communicating a shared school vision and mission**

In paragraph 3.4.1.1 it was pointed out that effective school organisations have a clear vision that indicates where they are heading and members of the school community should share in the development of that school vision. It was also noted that a shared school vision is very important because it guides the change process and realises the potential for improvement in the COTL. The literature study indicated that when people in an organisation share a vision, they tend to become connected in a fundamental and important manner and this enables them to have a common purpose. This was echoed by one participant high school head :

Anyone with a vision does not wait for anybody to give him or her instruction because the vision itself is an instruction.

In all five high schools, which the researcher visited during the empirical study, he observed that the school vision and mission statements were displayed on the walls of the administration offices, the school head's office, and the staffroom and in some cases, in teachers' offices. At schools 1 and 2, the school's vision is inscribed on the wall at the entrance gate and on the walls of the administration block respectively. Observation and document analysis revealed that the school mission for each high school was derived from the one provided by the Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and culture (refer to Appendix N). Perhaps this explains why the researcher found the mission statements for the five high schools to be almost identical. The Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture's vision emphasises quality education of excellent standards and aims at developing the whole child physically, intellectually, morally, spiritually and culturally. MoESAC's vision reads: *"Our vision is of united and well educated Zimbabweans with Unhu/Ubuntu and are*

*patriotic, balanced and self reliant*" (refer to Appendix M). Reacting to this practice of basing the school mission statement on that provided by the MoESAC, one teacher felt this makes the whole process rhetorical. Instead, he advocated that a home grown mission statement that suits the needs and potential of the school environment should be developed. This teacher points out that: *"Schools are different in many respects and as such, they should have different visions relevant to their local needs."* According to the statements made by all the participating high school heads, HODs, teachers and parents the school vision is the output of all the members of the school community. According to the head of school 1, the students are also involved in the formulation of the school vision. She confirmed that the students contributed to the development of the school vision through their prefects. However, concern was expressed regarding whether the students had a clear understanding of the school vision. High school heads interviewed also reported that in most cases the school vision was formulated by all the staff during a meeting at the beginning of the year. Parents also participated in the process of developing a school vision during the Annual General Meetings (AGMs).

Building a shared school vision has a marked effect on the motivation of all the members of the school community. It also directs the attention of all the stakeholders at what they need to create, namely a healthy COTL.

Although the formulation of the school vision and mission statement is a collaborative issue, it was disturbing to note that the majority of the HODs and teachers included in the focus group interviews were negative about these issues and attached very little value to it. One of the teachers made the following telling remark: *"I can't think of a mission statement on an empty stomach."* In a similar vein, another teacher exhibited his indifference to these issues as follows: *"I have other better things to think and worry about than the school vision and school mission."* The opinions expressed by the teachers seem to indicate that, while the high schools do have excellent vision and mission statements on paper, teachers who

are the implementers, lack the zeal to make them a reality. The teachers' negative attitude is reflected in their reluctance to carry out the tasks assigned to them.

It was also revealed during the interviews with high school heads, HODs and teachers that the existing school vision had been formulated many years before by members who were no longer at the schools. In this regard, the head of school 4 explained:

I am only new at this school and so also a number of other teachers. I came to this school in January this year at the peak of the industrial action by teachers. The school vision we have was formulated by my predecessor and I'm yet to see how it is and whether it is achievable.

Findings from the interviews held with the high school heads and the parents indicated that parents are not very interested in becoming involved in the formulation of the school vision because they think it is the responsibility of the school head and his or her staff. Therefore, they prefer to be given a drafted school vision that they can then endorse. The head of school 5 expressed doubt whether the parents actually understood the vision and mission statements of their school in spite of the efforts made to inform them about these concepts. Sentiments expressed by the parents interviewed at schools 1 and 5 appeared to imply that parents did not seem to think they were part of the school vision.

One of the biggest challenges cited by the five high school heads interviewed is that of articulating exactly what it is that underpins their vision for the school as instructional leaders. Vision is a driving force that reflects the instructional leader's image of the future based on his or her values, beliefs and experience. Since a school vision is not only the instructional leader's personal view it also provides a global overview; thus students are reminded of it regularly at assemblies.

To make the school vision a deeply inspiring goal that can direct their dreams and actions, all the participants indicated that both teachers and parents meet to discuss the "O" & "A" level results once they are released to evaluate and compare them



with those of the previous years. According to the head of school 5, the school vision represents a destination, which he, as the instructional leader, should exhort everyone concerned to reach. Moreover, it was also his task as the instructional leader to evoke passion for the vision. It emerged from the interviews with all the participants that the school vision was compared to a journey where anyone planning to undertake it, should begin with the end in mind. In essence, it was reported that the term “vision” encompassed everything that schools did.

A shared vision helped direct and motivate people’s attention to and align people’s actions around the same goals. Not only was a shared vision based on fundamental values that were widely shared, but in the opinion of the high school heads, it also tended to increase commitment to work and provided opportunities for the school constituents to experience deeper levels of satisfaction in their work. While school heads admitted that they could easily spell out what they wanted to achieve, they admitted that translating their aspirations into words was far from easy. At schools 1, 2, 3 and 4 the school vision was written on the wall at the entrance and displayed in the staffroom and offices. High school heads also mentioned the school vision and mission at assemblies on Mondays and Fridays in the case of schools 2 and 3.

As discussed in paragraph 3.4.1.2, a vision cannot be forced on followers; on the contrary, it must rather capture their imaginations. Formulating a vision for the school is an important instructional leadership role and is a means for accomplishing integration of the organisation’s activities. Creating a shared vision enabled school heads to ensure that all the instructional activities were not only consistent with one another but actively supported each other. The core values held by members of the school community specify the means by which the vision is to be attained. Interviews held with high school heads, HODs and teachers as well as the researcher’s observations and document analysis revealed that the following measures were taken to sustain the vision and mission statements of schools:

- The school vision and mission were shared and communicated effectively to staff and parents during meetings and to students at assemblies, which were held once or twice a week.
- Progress regarding the attainment of the school vision and mission was communicated to all stakeholders.
- The school vision and mission were communicated by means of symbols, stories and ceremonies.
- The contribution of all members of the school community to the realisation of the school vision and mission was recognised and celebrated.
- The resources needed to realise the school vision and mission were sought and provided.
- The school vision and mission statements were monitored, evaluated and reviewed regularly.
- Barriers to achieving the school vision and mission were identified, clarified and addressed

There seemed to be an anomaly in that school heads were quite positive about the involvement of all stakeholders in the formulation of the school vision, while HODs, teachers and parents appeared to feel otherwise. This could be attributed to high teacher mobility as well as the short period of time that members of the SDC had served on that body (as is stipulated in Statutory Instrument 87 of 1992). Another reason for the difference could be that the mobility of high school heads is less as compared with that of HODs and teachers at a school. In addition to that, the vision and mission of a school hardly changes which is why it was permanently inscribed on the walls at schools 2 and 4.

High school heads referred to their school vision, as often as possible, both formally and informally during meetings with the various stakeholders. Evidence of this was noted in the minutes of staff meetings and the researcher observed this also. Importantly too, the school heads interviewed pointed out that they always tried to reach out to all stakeholders in the school to help determine and support the

school's goals financially, materially and morally. In addition, high school heads used the short-term instructional leadership dimensions discussed in paragraph 5.4.2 to support the long-term instructional leadership function of envisioning and communicating the school vision that is the portrait used by high school heads to create a COTL.

The Director's Circular Minute P.35 of 1999 spells out the need for school heads to define channels of communication in all directions. The findings obtained from the literature study (paragraph 3.4.1) together with the empirical investigation, have both confirmed that formulating and communicating the school vision are the hallmark of the high school head's instructional leadership role designed to create a COTL.

#### **5.4.1.2 Instructional leader's values management**

The literature study in paragraphs 2.3.1.5 and 2.3.1.6 has highlighted the importance of values and beliefs respectively, concerning the leadership of organisations. It was pointed out that beliefs provided the basis for what people hold to be true or untrue, right or wrong, good or bad, and relevant or irrelevant. The different kinds of beliefs (see paragraph 2.3.1.6) held and the individual's willingness to comply with them have an impact on the behaviour exhibited. During the individual interviews conducted with the five high school heads and the researcher's observations, it was found that each of them articulated his or her values and beliefs that guided his or her instructional leadership role in creating a COTL. The research revealed that values were viewed by high school heads as conceptions that underlie the desired outcomes. In addition, participant school heads pointed out that values formed the framework for guiding teachers' behaviour and actions against which they could be evaluated, and that they actively engaged in managing these. Most of the values and beliefs held by the high school heads are in line with the Director's Circular Minute No. 41 of 2006 and were focused on making their schools centres of care and support for students. In practical terms, the researcher found the values and beliefs to be concerned with school-community partnerships, human rights,

school effectiveness and issues of equity among others. It also emerged from the interviews held with school heads, HODs and teachers, that strategies for improving the COTL were derived from value systems. Some of the value systems mentioned during the interviews and observed included a genuine caring attitude towards all the members of the school community and democratic principles. According to the high school heads interviewed, their instructional leadership's values were concerned with making schools centres of care and support as stated in the Director's Circular Minute No. 41 of 2006. Importantly too, high school heads had established a social network to engage in communication against a specific cultural background. Empirical evidence gathered through observations, interviews and document analysis seemed to show that the heart of the instructional leadership role in creating a COTL lay in what the school head believed, valued, dreamt about, and to which he/she was committed. High school heads kept on reminding teachers about these values in both formal and informal meetings. In this regard, a strong philosophy was evident in the pronouncement of the head of school 5:

I value professionalism, commitment, sound relationships with all members of the school community, transparency and ethics.

The assertion above was found to be true according to the researcher's observations and was emphasised in the minutes of staff meetings held. Parents interviewed also confirmed this component of instructional leadership. The values and beliefs spelt out by all the high school heads interviewed, tended to concur. It emerged from the interviews with high school heads that core values were established by turning beliefs into actions. As part of management of teachers high school heads reported that they monitored the teachers' punctuality and attendance to their lessons. This meant that high school heads as instructional leaders, had to model good practices of teaching. As reflected in table 5.2, four of the five high school heads involved in the study, taught at least five lessons per week and this gave them the opportunity to model good practices. The Director's Circular Minute No. 15 of 2006 requires them to teach at least 5 periods per week. At school 2 the

researcher found the principal teaching a geography lesson in one of the O' Level classes. Virtually all the high school heads believed that: every student was important; every student could succeed and every student could reach his or her full potential. It was in terms of this belief that the head of school 1 indicated that at her school all students are admitted to form one or the upper sixth, regardless of their academic achievements. The same high school head explained that her priorities were:

- Promoting the welfare of teachers and students. This important aspect of instructional leadership was observed and documented in the minutes of staff meetings
- Ensuring that parents had trust in the school and could talk openly about what they felt about the COTL in the school. The researcher observed this aspect of instructional leadership.

Another important positive belief that emerged from the interviews with the high school heads was that they all indicated that they valued their teachers' innovation and creativity in their instructional tasks and did everything possible to ensure that there was a sound COTL in the school. The values and beliefs that the high school heads as instructional leaders upheld about instruction had a significant influence on the commitment and motivation of HODs and teachers when creating a COTL. In paragraph 2.9.1, the different ways of managing a COTL were discussed and the empirical study seem to confirm this. As reported by the participant school heads they promote values such as integrity, honesty, dedication to work and productivity. On this note, the head of school 2 pronounced:

*I believe that when a teacher leaves his or her home each day for work, that automatically binds him or her to honesty, morality and commitment. It also means that he or she should give out the best for the students who have confidence in him or her.*

In the light of this perception, the values cherished by high school heads helped teachers shape individual purpose and meaning, personal conduct and the means of working with their clients (students). Teachers and HODs interviewed in focus groups expressed that they valued interactions with their school heads about core purposes and how best to work with learners in their classrooms. During his visits at the high schools, the researcher also observed that members of the school community tended to relate very well with one another. The one participant teacher had this to say during a focus group interview: *"I value being known and recognised by my school head for the contribution I make towards improving the COTL in the school"*. Findings of the research have shown that heads of department (HODs) and teachers value feedback from senior colleagues. Praise from the school head or deputy head is therefore an important motivator according to the HODs and teachers interviewed. This aspect of value management according to the researcher's own observation contributed immensely towards effective instructional leadership.

Although school heads, teachers and HODs reported that values have an impact on the process of creating a COTL, the reality of the circumstances prevailing in the country (Zimbabwe) at the moment seems to interfere with, modify and alter the cherished values. Values provide the basis for teachers to evaluate the situations they encounter, the worth of their actions, activities, their priorities, and the behaviours of those with whom they work. As members of the school community, high school heads, HODs, teachers and parents reported that they always work through, discuss and resolve their interpersonal and intra-group problems so that the process of creating a conducive COTL is successful. Some of the core values emphasised include among others, respect for the dignity of all persons, an ethic of caring and commitment and dedication to educational excellence. Observations made by the researcher indicated that value management as an aspect of instructional leadership enabled HODS and teachers to hold high academic expectations for students. In addition, it also promoted a healthy school climate (see paragraph 2.4.1).

As was indicated in the literature study (see paragraphs 2.3.1.5, 3.4.2 & 3.5.1.4), the instructional leader's value management indeed seems to be important for a model of effective instructional leadership aimed at creating a COTL.

#### **5.4.1.3 Professional development of teachers**

High schools and their heads in Zimbabwe are experiencing growing pressure to deliver high quality education. There was consensus among the school heads, HODs and teachers interviewed, that teachers should be encouraged and supported within the school context to develop professionally to achieve high quality education.

In order for teachers to reach pedagogical maturity, they need an environment that stimulates and supports professional growth. When asked how they nurture professional teacher development, the following emerged from the interviews conducted with high school heads:

- Stimulating discussions with teachers as individuals and as groups so that teachers could examine their current instructional practices and explore new technologies.
- Structuring staff meetings that focussed specifically on instructional and curriculum matters by meeting with teachers in the departments or as whole staff to reflect on current practices and assisting them explore ways in which the quality of instruction and student achievement could be enhanced.
- Meeting with individual teachers to discuss their current professional problems and providing the necessary assistance.
- Stimulating enthusiasm among teachers and enabling them to pursue further instructional or curriculum interests.

Heads of Department and teachers interviewed in their respective focus groups confirmed the above.

The researcher found document evidence at School 3 from memos, circulars and minutes of staff meetings that the high school head's instructional leadership role in the professional development of teachers is twofold. At all the high schools the researcher noted that the planning of a comprehensive professional development programme (PDP) included teachers and took cognisance of the individual and collective needs of the teachers. Data collected through interviews and document analysis at all high schools indicated that school heads' instructional leadership involved providing resources, including time and money so that teachers can reflect upon and participate in dialogue about their instructional practice. It was quite pleasing to note that all the high school heads included in the study declared that each dollar spent on providing professional development (PD) for teachers, resulted in greater gains than from any other expenditure. It also emerged that high school heads at all the high schools involved in the study were in support of the professional development of teachers and this tended to increase the teachers' interest and commitment in their work. Activities for effective improvement in continuing professional development (CPD) that emerged from a study of the minutes of staff meetings held at schools 2, 3 and 5 included firstly, workshops run inside the schools on teaching strategies. The second was whole-staff in-service training on teaching and learning and the third was team teaching at departmental level.

Professional development was regarded by both school heads and teachers as an important long-term dimension of improving teachers' skills and capabilities in imparting knowledge to learners. In developing and extending teachers' skills and knowledge, classroom performance was likely to improve for the benefit of students. Importantly too, professional development was regarded as an important tool that could develop teachers' confidence and motivation which, in turn, provided teachers with the opportunity to be innovative. All high school heads interviewed indicated that they encouraged their teachers to improve their professional qualifications by engaging in further studies with the country's Open University for distance education (Zimbabwe Open University) and other conventional universities offering block



release programmes, such as the Midlands State University. However, as reflected in tables 5.3 to 5.6, few teachers responded positively to this due to financial constraints.

From the interviews with principals, teachers and HODs it was found that professional development in the high schools involved was accepted as fundamental to the improvement of teaching and learning. One of the HODs in a focus group interview remarked: *“Staff development of teachers is very important and should be an ongoing thing because it enables teachers to cope with the rapid changes taking place in instruction.”* The high school heads interviewed also conceded that professional development enabled them to evaluate standards more effectively. Furthermore, all the high school heads reported that professional development facilitated decision-making and the implementation of valued changes in pedagogy. However, a concern raised by most of the high school heads, HODs and the teachers interviewed, indicates that most of the planned Professional Development Programmes remained on the drawing board and were never actually implemented. In this study, it was revealed during the interviews with all participants that high school heads had to contend with the following barriers, which affected the effectiveness of comprehensive professional development for teachers:

- Inability to provide essential instructional resources due to financial constraints.
- Lack of interest on the part of teachers.
- Lack of follow up on decisions and reinforcement of knowledge.
- Lack of acknowledgement and support for the efforts of teachers by means of incentives.

The barriers stated above can be attributed to the unfavourable socio-economic and political climate prevailing in the country. Nevertheless, in spite of the barriers stated above, professional development is regarded by educators as a kind of “win-win” situation for instructional leaders in the sense that it establishes a basis for meeting

the teachers' needs for career development, which according to them contributes significantly to school improvement.

Learning is so central to the function of a school that it is vital that instruction, which is used as a basic tool to promote it, should be perfected through supervision (see paragraph 3.4.3.2). To bridge the gap between curriculum intention and reality, high school heads interviewed in the study pointed out that they monitored the teaching and learning process closely. All the high school heads confirmed that they used supervision to identify training needs, to control the instructional programme and to note each individual teacher's strengths and build on them and if there were any weaknesses, to help them overcome them. To promote instruction, high school heads interviewed reported that they had formal and informal meetings with teachers, observed the classroom interaction formally and informally, and helped each individual teacher to develop appropriate and meaningful instructional activities and learning experiences. It is important that high school heads as instructional leaders take a major responsibility to promote staff development programmes as stipulated in the Vacancy Announcement – Internal Director's Circular Minute No. 3 of 2010. As pointed out in paragraph 3.4.3.2, supervision and evaluation of teachers are important because they reveal aspects of teaching and learning that are executed in a satisfactory manner or otherwise.

It emerged from the observations made by the researcher that supervision of teachers was not only done by the school head, but also by the deputy school head, the senior master/senior woman, and HODs. It was reported that there was a division of labour in the supervisory structure in the schools. In this regard, school heads supervise the administration personnel, namely the deputy head, the senior master/senior female teacher and the HODs. The supervision of assistant teachers is carried out by the HODs. Deducing from the minutes of the staff meetings held at schools 2 and 4, it appeared that each teacher was supposed to be supervised at least once every school term by his or her HOD. However, occasionally when the need arose, school heads also supervised the teachers. In addition, it was

interesting to note that the school head at school 2 confirmed that sometimes he invited the HOD in his subject of specialisation to observe him teach. However, findings gathered from the interviews with high school heads, HODs and teachers, the researcher's observations as well as a document analysis indicated that there had been no external supervision of teachers for a considerable period of time due to the economic challenges facing the country.

The findings derived from the literature study (see paragraph 3.4.3) and the empirical investigation, confirm that professional development is viewed as an important aspect of the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL.

#### **5.4.1.4 Empowerment of teachers**

The concept of empowerment and its importance in a school setting was discussed in paragraph 3.4.4. Findings from the study have revealed that high school heads empowered teachers by giving them the autonomy to make innovations in curriculum development. One of the school heads remarked as follows: *“Teachers are the implementers of the school curriculum and so teachers need the autonomy to innovate and improve the teaching and learning process.”* A similar view was expressed by one of the HODs who had this to say: *“My school head does not interfere with the decisions we make in our department because I’ve been given the power as the HOD to do so.”* According to the participant school heads, HODs and teachers interviewed, empowerment included operational decisions such as departmental policy and methods of evaluating teaching and learning. Evidence from the researcher's document analysis of the minutes of staff meetings held indicated that high school heads had established well-defined procedures with clear expectations. This meant that teachers did not have to approach their school head for answers to all their questions regarding instruction. It was also observed that some of the problems related to teaching and learning were dealt with at departmental level. HODs interviewed confirmed that their school heads granted

them autonomy to make supervision timetables and to make requisitions of instructional material needed in their departments. High school heads at Schools 2 and 3 reported that their practical departments had generated revenue which had since been used to repair old books and to buy new ones.

In this study, parent members of the SDC in their respective focus groups agreed that their school heads had empowered them to participate in fund-raising activities within the school to raise revenue. At schools 2, 3 and 5 the researcher observed that there was a functional tuckshop run by the SDC. In this regard, the chairperson of the SDC at school 5 indicated: *“As the SDC, the school head has given us the power to be involved in the making of decisions aimed at improving the quality of education in the school.”* The involvement of parents in decision-making had a positive impact on instructional leadership in that they cooperated in all school activities. Despite the efforts by the school heads to empower teachers and parents, the main challenge pointed out during interviews and also observed lay in the fact that both teachers and parents seemed to be dragging in supporting the instructional leadership role of the school head in creating a COTL because of the effects of the political and economic crises in the country.

The empowerment of teachers and parents is such an important factor in the instructional leadership role of the high school head in the process of creating a COTL (see paragraph 3.4.4) that it should be included in a model of instructional leadership. In the process of empowerment, HODs and teachers interviewed confirmed that their school heads supported them and showed empathy towards them also. High school heads involved in the study also pointed out that they saw their instructional leadership role as empowering HODs, teachers and parents to make decisions about the operation of the school. By providing teachers with such autonomy and creating opportunities for them to engage in professional conversation, a supportive teaching and learning environment was developed and a culture of commitment created. Evidence gathered through observation also

revealed that the empowerment of teachers is a means for better performance and has minimum coercion.

#### **5.4.2 SHORT- TERM INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP DIMENSIONS**

As stated in paragraph 3.5, the short-term instructional leadership dimension refers to those actions taken by high school heads, as instructional leaders, to handle specific situations effectively that are encountered in the process of creating a COTL. The discussion of the short-term dimension is carried out in three sections, namely, the characteristics of the high school leader as the instructional leader; the characteristics of teachers, students and parents and the characteristics of the situation.

##### **5.4.2.1 Characteristics of the high school heads as instructional leaders**

In paragraph 1.9.2 it was pointed out the school head in Zimbabwe is the one who provides for the coordination of the instructional programme in a manner that can lead to the creation of a positive COTL. As stated in paragraph 3.5, the instructional leader's characteristics are important aspects of a model of instructional leadership aimed at creating a COTL. The characteristics of the high school heads as the instructional leaders that are discussed below include their perception of stakeholders, task and people orientation, personality, value system and expectations and trust.

###### **5.4.2.1.1 The instructional leader's perception of stakeholders**

The literature review reported in paragraph 3.5.1.1 has shown that the school head's view of all the stakeholders has a significant influence on his or her instructional leadership. All the participants included in the study seemed to agree that the school head's instructional leadership depended on his or her perception of the teachers, parents and even the learners. It emerged from the interviews conducted that school

heads as instructional leaders valued the contributions of the stakeholders. In this regard, one HOD from school 5 pronounced: *“My school head respects me as an individual and my professionalism as an HOD. Our relationships are good, we solve problems together and my suggestions to improve the department are considered.”* The parents interviewed also expressed positive sentiments about how their school heads perceived them. In their opinion, their school heads valued their involvement and contribution towards the process of creating a beneficial COTL. During a focus group interview conducted at school 3 one of the parents stated : *“The school head always invites us to visit the school and also encourages parents to raise issues of concern so that improvements can be made to achieve quality education.”* Another important aspect relating to the school head’s positive view of stakeholders that came up in the informal discussions with teachers and parents during visits to the schools, is that it helped to prevent the development of a toxic school culture (see paragraph 2.4.2) in spite of the prevailing circumstances in Zimbabwe. Heads of Department, teachers and parents interviewed also expressed satisfaction with their school head’s perception of them as key actors in their instructional leadership role in creating a COTL. Evidence to this effect was also obtained from observations and document analysis of minutes at schools 2 and 4.

Findings from both the literature study (see paragraphs 2.7.2 & 3.5.1.1) as well as the empirical investigation, have confirmed that the instructional leader’s view of all the stakeholders is important and should be included in a model of effective instructional leadership. A model of the high school head’s instructional leadership indicates that his or her view of people does not only influence his or her leadership style, but also has an impact on the effectiveness of efforts made to create a conducive culture of teaching and learning. As Theory Y leaders (see paragraph 3.5.2.2), high school heads’ instructional leadership is characterised by a positive view of all stakeholders and a belief that everyone can be creative, wants to make a constructive contribution and has a desire to excel in his or her work. Against such a background, the high school heads interviewed reported that they involve their

followers in the process of creating a COTL through the process of democratic leadership (see paragraph 3.2.2).

#### **5.4.2.1.2 The instructional leader's task and people orientation**

It is important to point out that the school head's task or people orientation will affect his or her instructional leadership approach (see paragraph 3.2.2). As pointed out in paragraph 3.5.1.2, a task oriented instructional leader is interested in getting the job done and emphasises activities such as planning and problem solving. Table 3.3 shows some of the elements related to a task orientation in instructional leadership. Findings from the study gathered through interviews and document analysis of minutes of staff meetings held revealed that school heads, as instructional leaders, demonstrate a task orientation **in** the following ways:

- Planning the activities of the day, week and term and displaying them in the staff room.
- Having a school calendar emphasising deadlines (for example with regard to designing and planning, setting internal examinations and filling in school reports at the end of the term).
- Letting all stakeholders know what was expected of them as laid down in the school's client charter and the school policy displayed in the staffroom and in offices at all the high schools.
- Maintaining the expected standards by insisting on getting things done as quickly as possible and through managing by walking around (MBWA) to ensure that effective teaching and learning took place. The researcher observed that all the high school heads involved in the study exercised visibility during lesson time.
- Being critical of unsatisfactory work and insisting on quality in the teaching and learning process.

The above instructional tasks of the school head are stipulated in the Vacancy Announcement – Internal Director's Circular Minute No. 3 of 2010. Unlike task

orientation, which is concerned with the accomplishment of tasks, a people oriented instructional leader seeks to maintain good relations with all stakeholders. Elements of a people oriented approach to instructional leadership are given in Table 3.3. It emerged from the individual interviews held with high school heads and the focus group interviews with HODs, teachers and parents that a people-oriented approach to instructional leadership was demonstrated in a number of ways. These included an open door policy where according to the researcher's observation, school heads listened to and accepted ideas from all the stakeholders. High school heads also showed concern about the welfare of their teachers. One teacher from school 2 confirmed this by saying:

Our school head is very considerate. He understands the difficult circumstances in which we are living because of the economic situation in the country and tries to encourage parents to provide some incentives to caution us against the effects of low salaries given by the government.

A people oriented approach was also acknowledged by one of the parents during a focus group interview held at school 1 when he commented thus: *"We work very well with our school head. She is very simple and approachable."* To obtain a balance between task orientation and people orientation, the school head at school 1 reported that she reinforced the school goals during meetings with parents and teachers while exhibiting empathy and understanding towards them. As people-oriented instructional leaders, high school heads interviewed stressed their desire to establish and maintain sound relationships with all stakeholders. To achieve this they pointed out that they emphasise free expression of feelings, teamwork, harmony and healthy compromising. Some of the people-oriented behaviour exhibited by high school heads cited during the interviews with high school heads, HODs, teachers and parents included; being friendly and approachable, finding time to listen to suggestions from all members of the school community, showing concern for the welfare of teachers and learners, and seeking consensus on matters of decision-making. According to the HODs, teachers and parents interviewed, the head at school 5 made use of both task and people orientation in his instructional



leadership role to create a COTL. The above were experienced by HODs and teachers after lesson observation and in briefings at break time.

The findings derived from both the literature review and the empirical investigation confirm that it would be useful to include the school head's task and or people orientation in a model for effective instructional leadership. Importantly, both task and people orientation are determined by the personality of the school head as the instructional leader.

#### **5.4.2.1.3 The personality of high school heads as instructional leaders**

It was pointed out in paragraph 3.5.1.3 that the personality of the instructional leader is pivotal in the process of creating a COTL. Importantly too, the literature study revealed that school leaders need to adjust their leadership approaches as discussed in paragraph 3.2.2 to suit the situation at hand.

The responses from the HODs, teachers and parents interviewed in their respective focus groups indicated that they appreciated their school heads' distinctive personal characteristics and qualities. Common traits among the high school heads that were interviewed, included their passion and enthusiasm for ensuring that a healthy COTL as described in paragraph 2.4.1 is cultivated in order to achieve high quality education. High school heads as instructional leaders were described by the HODs and teachers who participated in the focus group interviews as persistent, determined and assertive in their roles. The parents whom the researcher interviewed as a focus group in schools 1 and 5 commended their school heads for their interpersonal and communication skills. They felt that their school head had managed to build trust among members of the school community through their transparency and open door policy. The chairperson at school 1 who was also the chairperson of all the SDCs in the district remarked:

Generally, all the SDCs have expressed satisfaction with regard to the personality of their school heads. There have been no reports of conflict at all because the school heads are approachable and value the contribution from their SDCs.

The willingness of high school heads to share both school-related and personal information with their teachers has been identified as a key factor in determining the extent to which teachers are willing to trust their instructional leader. The following three personality factors of high school heads also surfaced prominently during the interviews with the participants:

- Conscientiousness, characterised by diligence, an achievement oriented inclination and perseverance.
- Emotional stability, characterised by cheerfulness and empathy.
- Agreeableness, characterised by courteousness, flexibility, good nature, cooperative, softhearted attitude and tolerance.

As emphasised in the situational leadership theory (see paragraph 3.5.1.3), it was revealed in the interviews conducted with the various participants that school heads, as instructional leaders, took the prevailing circumstances in the school's internal and external environment into account. In this process, the people orientation discussed in the previous paragraph was employed. The high school head at school 3 also pointed out that she exercised emotional awareness, resilience, and persistence in the course of their instructional leadership to succeed in creating a COTL. Regarding this matter, the head of school 1 had this to say: *"In the situation in which we are operating, there is a need for situational leadership to avoid confrontation with followers who are struggling to make ends meet under the harsh economic situation."* In essence, evidence gathered from observations of the high school head's instructional leadership behaviour, document analysis of minutes of staff meetings held and interviews conducted indicated that most school heads manifested an understanding and empathic personality. As observed by the researcher and confirmed by both HODs and teachers, high school heads handled

followers as individuals and no dissent voices emerged. This presupposed that the instructional leadership of high school heads did not rely on set rules.

Findings from both the literature study as well as the empirical investigation confirmed that the personality of the school head has a great impact on his or her instructional leadership aimed at creating a COTL.

#### **5.4.2.1.4 Value system**

As stated in the literature review in paragraph 3.5.1.4, work values are important in the process of creating a COTL because they affect how teachers behave in their place of work in terms of what is right and wrong. Findings derived from the focus group interviews with HODs, teachers and parents revealed that the work values to which high school heads subscribe, include achievement orientation, concern for others, honesty and fairness. According to the high school heads involved in the study, achievement means a concern for the advancement of teachers in their career. This is manifested in certain types of behaviour such as working hard and seeking opportunities to develop new instructional skills. In addition, concern for others is manifested in caring and compassionate behaviour, which includes encouraging them to tackle difficult tasks. Honesty refers to providing accurate information after carrying out supervision to improve the COTL in the school. Lastly, fairness emphasises impartiality and taking cognisance of other people's points of view. This was confirmed by both HODs and teachers from schools 1, 2 and 5.

An important finding emerging from the qualitative data obtained from the empirical study is that high school heads, as instructional leaders, establish core values that they model in their own practice. The head at school 2 had this to say:

I have to create a COTL, a culture that cannot be poured into the school. However, I see many challenges in achieving this.

The school head at School 3 expressed a similar point of view during the interview when she remarked: *“If the school head relaxes, the teachers will also relax. A school is like its head.”* In essence, the participant school heads seemed to be aware of the fact that their personal values had a strong effect on the work situation as well as the fact that it would have a direct effect on instruction in their schools. However, school heads, HODs and teachers interviewed concurred that teachers value work situations differently, for example how they use instructional time and the methods of disciplining students.

High school heads, HODs, teachers and parents involved in the interviews pointed out that the core values embraced by all members of the school community help specify the means that must be used to achieve the school vision. When asked what she valued in the teaching and learning process, the head of School 1 had this to say: *“I value the best and I don’t accept anything less than that.”* Importantly too, HODs, and teachers were also in agreement with their school heads that students deserved quality education regardless of the negative factors challenging the education system. Sufficient evidence was gathered from observations made by the researcher at school 3 indicating that the school head, as instructional leader, acts according to her personal ideals in an effort to curb bad instructional habits and to promote the good ones. Findings from the focus group interviews with HODs and teachers also revealed that the high school heads valued the contributions of all members of the school community. HODS, teachers and parents interviewed also confirmed this. High school heads, as instructional leaders, should value learning, promote the importance of good human relations and reflect an awareness of the consequences of their actions. The school head of school 2 responded as follows on this matter: *“As a humanist, I always try to be part of the teachers by interacting with them in the staffroom and even at the sport fields so that I can know more about their problems in an informal way. I do the same with parents during meetings.”* When asked how they ensured the success of the core values they embraced, most high school heads confirmed that they modelled good practices of teaching for teachers to imitate.

As pointed out in paragraph 2.3.1.5, and confirmed by the empirical investigation, value systems influence the norms and standards that influence patterns of the high school head's instructional leadership behaviour which in turn is instrumental in creating a COTL.

#### **5.4.2.1.5 Knowledge and experience**

In paragraph 3.5.1.5 it was stated that knowledge and experience are important characteristics of an instructional leader in creating a culture of teaching and learning (COTL). It was also pointed out in paragraph 5.3.1 that high school heads interviewed have sufficient knowledge and experience needed to perform their instructional leadership role. The high school head's knowledge is necessary for him/her to know good instruction and encourage it. As stipulated in the Vacancy Announcement – Internal Director's Circular Minute No. 3 of 2010, high school heads should have at least a degree (see Table 5.2). This information was gathered using a form on personal details (see Appendix F). Although the empirical investigation did not focus much on this aspect, HODs, teachers and parents interviewed confirmed that they respect their school heads because of their knowledge and experience. All the high school heads interviewed possessed the competences and qualifications stated in the Vacancy Announcement – Internal Director's Circular Minute No. 3 of 2010 (see Table 5.2). The high school head's knowledge and experience are critical in instructional leadership..

#### **5.4.2.1.6 Expectations and trust**

It was explained in paragraph 3.5.1.6 that instructional leaders should have high expectations of both themselves and their followers. In paragraph 2.9.2.4, it was also pointed out that expectations by a school leader regarding achievement and social behaviour have a favourable effect on the process of creating a COTL. In order to promote a healthy COTL, high school heads who were interviewed in the study stated that they expected teachers to be committed to their work and this was

manifested in the quality of work given to the students. The high school heads also pointed out that they expected teachers to be honest and attend to their lessons regularly according to the timetable, mark the students' work thoroughly and give feedback as soon as possible with minimum supervision.

From the researcher's observations and an analysis of documents on the notice boards, it emerged that the school heads' views regarding high expectations of students was regarded as part of the vision that guided the schools. It was also revealed that there was widespread agreement among the participants in this study that high expectations were a vital aspect of the school's success in creating a COTL. The high school heads expressed the same sentiments as their HODs and teachers, namely that students' self-esteem could be improved by academic success. The strategies employed by high school heads to motivate the students to achieve academic success are discussed in paragraph 5.4.2.2.2. To be effective in their instructional leadership roles and foster high expectations and trust among teachers, the high school heads interviewed stated that they put ideas into actions, by modelling the attitudes and behaviour they expected from both teachers and students. They achieved this in the following three ways:

- Working with teachers in professional development programmes (PDMs).
- Giving their own time to support student learning.
- Treating students, teachers and other members of the school community with respect .

Trust has emerged as an important resource in school reform. High school heads acquire trust when they deliver promises, establish and focus on their priorities, model the attitudes, behaviours and commitments that they call upon others to demonstrate. Increasing trust in high schools has been linked to increased participation among teachers and parents in school reform efforts, greater openness to innovation among teachers, increased outreach to parents, and academic productivity. Findings from interviews with all the participants have also shown that

the growth of trust among members of the school community depends partly on the extent to which they have a shared understanding of their role obligations. Despite the power structures, high school heads, HODs, teachers and parents interviewed agreed that they depend on one another to improve the culture of teaching and learning in their schools. For instance, high school heads reported that they depend on HODs and other teachers to provide high quality classroom instruction for the students. Heads of Department (HODs) and teachers confirmed that they also depend on their school head for resources and on parents to support their efforts. Similarly, parents reported that they depend on teachers to educate their children. Trust and support enable high school heads as instructional leaders to develop group dynamics and mutual relationships essential for the school to move towards a vision of effectiveness (see paragraphs 2.9.2.2 & 3.5.3.2). The researcher observed that most high school heads interacted very well with teachers, HODs and parents during their instructional leadership.

As illustrated above, all the high school heads included in the study seemed to be clear regarding their expectations that their schools should educate everyone so that they could attain high standards. The findings of both the literature study and the empirical investigation confirm that it would be useful to include the expectations and trust of the school head as an important factor in a model of instructional leadership.

#### **5.4.2.2 Characteristics of the instructional leader's followers**

The effectiveness of instructional leadership in creating a COTL is greatly influenced by the characteristics of the followers. Thus the motivation of teachers, learners and parents; teachers' level of knowledge and experience and the level of responsibility of the teachers and parents are very important in instructional leadership. These are discussed below.

#### 5.4.2.2.1 Teacher morale, job satisfaction and motivation

Inevitably, a workforce with low morale and self-esteem and few rewards will lack the necessary motivation. In paragraph 3.5.2.2, it was pointed out that the goals of an organisation cannot be attained without a motivated workforce. Morale is an emotional attribute that provides energy, acceptance of leadership and cooperation among members of an organisation. In addition, morale refers to the attitudes of the members of an organisation. When asked about the morale and motivation of the teachers regarding the process of creating a COTL, the head of school 4 replied as follows:

Things are no longer the same; we have had several factors that have affected the willingness by both the student and teacher to do their best in whatever tasks are assigned to them. Really, you have come at such a bad time when the level of motivation is at its lowest. Everyone is just not their self. Things are just bad.

A similar view was expressed by another school head: "*The heart is not there in the teacher and in the student.*" When the researcher asked for possible reasons for the low teacher morale, the following emerged:

- The poor remuneration and lack of incentives (refer to appendix M)..
- The economic factors exacerbated by high levels of inflation.
- The degradation of the status of the teacher as a result of a negative perception by society.
- Inadequate facilities.
- Negative images of teaching in the media (see also appendices L & M).
- Class loads, as well as class size.
- Government policy, which tends to create confusion and uncertainty among the teachers.

The challenges mentioned above emanate from the country's economic situation that is currently characterised by high levels of inflation, unemployment, high interest rates and prices of goods as well as low levels of disposable income, foreign



currency and the business cycle energy. All the participants interviewed emphasised the impact of the harsh economic environment prevailing in the country on the process of creating a COTL in their respective schools. It emerged from the focus group discussions with parents at one of the high schools that parents were unable to pay school fees and levies for their children because they were unemployed. The treasurer of the SDC of school 4 had this to say:

Parents are very supportive of the school's efforts to improve the quality of education in the school. They want to pay school fees and levies in time but most of them can't afford because they are not employed. As parents we are confronted with a harsh economic situation in the country which makes it difficult to provide adequate funds to our school.

The economic factor proved to be the biggest challenge, while the other factors were all consequences of this factor. For instance, the poor economic conditions affected parents' ability to pay school fees and levies, their attendance of meetings convened by the school and their ability to pay incentives to teachers.

It is difficult to achieve good results in the face of such conditions characterised by the poor morale of everyone connected with the school. Teacher dedication and commitment play a decisive role towards the attainment of a healthy COTL. This sentiment was echoed by another participant high school head that had this to say about the effects of low morale among teachers:

When morale is down people do not normally look for material that is not easily available in the school. They want all the material to be provided and this affects the quality of the teaching and learning.

Morale is closely connected with the satisfaction that a person hopes to derive from work. However, good morale does not necessarily guarantee high productivity, it is merely one of the influences on total productivity. In order that a high morale can influence productivity positively, it must be accompanied by the reasonable direction

and control that is provided by the instructional leader. In this regard, one teacher had this to say: *“While the school head is trying his best to create a COTL, the underlying factor is why teachers are not performing at their best.”*

According to the findings of the study, low morale was manifested by absenteeism, tardiness, and high teacher attrition and this was acknowledged in the Draft Director’s Circular Minute No. 30 of 2008 and the Director’s Circular Minute No. 35 of 2008. While high teacher morale is associated with student achievement, findings obtained through observations, interviews and document analysis during the empirical investigation have also found poor morale to be indicative in the following ways:

- Less effective teaching performance due to apathy and indifference toward the job, as observed by the researcher during his visits to the schools.
- Poor attendance for lessons, poor time keeping and absenteeism by teachers, which was acknowledged by the high school heads interviewed and was documented in the minutes of meetings held by staff and even by parents.
- Lack of cooperation in dealing with problems pertaining to teaching and learning and unjustified resistance to change as a result of the low morale discussed in paragraph 5.4.2.2.1.
- Delays by teachers to mark and provide feedback to learners after giving written work, which was confirmed by high school heads and HODs interviewed and documented in the minutes of staff meetings held.
- Insufficient work given to learners and a careless attitude towards work by teachers. High school heads and parents interviewed expressed concern about this and the sentiment was reported in the minutes read.

According to the high school heads interviewed, teachers are not the same but differ in temperament and aptitude, age, experience and subject interests, and in ability, commitment and professionalism. In this regard, each teacher will have individual needs to be satisfied so that he or she can perform better. Instructional leadership behaviour that appeared to contribute towards the development and

maintenance of teacher morale included the involvement of teachers, students, and parents in decision-making pertaining to incentives (refer to paragraph 5.4.5). From the interviews with school heads, HODs, teachers and parents, the researcher found that parents had to raise some extra money as incentives for teachers (see appendix K) in accordance with the Draft Director's Circular Minute 30 of 2008.

It emerged in this study that teachers tend to make emotional judgements in accordance with their perception of the desirability of the outcomes that are associated with new educational policies or reform initiatives. The Draft Director's Circular Minute No. 30 of 2008 on teacher incentives was regarded as welcome news by high school heads, HODs and teachers interviewed. The researcher's observation also deduced that some of the emotions were prompted by the harsh socio-economic and political climate prevailing that made them view the instructional leadership role as a monster and this was typically so at schools 2 and 3 where teacher incentives were low. What teachers at schools 1, 4 and 5 did reflected the high level of their motivations, abilities and the situations in which they work.

Findings obtained from the study during the interviews showed that teachers' daily involvement in curriculum implementation could be sustained by a positive emotional climate, which was strongly linked to the instructional leader's approaches to decision-making and communication (see paragraph 3.2.2). Interviews conducted with high school heads, HODs and teachers revealed the conditions that supported a positive emotional climate, such as frequent feedback from teachers, students, and parents; and a dynamic work situation for the teachers. School heads as instructional leaders, reported that they tried to reduce teachers' negative emotions by attending to their concerns and by consulting with teachers in advance. Importantly, understanding teacher emotions entailed understanding why teachers acted as they did. In addition, it transpired that understanding how to help teachers with maintaining positive emotional states seemed to be essential for a successful instructional leader. The researcher had the opportunity to be present in the school head's office at School 1 when the head was conversing with one of her teachers

who was under stress and the researcher could derive from the incident that the school head as an instructional leader was empathic and concerned with the welfare of her teachers.

While teachers at all the high schools included in the study appeared to have passion for their profession, the harsh socio-economic environment prevailing in the country appeared to impact on the instructional leadership of the high school head in creating a COTL. However, the researcher's observation indicated that some teachers remained motivated as reflected by their commitment to work. High school heads also confirmed this during interviews.

Findings gathered through interviews with all participants in the study indicated that most teachers found it is difficult to maintain their motivation in the face of contentious government policies and initiatives. The high school head at school 4 had this to say: *The phenomenon of brain drain has reached extreme proportions in most high schools especially in the science subjects*". Formal and informal discussions held with the school heads and teachers seemed to also indicate that organisations representing the teachers had a considerable influence on the level of commitment to work (see appendix L). Evidence that pay, conditions of work, status, and other externally initiated factors influence the motivation, morale and job satisfaction of teachers were however based on assumptions and the complete picture is more complex than commonsense reasoning. However, this study found school-specific and externally initiated factors to be more influential on levels of teacher motivation, morale and job satisfaction. One of the important findings of the study is that the degree of motivation, morale and job satisfaction among teachers is predominantly contextually determined. This means that it is within the context in which teachers work that their contribution towards the process of creating a COTL is determined. As stipulated in the Director's Circular Minute No. 41 of 2006, the socio-economic and political situation in Zimbabwe demands that schools create an environment of care and support for students and one that ensures students are developed holistically for future sustainability. The availability of resources discussed

in paragraph 5.4.4 emerged as an important factor impacting on the school head's instructional leadership.

Since morale, job satisfaction and motivation are influenced at school level, it is at this level that they can best be enhanced. In paragraph 2.4, it was stated that school leaders have an obligation to transform the school culture to improve instructional practices. Morale is a generalised and relatively enduring state of mind and can also be viewed as the feeling a worker has about his or her job. In addition, morale can be seen as a sense of trust, confidence, enthusiasm and friendliness, among teachers. Good morale is often associated with hopeful attitudes, an optimistic attitude towards colleagues and enthusiasm for one's work. Conversely, poor morale is associated with cynicism, despair, and a lack of enthusiasm. When teacher morale is low, there is a sense of powerlessness that has a negative effect impact on students. Based on documentary evidence (see appendix L), and also on both the formal and informal interviews held with the various participants, there seems to be sufficient evidence to claim that teachers' level of motivation is low at the present moment (see paragraph 1.2).

Morale in a school setting refers to the attitude that teachers in a school reflect as they discharge their instructional tasks. Although the needs of teachers were found to be varied, it was revealed that school heads leave no stone unturned in striving to redress the negative effects of low morale on teachers' attitudes towards their work.

In response to the teachers' negative attitudes towards their work due to the low morale, job dissatisfaction and poor motivation, it emerged from the interviews and document analysis conducted, that high school heads were sometimes compelled to resort to the use of the following coercive tools of motivation:

- Giving warnings about inappropriate behaviour such as absenteeism or negligence of duty.

- Using verbal and written reprimands when the need arises in accordance with the Director's Circular Minute No. 35 of 2008.
- Making use of reprimands, counselling and corrective action as stipulated in the Director's Circular Minute P.35 of 1993.
- Using the check-in-check-out system contained in the Director's Circular Minute No. 35 of 2008 to ensure that teachers come to work.

The above coercive tools of motivation are consistent with McGregor's Theory X discussed in paragraph 3.5.2.2. The above were found to be more applicable at schools 2 and 3 which offered minimum incentives to teachers (refer to paragraph 5.4.5). However, in those instances when the above coercive tools of motivation are resorted to, very insignificant changes resulted because of the bureaucratic structure of the country's education system. Decisions to charge a teacher for any form of misconduct take a considerable amount of time before any results are seen.

From the above it is clear that the motivation of the followers will impact on the instructional leader's provision of short term leadership, which confirms that it would be important to include teacher morale, job satisfaction and motivation in a model of the school head's instructional leadership in order to create a COTL.

#### **5.4.2.2.2 Learners' attitudes and motivation towards learning**

Learners are the objects of curriculum implementation, for this reason, it was necessary for the researcher to determine the nature of the attitudes and motivation of school heads, HODs and teachers towards the learning of students during the interviews. All the participants expressed concern about their students' negative attitudes towards education. In this vein, one of the teachers in the focus group interviews commented:

I don't seem to see any hunger for success in our students. They come to school late and dodge lessons. Students seem to view coming to school as part of growing, socialisation or a mere routine.

A similar view was echoed by a participant high school head who made the following comment:

The students are just like football players who play according to their coach. If the teachers are spirited, they also become more serious with their school work and vice-versa.

Reasons stated by the participants for students' negative attitudes and lack of motivation towards teaching and learning included the following:

- The high level of unemployment in the country, together with the fact that their friends, brothers and sisters who had completed their graduate studies successfully were jobless and roaming the streets, had dampened the students' desire to succeed in their education.
- The prolonged industrial action by teachers also affected the students' interest in education (see paragraph 1.2).
- Lack of parental guidance in the case of some students, because they were reported to be staying alone as their parents were either out of the country or had died of the AIDS pandemic. The head at school 4 confirmed that about one fifth of the students in her school were orphans.

Given that the curriculum broadly seeks to assist students to construct knowledge and experience in a manner that they can control, the negative and indifferent attitudes of students reported by the participants had therefore become a potential obstacle to the process of creating a COTL in the high schools included in the study. Students' engagement and interaction with the teaching and learning materials could not be achieved if the students were uncooperative and disinterested in the teaching and learning process. In this regard, the researcher found it necessary to ask the high school heads, HODs, and teachers what they were doing to improve the level

of student motivation regarding education. The following emerged from the discussions:

- Guidance and counselling was provided by class teachers, deputy school heads and the school heads and this was reflected on the timetable displayed in the staffrooms, HODs' offices and in the school head's office.
- Former students who had been successful in their careers were invited to come and address the students according to information obtained by the researcher from the bulletins, minutes and school diaries.
- Book rewards were used to motivate students on prize-giving days.
- Career guidance was provided to students by invited guests from local colleges/universities and various organisations.
- Parents were invited to attend Open and Prize-giving Days organised by the school so that they could know how their children were progressing in school work, and the researcher attended one at School 3.

It emerged during the interviews with all the participants that the negative attitudes of students were also caused by the government's policy, which prohibited teachers from administering corporal punishment to students who were not committed to their schoolwork or misbehaved. In this regard, a teacher included in the focus group interviews had this to say:

There is really nothing we teachers can do if a student does not do his or her work because the Ministry does not allow us to institute corporal punishment. Counselling and giving them manual work do not seem to be effective.

Parents who participated in this study also expressed their displeasure at the government's policy, which prohibited teachers from administering corporal punishment to their children when they misbehaved or failed to do the work assigned to them by their teachers. One parent contended that:



This policy where teachers are not allowed to beat children who don't do schoolwork or misbehave is dysfunctional. During our school days, our teachers used to beat us and this made us to be more serious. We want this policy to be revised for the good of our children.

From the investigation into the motivational levels of students it became evident that the school head as instructional leader has a lot to contend with.

#### **5.4.2.2.3 The motivation of parents regarding the education of their children**

It was pointed out in the literature study (paragraph 3.5.2.2) that the motivation of followers, including the parents, will have a significant effect on the instructional leadership role of the school head in creating a COTL.

Findings of this study have revealed conflicting views. The high school heads, HODs, and teachers expressed the viewpoint that there was a lot to be desired regarding parental attitudes, but the parents held the opposite viewpoint. When asked about the general attitudes of parents regarding the education of their children, one member of the SDC made this comment:

The fact that they send their children to school shows that their attitude is positive. Parents do want their children to be educated and that is why they make sacrifices to pay school fees and levies.

The researcher had the opportunity to attend a consultation day at school 3 where parents and guardians came to discuss their children's progress. During the discussions, most parents showed great interest in their children's progress and expressed their complete solidarity with the teachers in dealing with all forms of indiscipline. One parent had this to say:

Never hesitate to deal with her in the best way you think is helpful. We want her to get a very good education. Report to us whenever she misbehaves or does not do her schoolwork and we will come to assist you.

Another positive aspect of the parents' attitude towards education commended by the head at school 2 was that they reported students whom they saw loitering outside the school during school hours. In some cases the researcher observed that parents visited the school to have discussions with teachers or just to check on the attendance of their children. Parental involvement in the education of their children is critical in the activities of the high school head as the instructional leader. According to the high school heads, HODs, and the teachers interviewed, such an attitude is functional and helps with maintaining student discipline. Findings of this study gathered through interviews with all participants and as documented in the minutes of their respective meetings revealed that parental involvement in the teaching and learning process promotes better performance. Parental involvement is stipulated in the Director's Circular Minute No. 3 of 2006. The advantage of parental involvement in the education of their children was also noted during the researchers' observation of the infrastructure and equipment provided at the respective high schools. Parents and teachers working together in solidarity convey high expectations to students that influence achievement (refer to paragraphs 2.9.2.4 & 3.5.1.6).

It has emerged from the findings from the empirical investigation that the attitude of followers (parents, teachers) towards the education of students will impact on the success of instructional leadership.

#### **5.4.2.2.4 Knowledge and experience of teachers**

Teachers' knowledge and experience are critical in the process of creating a COTL (paragraph 3.5.2.3). In this regard, the researcher had to ask the high school heads, HODs and the teachers themselves, what they felt about the knowledge and experience of the teachers. Commenting on the level of teachers' knowledge in their subject areas, all the high school heads expressed general satisfaction in this regard. The head of school 3 had this to say:

Ya-a! We have teachers who are very knowledgeable in their subject areas. Most of them have degrees and a few hold masters' degrees. However, what most of the teachers lack is experience since the majority of them are straight from colleges and universities.

As evidence of the high level of knowledge among most of his teachers, the head of school 2 confirmed that teachers in practical subjects such as metalwork and woodwork assisted the school in repairing school furniture. The researcher had the opportunity to see some of the chairs and desks that had been well repaired during one of his visits after an invitation by the members of the SDC. While the consensus view regarding the teachers' level of knowledge was that it was greatly applauded, however, concern was expressed by the high school heads included in the study about the teachers' commitment and capacity to give their best.

In terms of teachers' experience, findings of the study revealed that the high schools were staffed with inexperienced teachers, some of whom had come straight from colleges and universities. However, this is not reflected in the focus group participants who were mostly experienced teachers (see Tables 5.3 - 5.5). The head of school 3 pointed out that the school had lost quite a number of very experienced teachers due to the problem of the brain drain with which the education system had to contend. In her opinion, the lack of experience among teachers, affected the pass rate in the Ordinary and Advanced level results because she contended that the teachers were not public examiners, hence they lacked the expertise and experience needed to coach students to tackle examination questions. Information about the qualifications and experience levels of HODs and teachers taking part in the focus group interviews was collected by using appendices E, F, & G and the results are shown in Tables 5.3 to 5.6. When asked what she was doing as an instructional leader, the school head explained that she encouraged the teachers to be public examiners and organised staff development programmes to develop the teachers' skills in terms of preparing students for external examinations.

The findings derived from both the literature study (see paragraph 3.5.2.3) and the empirical investigation, do indicate that the knowledge and experience of teachers are most important factors that contribute significantly to the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL.

#### **5.4.2.2.5 Level of responsibility of teachers and parents**

The level of responsibility of the teachers and parents will have a significant effect on the instructional leadership role of the school head in creating a COTL (see paragraph 3.5.2.1). Statements made by the interviewees on the level of the teachers' responsibility were rather conflicting. Teachers and the HODs interviewed, expressed a positive feeling about their level of responsibility. One of the teachers had this to say in support of this view:

Teachers at our school are ready to perform their duties of teaching but because they are operating in an abnormal situation, it appears as if we aren't. Right now, we have agreed to come and have vacation lessons with our exam classes.

While teachers and HODs claimed to be responsible and ready to carry out their teaching tasks, evidence gathered from the researchers' observations and the document analysis differed. If information contained in the minutes of staff meetings held at the schools is correct, then one can conclude that the level of responsibility on the part of teachers was quite low. An analysis of the minutes revealed that school heads generally complained about teachers who did not mark the attendance registers and also arrived late for their lessons. The researcher also learnt that, at each school, teachers have to check in and check out every day to ensure that they come to work. The head of school 3 intimated that senior teachers seemed to be more responsible than the young teachers who had just joined the profession. When asked why senior teachers tended to show a higher level of responsibility the school head's response was: *"Most of the senior teachers have got their own children either*

*at this school or at another school and this compels them to have a moral obligation.”*

The level of responsibility on the part of parents regarding the process of creating a COTL also appeared to be a controversial issue. Whereas the parents interviewed claimed to be cooperative and ready to play their part, the school heads, HODs and teachers interviewed felt otherwise. The head of school 3 asserted: *“Due to the harsh economic environment, parents seem to have forgotten their important role of supporting the school in promoting quality education by not paying school fees and levies in time.”* The poor attendance of meetings convened at school was cited by the school heads interviewed as one of the indicators of a lack of commitment to their (the parents’) responsibility. The teachers interviewed felt parents could do much more in terms of ensuring that disciplinary problems experienced at school could be dealt with jointly by the two parties. One HOD expressed the following view: *“Sometimes parents let us down by not coming to school when we have problems with their children.”* The scenario described above can be attributed to what was pointed out by the head of School 4, namely that the socio-political and economic situation in the country had crippled all sectors to such an extent that it was impossible for everyone concerned to fulfil their responsibilities. Findings of the study have also revealed that parents tend to be too busy fulfilling their basic needs to participate in school activities. Given the above contextual and cultural factors, it can be concluded that high school heads are unlikely to develop the school curriculum, encourage staff development or promote quality instruction in such circumstances.

Against this background, it is clear that the instructional leadership of the school head in creating a COTL was affected adversely by a low level of responsibility on the part of the various members of the school community. Thus, a model for the instructional leadership role of the school head should include the level of responsibility of teachers and parents as an important factor with an impact on the instructional leadership task of the school head.

### **5.4.2.3 Characteristics of the situation**

This paragraph discusses the following aspects of the findings: the manner in which the high school head as the instructional leader built and promoted a positive school climate and culture; the level of teamwork among teachers, the nature of relationships among the various constituents of the respective high schools included in the study, and the structuring of the instructional programme. Other aspects added to the model given by Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2009) include the availability of human and material resources and the use of incentives. It emanated from the empirical research that these aspects need to be added to construct a comprehensive model of instructional leadership for the Zimbabwean context.

#### **5.4.2.3.1 School climate and a culture of teaching and learning**

In paragraphs 2.4 and 3.5.3.1 allusion was made to the fact that educational leaders could not afford to underplay the impact of the school climate and culture to the performance of the school. All the high school heads included in the study reported that understanding and enhancing both the school climate and culture was very important in terms of their instructional leadership function. In addition, both the climate and culture were regarded as vital to a school's quality of life and its ability to enhance positive instructional outcomes.

According to the findings derived from document analysis and the researcher's observations, high school heads built and enhanced a positive school climate and culture by:

- Providing a sense of direction (see paragraph 5.4.1.1).
- Encouraging creativity in the classroom.
- Promoting teamwork among teachers (see paragraph 5.4.2.3.2).
- Collective fact-finding and problem solving through participative leadership (see paragraph 3.2.2).
- Removing the fear of experimenting among teachers and rewarding innovation.

- Sharing responsibility in supervising teachers with the deputy head and HODs.
- Ensuring consistency and credibility in teaching and assessment of students' work.

The HODs and teachers who participated in the focus group interviews agreed that the COTL in their respective schools had deteriorated to unprecedented levels due to the socio-political and economic crisis in the country. In this regard, one of the teachers declared: *"At the moment, the teaching aspect is not done as it should be because of the demotivation of teachers and the attitudes of our students."* To effectively provide appropriate instructional leadership the Director's Circular Minute No. 15 of 2006 stipulates that the school head should remain in direct control of teachers and in close contact with the students. Findings gathered from an analysis of the minutes of staff meetings held at schools 2, 3, 4 and 5 and interviews held with high school heads, HODs and teachers all confirmed that the Director's Circular Minute No.35 of 2008 on abscondments was applied by high school heads in their instructional functions discussed in paragraph 3.3.1. However, high school heads, HODs and teachers interviewed indicated the need for them to strike a balance between instructional leadership and administrative duties.

The high school heads interviewed indicated that they tried to reach out and welcome parents, community members, and other stakeholders into the school as much as possible for the sake of creating a COTL. The high school heads commented that they had an open door policy in terms of which all visitors to the school were attended to even if they had no appointments. At all five schools, the researcher observed this state of affairs and also came across a statement pertaining to this matter on notice boards in the staff room and in the school's client charter. One of the high school heads emphasised the existence of an open door policy in the school as follows: *"We always invite parents to come into the school so that we can share ideas and problems facing the school and thus map the way forward."* However, the same school head admitted that the offer had not yielded positive results yet because most of the learners' parents were either out of the

country or were too financially disadvantaged to visit the school. This has apparently had a rather profound effect on the instructional leadership role in creating a COTL. Generally, the chairpersons of the SDCs of schools 2 and 4 confirmed that it was difficult for most parents to find the time to visit the school due to other commitments. To establish an effective COTL in the school, the school heads interviewed stated that they catered for individual differences in the school community. The qualifications and experience of teachers are considered when allocating classes and subjects to them. Tables 5.3 to 5.6 show that HODs and teachers are assigned to teach subjects in which they had specialised. Evidence gathered through the researcher's observations revealed that the instructional leadership role of the school head in creating a COTL is characterised by respect for learners, fair treatment of teachers, teacher autonomy, social support and giving teachers challenging tasks.

However, in spite of all these efforts by school heads to promote a healthy COTL, it emerged that the prevailing socio-political and economic situation tended to be counterproductive. Furthermore, there was a critical shortage of basic instructional resources (see paragraph 5.4.4) and the motivation of both teachers and learners was at its lowest ebb (see paragraphs 5.4.2.2.1 & 5.4.2.2.2). The breakdown in the COTL in most high schools may be attributed to the disruptions of classes, malfunctioning of instructional leadership because of the difficult circumstances, the collapse of the high school head's authority and indiscipline on the part of students. Other observable characteristics of a poor COTL noted during the field study included the poor state of buildings, as well as the general feelings of hopelessness and low morale on the part of all constituents in the school system. All the participants interviewed confirmed that the school climate and culture are pivotal in the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL.

#### **5.4.2.3.2 Teamwork**



In paragraph 3.5.3.4, it was shown that making schools successful in creating a COTL takes more than individual efforts. Currently, the concept of 'teamwork' is receiving increasing attention in high schools. Teamwork was reported to be generally good, especially at departmental level. According to the school heads and HODs interviewed, teamwork meant working towards the good of the whole department or school with individual preferences made subservient to the larger cause. In terms of teamwork, each member of the school personnel, including the deputy school head, the senior master/teacher, HODs and teachers contributed a clearly defined part of the overall effort aimed at creating a COTL. During interviews with high school heads, HODs and teachers the following were cited as evidence of teamwork in the various departments:

- Members work together in setting and marking examinations that are administered at school level.
- Members work together to break the official syllabus down into a school-based syllabus.
- Members within the same department engage in team-teaching.
- When a teacher is absent, other members in the same department take over the lessons.

The above were confirmed by an analysis of the minutes of staff meetings held at schools 2, 3 and 4. Observations made by the researcher during his visits to the high schools revealed the commitment of school heads to promote teamwork. However, it was also reported by all the high school heads interviewed that the high teacher mobility had a marked influence on the effectiveness of teamwork. In addition, it was reported that new teachers tended to be too individualistic. One senior teacher from school 5 contended:

Whilst we don't seem to work against each other, we don't seem to work together. New teachers often bring into the school system a culture that is at variance with the spirit of teamwork prevalent in the school.

If the above statement is anything to go by, then one can conclude that teamwork is not yet as effective as it can and should be in some of the schools. The aspects of individualism mentioned in paragraph 2.5.1 were reported to be a common phenomenon in some departments. On the other hand, one of the teachers interviewed pointed out that both the harsh economic situation in the country and the industrial action (though dysfunctional) had in fact, ironically enough, strengthened teamwork among teachers. In this regard, one teacher had this to say: *“In our department we work as a team. If a member of the department is late for lessons or absent, another teacher takes over the lessons so that this is not discovered by the school head.”* Importantly, relationships had also been strengthened as a result of this approach. Observations made by the researcher at each of the five high schools included in the study indicated that in those schools where teamwork was focused on improving teaching and learning, high school heads got substantial assistance from their HODs and their respective departments in their instructional leadership role and where this was not the case the COTL suffered. Informal discussions held by the researcher with teachers at schools 1, 2 and 5 revealed that this assistance was more pronounced than at schools 3 and 4.

Teamwork among members of the school community was reported as a vital ingredient of the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL.

#### **5.4.2.3.3 Relationships**

Effective relationships are at the core of a positive school culture and are thus fundamental to the work of instructional leaders (see paragraphs 2.9.2.2 & 3.5.3.2). Meaningful relationships bind teachers to each other, and school leadership, students, parents, and community members together. When the various participants were asked about the nature of the relationships among the members of the school community, many expressed differing points of views. The five high school heads interviewed in the study confirmed that meaningful relationships are essential for

success in creating a COTL. To create a COTL, the high school heads interviewed in the study pointed out that they recognised the need to build personal capacity, interpersonal capacity, as well as organisational capacity. The relationships among the various members of the school community were said to hinge around the notion that all students can learn and that teachers are responsible for the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

The high school heads who were interviewed, reported that they had developed interpersonal capacity within their schools by focusing on relationships. One of the heads stated that he tried his best to develop an understanding of how teachers and students interacted in everyday situations. Another high school head also emphasised the importance of sharing information between teachers, students, and parents and improving cooperation within the school community in order to create a COTL. The relationships among the various members of the school community are discussed below.

**(a) Relationships between the school leadership and teachers**

Relationships between teachers and their school heads and among teachers themselves, were reported to be cordial as is evident in the following remark by the head of school 5:

I am only a senior among equals. As a humanist, I believe that followers know and so I listen to everybody's problems.

In the same vein, a teacher from school 1 included in the focus group interviews, shared a similar view:

Relationships are good. We are involved in decision-making on matters that concern us as teachers. In addition, the economic hardships in our country seem to bind us together as we try to find the means of survival. Our school head persuades parents to give us some more incentives like what is done in other schools.

Findings emanating from the researcher's observations revealed that the nature of the teacher-school leader relationships stated above, has important consequences for teacher emotions and to a large extent, helps the process of creating a positive COLT. Understanding teacher emotions seems to be the key to understanding why teachers act as they do, and importantly too, understanding how to assist teachers with remaining positive is considered important. The teachers interviewed during the focus group interviews, confirmed that they enjoyed their school heads' honesty and constructive, non-threatening manner. They also expressed the view that school heads' ability to consider both personal and professional needs is crucial in the process of creating a COTL. The social relations within the high schools especially in terms of professional exchanges between teachers on curriculum and instruction are important for academic excellence. A teacher from school 3 explained that teachers at his school were involved in the purchasing of school equipment and stationery. The willingness of high school heads to engage in face-to-face collaborative decision-making as well as establishing and maintaining cordial relationships with the teachers was greatly appreciated by those teachers who participated in the focus group interviews. Both the HODs and teachers also indicated that they valued the willingness of their school heads to support them in confrontations with students and parents. HODs and teachers interviewed in the focus groups confirmed that they regularly hold meetings with their respective school heads to discuss personal and professional matters. This was also observed by the researcher during his visits to schools 3 and 5. It is critical that instructional leaders accommodate such a collaborative process to achieve a sound COTL.

#### **(b) Relationships between teachers and learners**

Relationships between teachers and the learners were reported to be generally good depending on the different teachers. This was also confirmed through observations. However, it was also reported that relationships between teachers and students had been affected by the way society perceived teachers. One of the HODs explained:

The status of the teacher has been relegated to that of a miserable person. Teaching is no longer viewed as a noble profession.

In the same vein, one of the school heads expressed his disillusionment about the way society views teachers when he remarked: “*Teaching is a thankless job. Those whom the gods hate they turn them into teachers*”. Furthermore, the teachers interviewed in the focus groups indicated that the attitudes of students towards schoolwork tended to affect teacher–learner relationships negatively. The head of school 4 asserted: “*The students have become used to lazing around and judging from the feedback of the dedicated teachers, students complain about being given work because they do not value education.*” As stated in paragraph 5.4.2.2.2, learners had developed a negative attitude towards learning. The importance of quality relationships between teachers and learners was underlined in paragraph 2.9.2.2. High school heads as instructional leaders should therefore do much more to improve the relationship between teachers and students so as to create a sound COTL in their schools.

### **(c) Relationships between school leadership and parents**

One of the key aspects needed for developing the social curriculum in a school is building positive and mutually supportive partnerships with the parents and the members of the community. In paragraph 3.5.3.2, it was pointed out that close relationships between parents and the school tended to increase the quality of work in the classroom.

The high school heads and the parents interviewed all confirmed that the relationships between school leadership and the parents were cordial. Both parties were reported to be guided by the same goal of achieving the best results in public examinations. The Chairperson of the SDC at school 4 had this to say:

We relate very well with our school head because she is open to us and accepts our suggestions. Our rights as parents, are not in conflict with her rights as the school head and this makes us work towards the same goal.

According to the high school heads and parents interviewed, the good relationships between the school leadership and the parents could be seen in the support of the community in terms of protecting the school against vandalism and theft. The researcher also observed this during his visits to the schools. Another characteristic of the cordial relationships reported was that members of the school community were allowed to use school facilities such as the hall, for their social functions and the school grounds for sporting activities.

However, it transpired that the cordial relationships between the school leadership and the parents were being challenged by the parents' delays in paying their school fees and levies. The high school heads reported that in certain instances, they were forced to take action against parents for the non-payment of fees and levies by involving debt collectors. Similar views were shared by the members of the SDC who were interviewed during the study. One parent had this to say:

Although we know that parents are finding it difficult to raise the needed school fees and levies, there is no choice because the school needs money to function so that our children receive quality education. The use of debt collectors is one of the means, we think can enable the school to get the money.

The findings of the research study have confirmed that relationships between the school head as the instructional leader and the parents/guardians of the learners play an important part in the instructional leadership role in creating a COTL.

#### **(d) Relationships between teachers and parents**

Concerning the relationships between the teachers and the parents, it was reported by the high school heads, HODs, teachers and parents interviewed that they had

deteriorated due to the introduction of incentives, which were to be paid by parents to teachers. In his document analysis, the researcher came across a letter from a teachers' union, which also expressed concern about the deteriorating relationships between these parties. The introduction of the letter reads as follows:

We note with great concern the deteriorating relations between teachers and communities. On the one hand, teachers are not amused by the lack of respect and public ridicule they suffer from parents and students and the interference of communities in professional matters. On the other hand, parents strongly feel teachers are holding them at ransom through incentive schemes. In the worst of cases, such conflicts have resulted in serious altercation. However, it is common cause that parents need teachers and teachers need parents.

In the light of the above scenario, the teachers' union had planned to hold meetings with the parties concerned throughout the country to resolve the matter. According to a facsimile sent to all schools by the Zimbabwe Teachers' Association (ZIMTA), the Minister of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture gave a directive to schools and SDCs to allow 20% of the levies collected to be used to pay teachers as incentives (see appendix J) and this is stipulated in a draft of the Director's Circular Minute Number 30 of 2008. With regard to the payment of incentives, parents interviewed in the focus groups indicated that they were not happy about it in spite of its noble intention to help retain qualified teachers. A parent in the focus group held at school 5 contended: *"It is not our responsibility to pay teachers, but the government should do that. Moreover, we can't afford to give them the incentives because we are also suffering. Our duty is to develop the infrastructure in the school."*

The hostility between the parents and the teachers seems to be a cause for concern for both parties. On the one hand, parents felt it affected their children's education while, teachers on the other hand, were worried about their loss of credibility in society. In the researcher's opinion, this is likely to continue as long as parents have to pay incentives to the teachers.

In this study, both the literature review (see paragraphs 2.9.2.2 & 3.5.3.2) and the empirical investigation carried out, confirm that relationships between the various members of the school community are critical in the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL.

#### **5.4.2.3.4 The school head's authority as the instructional leader**

Teaching should result in learning and if students are not learning, teachers are not teaching. In this regard, school heads as instructional leaders, have to exercise authority in a number of ways. According to the school heads, HODs and teachers interviewed, high school heads exercised their legitimate and personal power when they made decisions, promulgated rules and regulations, interpreted policies, and issued directives. A documentary analysis of circulars and notices in the staff room undertaken by the researcher at each of the five schools included in the study supported the above statement. While the purpose of exercising authority is to elicit the desired response from teachers, the findings of this study have revealed that the authority of the high school head as an instructional leader was being tested more than ever before. Commenting on the stamping of her authority on the teachers so that effective teaching and learning could take place, one of the teachers had this to say:

We are fellow sufferers and as such, this binds us together. She cannot push us to give out the best under the present situation when teachers' morale is at its lowest. The school head gets the same meagre salary as we get.

Data gathered during the individual interviews with the high school heads from all the five schools included in the study revealed that the undermining of the authority of the high school head as the instructional leader could be ascribed largely to economic factors, which had a negative effect on the teachers' morale, job satisfaction, and motivation (see paragraph 5.4.2.2.1). Accordingly, the high school heads admitted that it was quite difficult to exert their authority in terms of influencing teachers to become committed to creating an environment conducive to a COTL.



The head of school 5 reported that he took the fact into consideration that teachers were confronted with economic hardships when dealing with them. Examples of concessions made by the school heads observed by the researcher included those made in connection with teachers arriving late at work, teachers failing to provide feedback to students in time, just to name a few. In the researcher's opinion, such compromises tend to hamper the process of creating a COTL. It emerged in this study that, while the ideal attitude regarding the school head's authority would be the acceptance of the right to exercise it and willingness of teachers to cooperate, the researcher found that that was not always achieved. Incidents were observed by the researcher where teachers arrived late at school dressed in casual clothes, and left early. Transport problems and financial constraints were mentioned by both school heads and teachers as reasons for the above aberrant behaviour.

Commenting on the school head's authority in terms of influencing teachers and parents to work towards a positive school COTL, the head of school 4 had this to say: *"When funds are limited, pressure increases and tempers flare and thus it becomes difficult to stick to policies and a code of ethics."* The same head added that school heads are currently playing on the teachers' emotions; consequently, teachers seemed to be suspicious whenever they were persuaded to perform certain tasks: *"Teachers have been cheated for such a long time that they suspect something sinister when they are asked to perform their tasks."* This scenario affirms that important decisions and difficult choices are made in emotional circumstances by school heads in order to forge ahead with their instructional leadership role in creating a COTL. It also emerged in the study that the authority of the instructional leader is compromised by bureaucracy within the Ministry of Education where cases of misconduct or gross incompetence by teachers take a very long time to be dealt with and appropriate action is taken against the culprits. Apparently, teachers seem to take advantage of this, but to the detriment of teaching and learning in schools.

The formal authority and status of the high school head render them responsible for certain kinds of management functions that have an impact on instructional

leadership. In this regard, the quality of teaching and learning is compromised, as is the instructional leadership of the school head, when the authority of the instructional leader is compromised. Thus this important factor needs to be incorporated into an authentic model of instructional leadership.

### **5.4.3 Structuring of the instructional programme**

As discussed in paragraph 3.3, providing instructional leadership is vital in the process of creating a COTL. Therefore, the provision of instructional support cannot be overemphasised. In paragraphs 1.9.2 and 2.2, it was also noted that the responsibility and accountability for ensuring effective teaching and learning, rests on the shoulders of the instructional leader who, in the Zimbabwean context, is the school head.

Each of the five high schools involved in the study had a structure and system that helps them to achieve quality education (see paragraph 1.9.7). The structuring of the instructional programme refers to the extent to which tasks are structured, described and defined. From the observations made by the researcher, all the high schools included in the study had an organisational chart displayed in the school head's office, the staffroom and departmental offices to illustrate a configuration of positions, duties and lines of authority. The structures also consist of the various ways in which individual staff members and teams function within the school system. In structuring the instructional programme high school heads concurred with HODs and teachers that consideration is given to the way the structures are arranged and this includes lines of responsibility, authority and accountability, and information flow or communication within and between the various departments or structures. When structuring the instructional programme high school heads interviewed stated that they pay attention to the rules and regulations that determine how the structures relate to one another. To be effective instructional leaders, high school heads try to ensure that tasks are structured unambiguously, logically and clearly so that HODs and teachers are able to function effectively and efficiently. High school heads as

instructional leaders structure the instructional programme by ensuring that there is a timetable so that there is a smooth flow of teaching and learning. The timetable is drawn up according to the parameters set by the various departments.

It surfaced from the interviews, observations and document analysis in this study that high school heads structured the instructional programme by:

- Developing personal instructional skills through discussions held after lesson observations, book inspection and other forms of teacher evaluation.
- Providing teachers with time to meet and talk about instructional issues.
- Shaping the instructional climate and organisation.
- Ensuring an easy and effective communication both by voice (see paragraph 2.9.2.5) and by physical proximity of teachers in their respective departments.
- Providing effective professional development (see paragraphs 3.4.3 and 5.4.1.3).
- Making student achievement an important motivator.
- Keeping teachers at the centre of instructional improvements by motivating teachers and providing resources so that the COTL can be enhanced (see paragraph 5.4.2.2.1).
- Providing opportunities for informal one-to-one and also group dialogue.
- Promoting the achievement of all the students by mobilising the support of all the stakeholders.
- Restructuring the school to improve the COTL (see paragraph 2.9.2).

From the above it emanated that structuring the instructional programme provides a framework within which individual teachers, groups and teams can operate. It also enables high school heads, HODs and teachers to operate in a climate of agreed values and to work for an agreed purpose. Commenting on the instructional leadership role in structuring the instructional programme the heads at schools 3 and 4 concurred that it was tough and challenging.

The high school heads interviewed indicated that they did the following to ensure the effective structuring of the instructional programme:

- They maintained dialogue with the stakeholders on how instruction and student achievement could be improved.
- They empowered teachers with the requisite skills to handle routine issues and to minimise the amount of time spent overseeing teachers. This was achieved by establishing well defined procedures with clear expectations and by fostering a mutually respectful school climate (see paragraphs 3.4.4 & 5.4.2.3.1).
- They prioritised instructional leadership and ensured that learning time was utilised effectively. Teachers especially at schools 2, 4 and 5 were not allowed to attend to visitors and to their personal issues during lessons.

The researcher asked HODs and teachers how they felt about their school head's instructional support. One senior teacher reacted as follows:

In my opinion, the head has not measured up to my expectations with regard to his role of providing instructional support to teachers. I think, as an instructional leader, he needs to keep abreast with what is taking place in the classrooms rather than concentrating on the physical outlook of the school.

Similar sentiments were expressed by one of the HODs included in the focus group interview when she commented as follows:

Besides motivating us to work hard, there is very little instructional support the school head can give under the current economic hardships. The head cannot use his own money to buy the material and equipment we need in our teaching.

One important finding emerging from this qualitative study was that the provision of instructional leadership by high school heads was affected adversely by the acute

shortage of support staff in their respective schools (see table 5.1). Due to this shortage, most heads interviewed in the study, pointed out that occasionally, they were so overloaded with administrative work that they only paid lip service to this important instructional role. In this regard, the head of school 4 informed the researcher:

The government has frozen many posts for nonteaching staff and still with such a skeleton support staff, I'm also expected to spearhead the process of creating a COTL on one hand and at the same time, I have to balance the books of accounts, I am both a school bursar and an instructional leader.

The researcher found evidence from the focus group interviews with parents that the SDCs at schools 3 and 4 temporarily employ their own bursar to assist with the collection of school fees and levies and to help the school head to balance the books of accounts. This move has reduced the administrative burden on the heads of these respective schools. It seems important to take into consideration in the structuring of the instructional programme that the school head as instructional leader be awarded sufficient time to be able to fulfil this important function adequately. Otherwise mere lip service will be paid to the instructional leadership task as other matters consume all the available time.

The ability of high school heads as instructional leaders to structure teaching and learning appeared to be influenced by their ability to master the changes occurring within the entire education system and to integrate them meaningfully into a learning programme.

#### **5.4.4 Availability of human and material resources**

In paragraph, 2.9.2.6 it was pointed out the school's physical environment has an impact on the process of creating a COTL. Therefore, the instructional leadership role of the school head in creating a COTL in high schools can only be effective if there are adequate resources and relevant technology. However, as is common in

most developing countries such as Zimbabwe, the basic resources essential for teaching and learning are far from adequate (refer to Table 5.1). The term “resources” as used in this study, refers to capital, machines, equipment, materials, patents and copyright, structural/cultural assets, and human resources, to name a few.

The financial assets needed to create a COTL conducive to teaching and learning include the per capita grant, the financial holdings of the school in terms of cash reserves, the actual and available debt and equity used by the schools. At the time when this research was conducted, the central government was not providing the per capita grant to high schools to purchase textbooks, equipment and teaching material such as pens, charts and maps. The physical assets essential for teaching and learning that were reported by all the research participants to be lacking in high schools included classrooms, furniture, textbooks and equipment. Commenting on the critical shortage of classrooms and furniture, one participant high school head remarked:

The school is unfriendly to children, but the children are their own worst enemies because they vandalised most of the furniture when teachers were engaged in a prolonged industrial action.

One of the science teachers included in the focus group interviews asserted the following concerning the acute shortage of equipment:

Due to lack of equipment the teaching of science is not different from the arts subjects such as Shona and English because we just theorise. Some of our students do not know the basic apparatus such as a beaker.

Concerns about the critical shortage of resources were also expressed by teachers teaching practical subjects such as Food and Nutrition (F&N), Woodwork, Metalwork, Fashion and Fabrics (F&F), and Agriculture. All the participants interviewed during the empirical study concurred that the process of creating a COTL is adversely affected by a lack of the above resources; therefore serious

consideration should be given to incorporate this aspect into a model of instructional leadership.

It is important to point out that the provision of educational resources for an effective COTL is not possible without the cooperation and joint action of the central government, the local authorities and the parents. For this reason, the government of Zimbabwe has established the School Development Committee (SDC) whose main responsibilities include:

- Mobilising resources to facilitate the teaching and learning process.
- Organising parents to support the school's programmes such as sports and fund-raising.
- Assisting the school in addressing all forms of student indiscipline.
- Improving the attitudes of community members towards education in general and the teachers, specifically.

Members of the SDCs interviewed during the focus group discussions, stated that they were doing much to promote a COTL in their respective schools. The chairperson of the SDC at school 5 stressed that:

We are really doing much towards improving teaching and learning. We have repaired the furniture (chairs and desks), classroom floors and doors, chalkboards, and water taps. We have also bought stationery for the administration office and some textbooks for the students.

At school 4, the SDC mentioned that it had managed to raise funds for the school's under 16 soccer team for it to participate in the national tournament. The SDC at school 3 added that it had also contributed some funds to their under 16 soccer players who went to Norway as well as to the school's chess club, which competed at national level.

The lack of technology in the high schools was another big challenge that emerged from the interviews with the various participants in the study. As reflected in table 5.1, all five high schools included in the study had computers. However, the observations of the researcher revealed that the computers remained unused and were not utilised to enhance teaching and learning because the teachers were computer illiterate. When the researcher investigated why teachers could not be trained to use the computers, financial constraints were cited as the reason why training did not take place. The HODs and teachers that were interviewed, complained about the use of chalk-and-board when technology was just at their doorstep. One of the teachers declared:

We are living in a world of technology. Gone are the days when the teacher was the sole instructor in the learning process. It's high time that our education system develops technologically. We are sick and tired of using chalk for all the teaching because it is hazardous to health.

With millions of workers now using computers daily in their workplaces, the development of computer skills is critical. Computer-assisted instruction offers many opportunities for improving the COTL. Resources and technology were found by the researcher to impact on the feelings and attitudes of the teachers. Importantly, the lack of resources revealed above is frequently a source of frustration for teachers and creates barriers regarding the process of creating a COTL by the school heads.

With regards to human resources, teacher mobility was reported by the high school heads included in the study to be another factor that had a negative effect on the process of developing a COTL. As pointed out by one of the HODs from school 5 during the focus group interviews, the entry of newly qualified teachers into the school system contributed to a change in the COTL. He was of the opinion that the appointment of new teachers from other schools had also affected the degree of teamwork among teachers in the various departments. One of the HODs asserted :



Most of the new teachers who have joined my department are aloof. They are neither interested in sharing knowledge nor willing to contribute towards problem solving.

It also emerged from the interviews conducted with the high school heads that teacher mobility was more pronounced among the female teachers. The explanation given for this was that government policy emphasised the importance of married women to stay with their husbands. In this regard, female teachers outnumbered their male counterparts in the high schools that were included in the study. One of the high school heads postulated that high teacher mobility had a negative impact on commitment because the teachers were uncertain about how long they would stay at their present schools. In addition, data collected during interviews and document analysis revealed that teacher mobility tended to be high during the first years of service. The findings derived from this study have also revealed that mature female teachers tended to stay in the profession longer than younger female and male teachers. It was also reported that the highest teacher mobility occurred among teachers teaching subjects such as mathematics, science, accounting and other commercial subjects that are in demand in the neighbouring countries such as South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. Mentioning an issue related to this mobility, high school heads expressed great concern about the critical shortage of experienced teachers in these subject areas. The school head at school 3 reported:

The high staff turnover, especially in the science and commercial subjects, is affecting the smooth flow of teaching and learning in these areas. It is affecting both planning and students' academic performance.

The HODs and teachers included in the focus group interviews cited teacher involvement in decision-making, the school's geographical location and administrative support as school-related factors contributing to the high staff turnover in the high schools. High school heads, HODs, and teachers at schools 1, 4 and 5 stated that their schools were experiencing high teacher mobility because of transport costs to and from work, since most of the teachers lived in the high-density suburbs, which were relatively far from the school. When asked what the school was

doing to alleviate the problem, the respective high school heads indicated that the SDC was providing transport for the staff, since the government was not paying a transport allowance at that time. However, the HODs and teachers at these schools regarded this as inadequate and unsatisfactory. A teacher from school 5 declared:

As much as I would like to remain at my present school I'm left with no choice but to transfer to a school which is nearer my place of residence because I can't afford the transport costs.

From the evidence gathered through document analysis, formal and informal interviews with the participants, it appeared that there was a relationship between teachers' lack of job satisfaction and their intention to leave the school or the profession. Teachers transferred from one school to another for various reasons. Among the reasons provided by the teachers was the search for better working conditions or greater convenience regarding their working conditions.

The poor delivery of services was reported as one of the challenges negatively affecting the process of creating a COTL that emerged from the individual and focus group interviews held with the participants. This was related to power cuts and the erratic supply of water at the schools, especially schools 2 and 3, which were located in the high density suburbs (see paragraph 5.2.1). The HODs and teachers in the practical subjects were affected the most. One of the teachers in the Home Economics department had this to say:

Sometimes there is no electricity the whole day and this means no practical lesson can be undertaken. Oftentimes electricity is switched off when the students are busy with their practical work and this means the lesson will have to be abandoned. Really, this affects our teaching.

An erratic supply of water at the schools was also reported to have a negative effect on the teaching and learning of subjects such as agriculture. In this regard, an agriculture HOD commented as follows:

The poor supply of water at our school has affected our practical work in a very negative way. The crops in the school garden are wilting because there will be no water during the day. Water sometimes comes at night when the students are at their homes.

It also emerged from the interviews that the power cuts and erratic supplies of water that was also experienced in the residential places of the teachers and students, affected their level of concentration because at times they came to school hungry due to the above two problems. Clearly, the problems affecting the instructional leadership role of the high school head stem from the general environment which cannot be resolved at school level only. The findings emanating from the empirical investigation have revealed that the availability of human and material resources is an important factor in the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL.

#### **5.4.5 The use of incentives**

The literature review in paragraph 3.6 has already alluded to the fact that school leaders in this millennium are confronted by difficult and challenging circumstances while striving to build a nurturing and supportive school culture where teachers can teach and students can learn. It was generally acknowledged by all the high school heads, HODs, teachers and parents included in the study that, while local conditions varied considerably, the socio-economic and political conditions prevailing in the country remained an important factor affecting their schools' potential to improve the COTL directly. In this regard, the use of incentives emerged as an important factor in the instructional leadership of the school head. To keep teachers in the schools, high school heads, HODs, teachers and parents interviewed pointed out that special incentives are offered to teachers and this was documented in the minutes of meetings held by parents and teachers read by the researcher. The Draft Director 's Circular Number 30 of 2008 stipulates that incentives should be awarded in government and non-government schools as a way to retain teachers in schools by augmenting their salaries. Whilst this seems to have paid off in schools 4 and 5,

this concept has been met with mixed feelings at schools 2 and 3 where lack of it impacted negatively on the motivation of teachers. The Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture (MoESAC) has also noted some flaws in the use of incentives. Lack of specificity by the Education Act on the question of incentives and their divisive nature were reported by High school heads, HODs, teachers and parents interviewed to be causing problems which affect instructional leadership.

Workers tend to be motivated by incentives, which are in line with their values. If the incentives do not reflect the workers' values, they become ineffective. While teachers are primarily motivated by intrinsic goals, money matters, especially to teachers whose pay falls short of providing in their personal needs. When hygiene factors such as wages, resources and interpersonal relationships are problematic, they cause dissatisfaction. However, even when they are improved they are not necessarily motivating. What it means therefore, is that the provision of incentives itself is not adequate. In other words, sources of motivation remain intrinsic to the work itself when there are opportunities for self-actualisation.

To engage teachers in the process of improving their performance in teaching students, high school heads, as instructional leaders, confirmed that they created opportunities that encouraged innovation and experimentation in instructional practices. It emerged from the study that a combination of both extrinsic and intrinsic incentives helped coordinate teachers' efforts, provided them with a shared purpose, enhanced their working conditions, and reaffirmed their professional identity.

The salary is one of the hygiene factors, which may sometimes act as a motivator because it can be used to give recognition to outstanding employees and indicate an individual's status in the organisation. Workers are motivated by money and material gains. In this study, salaries were found to have significant effects on teachers' internal states in spite of the fact that teachers are in one of the most altruistic occupations. Low teacher salaries apparently had a particularly significant impact on teachers' attitudes and perceptions (refer to appendices K & L). During

the focus group interviews, one of the teachers declared: *“We will just teach the Minister’s way. The Minister pays peanuts and we will just give peanuts.”*

Research findings based on this study have revealed that teacher morale, job satisfaction and motivation were influenced by both school-specific and externally initiated factors such as salary and conditions of work. Since it is at school level that morale, job satisfaction and motivation are influenced, it is at this level that they can best be enhanced after attention has been paid to the external factors.

As a way of summarising the discussion on the challenges affecting the process of creating a COTL, a participant high school head contended that:

Things are no longer the same; we have had several factors that have affected the willingness by both the learner and the teacher to do their best in whatever tasks are assigned to them. The teachers’ industrial action that has prolonged has affected both the learner and the teacher such that the willingness to do their best is very much affected.

A similar view was expressed by a parent during the focus group interviews:

As parents we are faced by a harsh economic situation where our ability to pay school fees and levy for our children is extremely difficult. Some of us are not employed and it means we struggle to raise the school fees and levies needed by the school.

While the participants included in the study did not seem to use the prevailing socio-economic and political conditions as an excuse for the unsatisfactory COTL in their schools, they admitted that students’ academic performance was greatly affected by this situation. The researcher found sufficient confirmation of the effect of economic factors on the school head’s instructional leadership role in creating a COTL.

In this study, it emerged that the use of incentives for teachers has a bearing on the teaching and learning process in high schools and should therefore be included in the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL.

## 5.5 SYNTHESIS OF EMERGENT PATTERNS

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the main purpose was to analyse, interpret and discuss the data collected through observations, interviews and document analysis, as outlined in paragraphs 4.2 and 4.9. Each of the research questions contained in appendices A, B, and C was intended to address the following research question: *What is the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL, with specific reference to high schools in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe?*

The themes discussed in the various paragraphs of this chapter, the sub-problems stated in paragraph 1.3.1 as well as the interview questions contained in the appendices quoted above were derived from the literature study. The themes have been categorised into a long-term instructional leadership dimension and a short-term instructional leadership dimension and each is further divided into its component parts as discussed in the literature study (paragraphs 3.4 & 3.5).

The findings of this study have additionally revealed that the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL in the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe is currently confronted by numerous challenges. They include:

- A critical shortage of basic instructional resources.
- Low morale and motivation among both teachers and the students.
- Lack of technology.
- High teacher mobility.
- Power cuts and erratic supplies of water in the schools.
- A harsh economic environment.

In spite of the challenges cited above, it also emerged in this study that high school heads still have a vision, which guides them in leading instructional activities. The

situations and dilemmas encountered by the high school heads in trying to create a COTL, require them to assign values and beliefs to facts, to evaluate alternative actions and ultimately reach appropriate decisions. Importantly too, it was revealed in this study that high school heads, as instructional leaders, strive to identify the discrepancy between the actual nature of the COTL in the school and what it should be like in terms of what is possible under the prevailing circumstances. Furthermore, given the realities of the socio-economic situation prevailing in the high schools (see paragraphs 5.4.4 & 5.4.5) and the need for motivational strategies, high school heads have an onerous role to influence teachers and parents towards the envisioned COTL so that students receive high quality education.

The implications for the school head's instructional leadership practice in creating a COTL are that the instructional leader needs to engage in practices aimed at improving the elements in the model identified and described in this chapter to succeed in creating a COTL.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

The instructional leadership role of the school head in creating a COTL in high schools in Zimbabwe is faced with a number of challenges, which emanate mainly from the socio-political and economic crisis prevailing in the country. In this chapter the model of instructional leadership discussed in chapter three was extended to include aspects uncovered in the emerging patterns of the empirical study. It was discussed in terms of the long-term and short-term dimensions of instructional leadership in the Zimbabwean context. The findings show that the sustainable instructional leadership of the school head in creating a COTL has two dimensions. The first is that the long-term instructional leadership dimension consists of visioning, value management, professional development and empowerment. The second is the short-term instructional leadership dimension that includes the characteristics of the instructional leader, the characteristics of the followers, and the characteristics of the situation. The characteristics of the instructional leader include

his or her view of followers, task or people orientation, personality, value system, expectations and trust. Characteristics of the followers include their level of motivation, knowledge, experience and responsibility. Characteristics of the situation has many aspects such as the school climate and culture, teamwork, relationships, authority of the instructional leader, the structuring of the instructional programme and economic factors.

It also emerged that the economic and political crises have given rise to low levels of motivation on the part of the teachers and the learners, and acute shortages of basic instructional resources needed to create an environment that promotes a COTL.

The next chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.



## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to investigate the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL, with particular reference to the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe. This was done with reference to the aims and objectives of the study as outlined in paragraph 1.3. These were:

- To provide a conceptual framework of a culture of teaching and learning (COTL).
- To provide a conceptual framework for the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL.
- To determine whether the conceptual framework provided would be of use in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe.
- To provide a model for effective instructional leadership.

In the previous chapter, an attempt was made to analyse and discuss the data obtained from observations, interviews and document analysis. Relevant excerpts from the high school heads, HODs, teachers and parents were cited to provide defensible and scientifically valid and reliable arguments. Following the review of related literature in chapters two and three and the empirical findings and discussions reported in chapter five, the instructional leadership role of the high school head can be perceived in terms of two perspectives, namely the long-term and the short-term dimensions respectively. As stated in paragraph 3.4, long-term instructional leadership refers to those actions that the high school head undertakes to steer the school towards a particular vision. On the other hand, short-term instructional leadership refers to those actions taken by the school head to deal

effectively with specific situations aimed at creating a COTL. The components of each of these dimensions are summarised in Figure 6.1 in paragraph 6.3. 3.

## **6.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS**

This paragraph provides a summary of what is contained in each of the chapters of the research study.

**Chapter one** The aim of Chapter 1 was to present the problem of the study and its context. This chapter described the following aspects of the study: the background, the statement of the problem, specific research questions, aims and objectives, the motivation for the study and the research methodology used. Finally, the chapter gave an elucidation of the key concepts and a summary of the structure of the entire research study.

**Chapter two** The aim of Chapter 2 was to provide a conceptual framework on organisational culture in general and school culture in particular. It started by focusing on the changing face of schools towards a COTL, before examining the concept of organisational culture in general, including its related concepts, layers, importance and dimensions. The chapter proceeded to discuss school culture and the process of creating a COTL in schools. Finally, the chapter concluded by looking at the conditions conducive to a healthy and positive school culture.

**Chapter three** The aim of Chapter 3 was to provide an overview of the conceptual framework of instructional leadership for creating a COTL that served as theoretical grounding for the empirical research. It included a description of the long term and short term dimensions of instructional leadership.

**Chapter four** The aim of Chapter 4 was to describe the research methodology and design used in the study to collect empirical data for the study. As stated in paragraphs 1.8 and 4.8, a qualitative research design drawing from ethnographic

studies was employed to gather data for the study. The nature and characteristics of qualitative research in the study were also discussed. Observations, interviews and documentary analysis were used with high school heads, HODs, teachers, and parents as participants in the study. The participants were purposefully selected (see paragraph 4.8.2).

**Chapter five** The aim of Chapter 5 was to collect data and analyse it in accordance with the procedures applicable to qualitative research and organised and presented according to the themes in the theoretical framework of instructional leadership presented in Chapter 3 which served as a grounding for the empirical research. (see paragraph 4.11).

**Chapter six** The aim of Chapter 6 was to provide a summary of the chapters, a model of effective instructional leadership, findings and recommendations, limitations of the study, fulfilment of research objectives, issues for further research and a conclusion. The paragraph that follows gives a summary of the findings of the study.

### **6.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

The paragraphs that follow give a summary of the findings of the empirical study in the context of long-term and short-term instructional leadership dimensions discussed in paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5 and in chapter five. It also provides the main recommendations of the study relating to the instructional leadership role of the school principal in terms of the model presented in this study.

#### **6.3.1 Long-term instructional leadership dimension**

The effectiveness of the school head as an instructional leader is determined by his or her ability to influence the performance of the entire school (see paragraph 3.3). The long-term instructional leadership dimension refers to those actions that are

taken by the instructional leader to steer the entire school towards a particular vision. The various aspects of the school head's long-term instructional leadership are discussed in paragraphs 3.4.1; 3.4.2; 3.4.3 and 3.4.4 and summarised in figure 6. 1 (see paragraph 6.3.3).

### **6.3.1.1 Visioning**

According to the findings in paragraph 3.4.1, the high school head needs to work with all the members of the school community and to articulate a clear school vision, which serves as a guideline to all school activities. This was confirmed in the empirical study in paragraph 5.4.1.1. It is therefore recommended that visioning be incorporated into a model of instructional leadership to assist high school heads in their important role as instructional leaders.

### **6.3.1.2 Value management**

According to the findings in paragraphs 2.3.1.5; 2.3.1.6; 3.4.2 & 3.5.1.4, values are at the heart of every activity that takes place within the school system. This was confirmed in the empirical study in paragraph 5.4.2.1.4. In this regard, the school head, as the instructional leader, must assist followers by identifying, nurturing and modelling the values deemed to be important for creating a COTL. It emerged from the study that situations and dilemmas encountered by high school heads, as instructional leaders, require them to assign values to facts, evaluate alternative actions to take informed value based decisions. Importantly too, they need to be able to see the discrepancy between the real and the ideal. Through situational identity and consensus in value management, school heads can influence members of the school community towards the desired response. It is therefore recommended that the instructional leader's value management be incorporated into the model of instructional leadership.

### **6.3.1.3 Professional development of teachers**

According to the findings in paragraph 3.4.3, the high school head needs to ensure the professional development of teachers so that they can be effective in the classroom. Findings of the empirical study in paragraph 5.4.1.3 indicated that the frequency and effectiveness of staff development programmes and school-based supervision by high school heads and their deputies, HODs and external supervision has been greatly affected by the socio-economic and political challenges stated in paragraph 1.7. Owing to this scenario, most of these initiatives have remained on the drawing board and have not been put into practice. High school heads cited time pressures and financial constraints as some of the reasons for not conducting the scheduled staff development programmes, though this is regarded by them as very important. It is therefore recommended that professional development of teachers be incorporated into the model of instructional leadership to assist high school heads in their important role as instructional leaders.

#### **6.3.1.4 Empowerment of teachers**

According to the findings in paragraph 3.4.4, the high school head needs to create an environment within which teaching and learning can occur optimally through the effective empowerment of people directly involved such as teachers, learners and parents. This was confirmed in the empirical study in paragraph 5.4.1.4. Empowered teachers, for instance, tend not to regard the syllabus or learning area guidelines as a recipe to be followed but rather as an opportunity to experiment and make it relevant to the needs of learners. The study has found that teachers, who are empowered, participate actively in the process of creating a COTL (see paragraphs 3.4.4 and 5.4.1.4). Manifestations of empowerment noted in the study include professionalism through teamwork. It is therefore recommended that the empowerment of teachers and parents be incorporated into the model of instructional leadership.

## **6.3.2 Short-term instructional leadership dimension**

The short-term instructional leadership dimension of the school head in creating a COTL refers to those actions taken to adopt and effectively handle specific situations that arise on a day-to-day basis during the process of creating a COTL. In the literature review, the short-term instructional leadership dimensions are divided into three components. These are the characteristics of the instructional leader, the characteristics of the followers and the characteristics of the situation (see paragraphs 3.5.1; 3.5.2 and 3.5.3). Each of these aspects of short-term instructional leadership is further broken into sub-parts as shown in figure 6.1 (see paragraph 6.3.3).

### **6.3.2.1 Characteristics of the instructional leader**

#### **6.3.2.1.1 The instructional leader's view of stakeholders**

According to the findings in paragraph 3.5.1.1, the high school head needs to view his or her followers in a positive way as an instructional leader. This was confirmed in the empirical study in paragraph 5.4.2.1.1. The manner in which the high school head views his or her followers has a significant effect on his or her instructional leadership (see paragraph 3.5.1.1). High school heads, as instructional leaders, view both teachers and parents as very important in the process of creating a COTL (see paragraph 5.4.2.1.1). It is therefore recommended that the instructional leader's view of followers be incorporated into the model of instructional leadership to assist high school heads in their important role as instructional leaders.

#### **6.3.2.1.2 The instructional leader's task and/or people orientation**

According to the findings in paragraph 3.5.1.2, task or people orientation was identified as a relevant situational factor of instructional leadership. This was validated in the empirical study in paragraph 5.4.2.1.2. High school heads, as

instructional leaders, were found to be results-oriented and did not merely declare their desire to create a positive COTL but also strived to turn aspirations into actions despite the difficult circumstances under which they function. Importantly, high school heads lead with teacher emotions in mind. It is therefore recommended that both task and people orientation be incorporated into the model of instructional leadership to assist high school heads in their important role as instructional leaders.

#### **6.3.2.1.3 The instructional leader's personality**

According to the findings in paragraph 3.5.1.3, the personality of the high school head as the instructional leader will affect the nature of his or her leadership when creating a COTL. The empirical study in paragraph 5.4.2.1.3 revealed that high school heads viewed their instructional leadership role in creating a COTL as crucial but daunting, since it is being implemented amidst many challenges such as a lack of basic instructional resources, low morale among teachers and learners, high teacher mobility, and the economic constraints faced by parents in paying school fees and levies. The HODs, teachers and parents expressed the view that school heads are trying their best to create a COTL under the difficult circumstances (see paragraph 5.4.2.2.1). In their instructional leadership therefore, school heads should strive to develop a personality that enables them to understand not only their emotions, but also the emotions of followers so that they can establish cordial relationships. It is therefore recommended that the personality of the school head be incorporated into the model of instructional leadership.

#### **6.3.2.1.4 Value system**

According to the findings in paragraph 3.5.1.4, instructional leaders have to ground their actions in clear personal and professional values in order to create a culture of teaching and learning (COTL) in the school. The empirical study in paragraph 5.4.2.1.4 revealed that high school heads try their level best to motivate teachers,

students as well as parents towards academic excellence by constantly reminding them of the school vision and modelling their core values through their own practice.

#### **6.3.2.1.5 Expectations and trust**

According to the findings in paragraph 3.5.1.6, the high school head needs to stimulate high expectations and trust in the teachers, students and parents. This was confirmed in the empirical study in paragraph 5.4.2.1.6. It emerged that school heads, as instructional leaders, seem to trust their followers and to have realistic expectations of them. The high expectations emphasised by school heads helps engender confidence in teachers and inspire higher standards of academic performance. It is therefore recommended that expectations and trust be incorporated into the model of instructional leadership.

#### **6.3.2.2 Characteristics of the followers**

##### **6.3.2.2.1 Motivation to excel**

According to findings in paragraph 3.5.2.2, the high school head needs to motivate teachers to improve their classroom practice. However, findings from the empirical study indicated that the level of motivation among the teachers and the learners was far from satisfactory (see paragraphs 5.4.2.2.1 & 5.4.2.2.2). Poor job satisfaction and low morale were attributed to poor remuneration and poor working conditions. Consequently, it was also revealed that a lack of motivation to excel, especially among teachers, had an impact on the process of creating a COTL (see paragraph 5.4.2.2.1). School heads have to contend with the fact that there are some teachers in their schools that are diligent and dedicated, whereas others are dubious starters. In this regard, the instructional leader should know the individual needs of teachers in order to provide relevant forms of motivation. It is therefore recommended that the motivation of teachers be incorporated into the model of instructional leadership to assist high school heads in their important role as instructional leaders.



#### **6.3.2.2.2. Teachers' knowledge and experience**

According to findings in paragraph 3.5.2.3, the high school head needs to ensure that teachers' knowledge and experience in the subjects they teach are satisfactory so that students can benefit. This was confirmed in the empirical study when high school heads interviewed in the study expressed great satisfaction about the level of knowledge of their teachers in the subjects they offered (see paragraph 5.4.2.2.4). However, it was their experience and readiness to give their best, which were reported to be lacking since most of the teachers were fresh from college and universities. Most of the experienced teachers, especially in the science and commercial subjects, resigned from teaching to continue their careers in another field. It is therefore recommended that teachers' level of knowledge and experience be incorporated into the model of instructional leadership.

#### **6.3.2.2.3 Level of responsibility of teachers and parents**

According to findings in paragraph 3.5.2.1, the high school head needs to ensure that both teachers and parents exercise a high level of responsibility in creating a conducive COTL. The empirical study in paragraph 5.4.2.2.5 confirmed that followers' readiness to take up their responsibility plays a pivotal role in the effectiveness of the high school head's instructional leadership role in creating a COTL. The findings of the study showed that high school heads exhibited substantial courage and exercised considerable discipline to influence teachers to execute their duties conscientiously under the prevailing socio-political and economic crises (see paragraphs 5.5 & 6.8). However, the level of responsibility by both teachers and parents had a negative effect on teaching and learning and this tends to make the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL rather difficult. Therefore, there is a need for school heads, as instructional leaders, to consider this important characteristic of followers in their effort to create a COTL to cope with the challenging situations that may arise.

### **6.3.2.3 Characteristics of the situation**

#### **6.3.2.3.1 School climate and culture**

According to findings in paragraphs 2.3 and 3.5.3.1, the high school head needs to ensure that a sound school culture and climate prevail in the school for effective teaching and learning to occur. The empirical study revealed that a school's culture and climate have a strong influence on the motivation and achievement of both teachers and learners; consequently, the school head as the instructional leader has an important role in cultivating them. Findings of the study have shown that school culture and climate as well as the high school head's instructional leadership remain paramount in promoting student achievement and furthering school reform (see paragraphs 5.4.2.1.1; 5.4.2.1.4 & 5.4.2.3.1). It is therefore recommended that both school culture and climate be incorporated into the model of instructional leadership to assist the high school heads in their important role as instructional leaders.

#### **6.3.2.3.2 Teamwork**

According to findings in paragraph 3.5.3.4, the high school head needs to cultivate and maintain teamwork among all school constituents in his or her instructional leadership. In paragraph 5.4.2.3.2 it was concluded that schools that are organised into study teams and that work together for the improvement of the school are more cohesive and teachers are more responsive to initiatives from one another and from school leadership. The high school heads, HODs and teachers interviewed indicated that teamwork in their schools was more pronounced at departmental level where members engaged in team teaching and shared some professional experiences (see paragraph 5.4.2.3.2). Teams abound in high schools and they are structured by the instructional leader in ways that allow teachers to work together for the betterment of a positive COTL. It is therefore recommended that teamwork be incorporated into the model of instructional leadership to assist high school heads in their important role as instructional leaders.

#### **6.3.2.3.3 Relationships between the instructional leader and stakeholders**

According to findings in paragraphs 2.9.2.2 and 3.5.2.2, the high school head needs to cultivate and maintain sound relationships with all stakeholders to create a healthy COTL in the school. This was confirmed in the empirical study in paragraph 5.4.2.3.3. Relations between the school head and teachers, among the teachers themselves and between the teachers and the learners were reported to be good, in general. However, it appeared that the opposite was the case regarding the relationships between teachers and parents (see paragraph 5.4.2.3.3). Findings emanating from the study revealed that relationships had been strained by the recent introduction of incentives to be paid by parents as a way of motivating teachers (see appendix I).

The findings of this study have shown that intimate relationships among teachers made them feel less isolated or disengaged from their work. Importantly too, it also emerged that the cordial relationships among teachers and their school heads helped to reduce possible stress and tension caused by the unfavourable macro-economic environment prevailing in the country. It is therefore recommended that sound relationships should be incorporated in the model of instructional leadership to assist the high school heads in their important role as instructional leaders.

#### **6.3.2.3.4 The instructional leader's authority**

According to findings in paragraph 3.5.3.3, the high school head's authority needs to be effective in the provision of instructional leadership. The empirical study confirmed this in paragraph 5.4.2.3.4 when it was revealed that the authority of the high school head, as the instructional leader, is a situational factor that has a significant influence on his or her role to create a COTL. While there was general consensus that school heads have legitimate power as instructional leaders, their lack of rewarding power tends to weaken their authority in terms of exerting a

greater influence on teachers. Moreover, bureaucracy within the education system is another problematic factor that impacts negatively on schools. School heads indicated that they cannot afford to employ coercive power in their instructional leadership and as such, they need more empowerment through training. It is therefore recommended that the high school head's authority be incorporated into the model of instructional leadership.

#### **6.3.2.3.5 Structuring the instructional programme**

According to findings in paragraph 3.5.3.5, the high school head needs to structure the instructional programme in the school so that there can be effective teaching and learning. During the empirical study it emerged that high school heads as instructional leaders, strive under difficult circumstances to ensure that the instructional tasks are developed logically and are clearly spelt out for teachers to function effectively (see paragraph 5.4.3). It is therefore recommended that the structuring of the instructional programme be incorporated into the model of instructional leadership.

#### **6.3.2.3.6 The availability of resources**

According to findings in paragraphs 2.9.2.6 and 3.3, the high school head needs to ensure the availability of essential resources required for effective teaching and learning to take place. It emerged during the empirical study that the availability of resources in schools was an important factor in the instructional leadership role of the high school head. Findings also revealed that high heads' efforts to create a COTL were thwarted by a lack of basic instructional resources and the power cuts (see paragraph 5.4.4). All stakeholders, therefore, need to see to it that schools are supplied with the necessary resources that will enable them to function adequately.

The theoretical framework given by Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2009) discussed in chapter 3 was extended through the empirical investigation to include two other

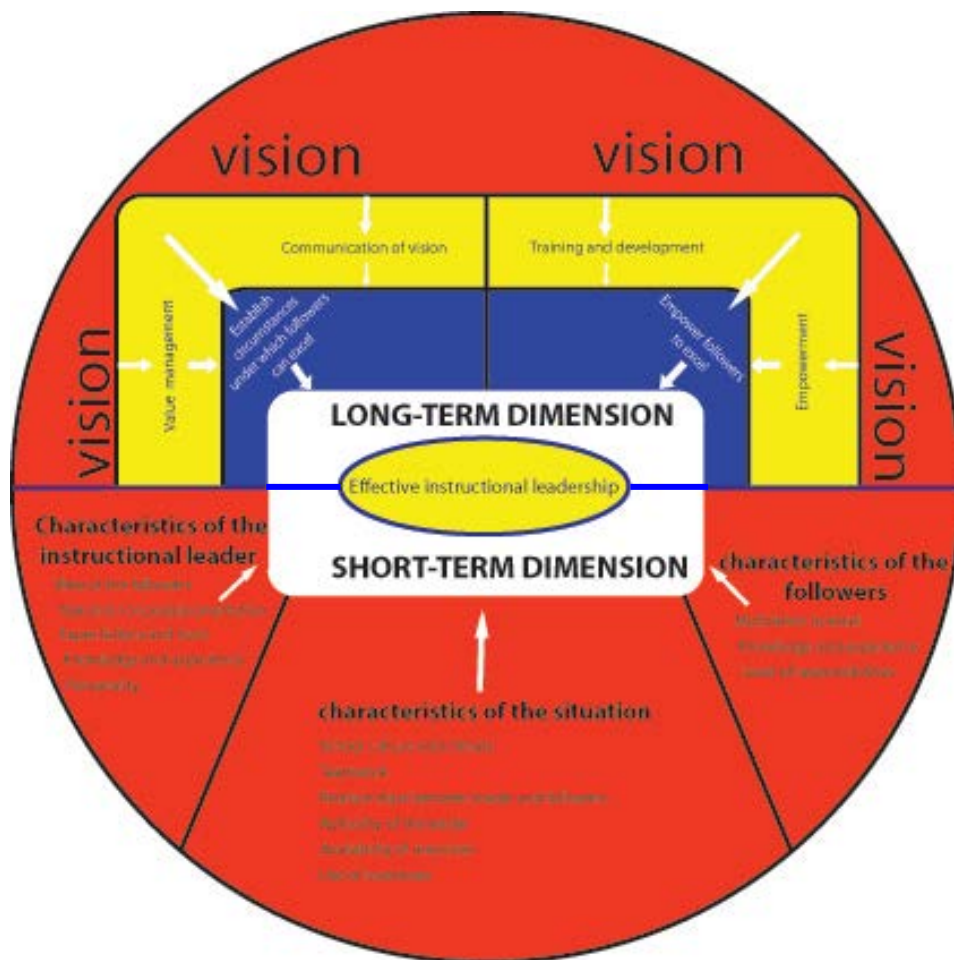
aspects, namely the availability of human and material resources and the use of incentives. It is therefore recommended that resources be incorporated into the model of instructional leadership to assist high school heads in their important role as instructional leaders.

#### **6.3.2.3.7 Teacher incentives**

As reflected in appendix J, the government has authorised schools to give teachers some incentives that are intended to motivate them. A lack of these was found to be a contributory factor to the high teacher mobility (see paragraph 5.5) and the confrontational attitude between teachers and parents (5.4.2.3.4). Teachers felt the parents were able, but unwilling to provide incentives whereas parents felt it was not their responsibility. It is therefore recommended that teacher incentives be incorporated into the model of instructional leadership to assist high school heads in their important role as instructional leaders.

#### **6.3.3 A summary of a model for effective instructional leadership**

This research study attempted to investigate the instructional leadership role of the high school head in Zimbabwe with particular reference to schools in the Midlands Province. A theoretical framework of effective instructional leadership consisting of long-term and short-term dimensions was discussed in chapter three (see paragraphs 3.4 & 3.5). This framework was discussed in chapter five (see paragraphs 5.4.1 & 5.4.2) in terms of its application in the Zimbabwean context with a view to determining its applicability within the Zimbabwean context. Figure 6.1 shows a summary of an integrated model for effective instructional leadership as it emanated from the theoretical framework and its validation in the empirical investigation. As alluded to in paragraph 6.3.2.3.7, this model is an extension of the generic leadership model provided by Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2009) applied to instructional leadership.



**Figure 6.1: A model for effective instructional leadership**

The most important finding of this study is that there is a need for high school heads to apply all aspects of the instructional leadership model presented and researched in the study, to improve the COTL through their instructional leadership role. It is therefore strongly recommended as the main recommendation of the research that all aspects of the model be implemented in the high schools included in the study.

#### **6.4 ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this part of the study, having formulated the main recommendation in the previous paragraph in the form of a model, it is important for the researcher to make some pertinent additional recommendations for the following stakeholders: The Ministry of

Education, Sports, Arts and Culture (MoESAC), policy makers, schools, and parents. The researcher would like to propose that, in terms of the research findings discussed in the various paragraphs of chapter 5, attention should be directed at the following recommendations in order to address the erosion of a COTL in the country's public high schools (see paragraph 5.5):

- There is need to ensure that the quality of working life is good if teachers are to give their best in the classroom for the ultimate benefit of the students.
- There is a need to improve the attitudes of learners towards education by creating opportunities for their employment and further education when they graduate successfully from the high schools. Learners tend to value education when they see possibilities for enjoying such practical benefits.
- There is a need for the central government, local authorities, parents and members of the community to join hands and increase financial resources to the high schools so that schools can afford to procure the basic instructional resources.
- There is a need to take measures to address the antagonistic relationships between the teachers and parents by creating the conditions for constructive engagement and establishing dialogue. Parents have to be made aware of the importance of teachers and their obligation to participate more actively in ensuring the provision of quality education to their children.
- There is a need for government and the private sector to address the socio-economic and political factors that are having a negative influence on the process of creating a healthy COTL outlined in paragraph 2.4. Improvement in the country's socio-economic and political environment would for instance reduce the problems of power cuts and erratic supplies of water in high schools that have a negative effect on the process of creating a COTL.

- There is a need for high school heads, as instructional leaders, to take major responsibility for in-service training of their teachers, through regular lesson observations and organisational workshops so as to address teachers' weaknesses. A prominent place should be given to instructional leadership within high school heads' training and development for them to be able to make a valuable contribution in this regard.

## **6.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

While the primary aim of this research study was to investigate and explore the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL, the following emerged as its limitations:

- As is the case with any other qualitative research (see paragraph 4.8.2), the study was limited in that the sample size was small. In this regard, it cannot support a general theory on the instructional leadership role of the high school head in Zimbabwe sufficiently in creating a COTL. Moreover, the research was purposefully confined to five public high schools that were selected based on their geographical location, academic performance and historical background as stated in paragraph 5.2.1.

Participants in the study were chosen based on their willingness to participate. Against such a background, one cannot completely rule out the possibility that different results might be obtained in different circumstances. In this regard, no attempts are made to generalise because the data were presented in descriptive form. Furthermore, the data gathered through the interviews may be circumstantial because of the participants' political sensitivity where people do not trust researchers. Parents, in particular, were more sensitive regarding the researcher's research topic, to the extent that four out of the five focus groups refused to be tape recorded in spite of the researcher's assurances concerning confidentiality and anonymity as stated in paragraph 4.10.



- The researcher would also have preferred to stay longer in the research site, but because of financial and time factors he could not.
- The researcher encountered difficulties in ensuring gender balance in the focus group interviews with the members of the SDC representing the parents as previously planned and thus, the findings reflect the views and opinions of the people captured at that time. As pointed out in paragraph 5.3.3, most females could not attend the focus group interviews because they were scheduled for the late hours of the day after work, on a day when they had their own meeting at school. Domestic commitments therefore, made it difficult for a fair representation of females among the parents in this study. In this regard, the findings might be gender biased.

## **6.6 FULFILMENT OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

In the researcher's opinion, the objectives of the study set out in paragraph 1.4 have been accomplished satisfactorily as follows:

- A conceptual framework of a culture of teaching and learning (COTL) was provided using relevant literature (Chapter 2) (first aim of the study)
- A conceptual framework for the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL was provided using relevant literature (Chapter 3) (second aim of the study).
- An empirical investigation was conducted to determine whether the conceptual framework of instructional leadership would be of use in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe (Chapter 5) (third aim of the study).
- A model for effective practice in instructional leadership was provided (Chapter 6) (fourth aim of the study).

The model of instructional leadership presented in Chapter 3 and in paragraph 6.3.3 was not only validated by a literature study into the role of instructional leadership in order to create a culture of teaching and learning, but a qualitative empirical investigation was undertaken within five high schools in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe in order to determine its practical applicability.

## **6.7 ISSUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Although this study has attempted to investigate and explore the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL, there are still some aspects, which could not be treated in the same subject area. The following are examples of issues pertaining to the role of instructional leadership in creating a COTL that need further research:

- How the internal emotional states of high school heads, as instructional leaders, affect the manner in which they lead their institutions.
- How high school heads, as instructional leaders, develop the emotional preparedness needed to lead with teacher emotions in mind.
- How high school leaders, as instructional leaders, can be empowered with the strategies to enhance the level of motivation among teachers and learners.
- How the model of instructional leadership presented in this study can be validated both qualitatively and quantitatively across the various levels of education and in various circumstances other than those of this study.

## **6.8 CONCLUSION**

This research study provided an insight into the instructional leadership role of the high school head in creating a COTL, with specific reference to the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe. From the research, it is quite evident that sustained and well-

designed instructional leadership by the high school head is essential for the attainment of high quality teaching and learning.

The findings of the study have revealed that the effectiveness of the high school head's instructional leadership role in creating a COTL is impeded by many challenges, which include: a lack of basic instructional resources and technology; high teacher mobility; a harsh socio-political and economic environment in the country; a lack of incentives for both teachers and students; power cuts and erratic water supplies in high schools.

The collective effort of all the stakeholders towards addressing the above and other stated challenges holds the only hope for the achievement of a healthy COTL. It is, therefore, the conclusion of this thesis that if high school heads, as instructional leaders, want teachers to respond creatively and constructively in the process of creating a COTL, they need to make active efforts to model the courage it takes to face the emotional challenges associated with such an imperative. In addition, they should apply the instructional leadership model presented in this study constantly and systematically to achieve their goal.

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## **APPENDIX A**

APPLICATION TO CARRY OUT AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION IN  
SELECTED HIGH SCHOOLS

Ref:.....

E.C. NO:.....

All communications should be addressed to  
"The Provincial Education Director for  
Education Sport and Culture"  
Telephone: 222911/4 and  
Fax: 226482, or 228595



ZIMBABWE

Ministry of Education Sport and Culture  
P.O Box 737  
GWERU

02 June 2009

Mr / Mrs / Miss S. Svestu Masuku  
UNISA

Dear Sir / Madam

**APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT AN EDUCATIONAL  
RESEARCH IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN MIDLANDS PROVINCES**

Permission to carry out a Research on

Creating a culture of teaching and  
learning in high schools in the Midlands  
Province in Zimbabwe, A model for effective  
practice

Midlands Province has been granted on these conditions.

- a) That in carrying out this you do not disturb the learning and teaching programmes in schools.
- b) That you avail the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture with a copy of your research findings.
- c) That this permission can be withdrawn at anytime by the Provincial Education Director or by any higher officer.

The Education Director wishes you success in your research work and in your University College studies.

E. Katoro  
20 JUL 2009  
GWERU

02 JUL 2009 EK

EDUCATION OFFICER (PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND LEGAL SERVICES)

**FOR: PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR- MIDLANDS**

## **APPENDIX B**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL HEADS**

1. How do you perceive your instructional leadership role in creating a culture of teaching and learning (COTL)?

**Possible probing questions**

- 1.1 What is your school vision as an instructional leader?
  - 1.2 How is the vision of your school formulated?
  - 1.3 How do you communicate the school vision for it to be realised?
  - 1.4 What are your values as an instructional leader and how do you share them with teachers and parents?
  - 1.5 How do you empower teachers and parents as an instructional leader in order to improve the COTL in your school?
  - 1.6 What are you doing as an instructional leader to improve the instructional skills of your teachers?
2. How do your personal characteristics as a leader impact on your instructional leadership role in creating a COTL?

**Possible probing questions**

- 2.1 How do you view your teachers?
  - 2.2 What can you say about the level of trust you have in your teachers?
  - 2.3 What power base do you rely on in your instructional leadership?
  - 2.4 What are your values as an instructional leader?
  - 2.5 How do you ensure teacher commitment towards the achievement of instructional goals?
3. What characteristics of your followers impact on your instructional leadership role in creating a COTL?

**Possible probing questions**

- 3.1 How motivated are the teachers and students towards the process of creating a COTL?
- 3.2 What can you say about the readiness of HODs and teachers in discharging their instructional tasks?
- 3.3 How do you view the qualifications and experience of your HODs and teachers?

- 4 What characteristics of the situation impact on your instructional leadership role in creating a COTL?

**Possible probing questions**

- 4.1 What can you say about the culture of teaching and learning in your school?
  - 4.2 What can you say about the relationships between teachers and the school head?
  - 4.3 What can you say about the relationships between teachers and the parents?
  - 4.4 What source of power do you rely on as an instructional leader to create a COTL in your school?
  - 4.5 How is teamwork among your teachers towards creating a COTL, and what are you doing to promote it?
  - 4.6 How do you view the use of incentives in creating a COTL in your school?
5. What challenges do you face as an instructional leader in creating a COTL?

**Possible probing questions**

- 5.1 How do you overcome the challenges you experience in creating a COTL as an instructional leader?
- 5.2 What role are parents playing in overcoming the challenges?
- 5.3 What measures have been taken by government to overcome the challenges related to your instructional leadership?

## **APPENDIX C**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS (HODs) AND TEACHERS**

1. How do you perceive the instructional leadership of your school head in creating a culture of teaching and learning (COTL) in your school?

**Possible probing questions**

- 1.1 How is the vision of your school formulated and communicated?
  - 1.2 Does the school head do values management to improve the COTL?
  - 1.3 What is your school head doing as an instructional leader to enable teachers to improve their teaching skills?
  - 1.4 How does your school head empower you as teachers to improve the COTL in the school?
2. What are some of the personal characteristics of your school head that impact on his/her instructional leadership role in creating a COTL?

**Probing questions**

- 2.1 How does your school head as an instructional leader view teachers?
  - 2.2 What can you say about the values of your school head as an instructional leader?
  - 2.3 What are the expectations of your school head as an instructional leader?
  - 2.4 What can you say about the leadership style employed by your school head in his/her instructional leadership?
3. What characteristics of teachers do you think impact on the instructional leadership role of your school head in creating a COTL?

**Probing questions**

- 3.1 What can you say about the readiness of teachers in discharging their instructional duties?
  - 3.2 How motivated are the teachers in your school towards creating a COTL?
  - 3.3 What can you say about the attitude of teachers towards the instructional leadership role of the school head in creating a COTL?
4. What characteristics of the situation determine the instructional leadership of your school head in creating a COTL?

**Probing questions**

- 4.1 What can you say about the relationship between the school leadership, teachers and parents?



- 4.2 What can you say about teamwork among teachers and how is it promoted to create a COTL?
- 4.3 What source of power does your school head rely on as an instructional leader to create a COTL?
- 4.4 How do you view the use of incentives in creating a COTL in your school?
5. What challenges are confronted by your school head in creating a COTL?

**Probing questions**

- 5.1 How best do you try to overcome the challenges?
- 5.2 What constraining factors impact on your attempts to overcome the challenges?
- 5.3 What measures have been taken by government to overcome the challenges related to the school head's instructional leadership?

## **APPENDIX D**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS**

1. How do you perceive the instructional leadership of your school head in creating a COTL?

**Possible probing questions**

- 1.1 What can you say about the culture of teaching and learning in your school?
  - 1.2 What is your contribution as parents towards the formulation and development of the vision and mission of your school?
  - 1.3 How is the school vision communicated to all parents?
2. What is your contribution as parents towards the instructional leadership role of your school head in creating a COTL?

**Probing questions**

- 2.1 What are your views about the involvement of parents in the teaching and learning process?
  - 2.2 What can you say about the parents' attitude towards the education of their children?
  - 2.3 How do you as representatives of parents assist the school head in creating a COTL?
  - 2.4 What can you say about the relationships between parents and the school head?
  - 2.5 How are the relationships between parents and teachers?
  - 2.6 How do you view the use of incentives in creating a COTL in your school?
3. What challenges have you found to be affecting the instructional leadership role of your school head in creating a COTL?

**Probing questions**

- 3.1 How do you as parents try to assist the school in overcoming the challenges?
- 3.2 What factors have constrained your attempts to overcome the challenges?
- 3.3 What measures have been taken by the government to overcome the challenges related to the improvement of teaching and learning in your school?

**APPENDIX E**

**PERSONAL DETAILS FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL HEADS**

**PERSONAL DETAILS FOR HIGH SCHOOL HEADS**

NAME OF SCHOOL: .....

GENDER:.....

AGE: .....

HIGHEST ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION:.....

HIGHEST PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION:.....

FURTHER STUDY:.....

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS TEACHER:.....

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS SCHOOL HEAD.....

NO. OF YEARS AS SCHOOL HEAD AT THIS SCHOOL:.....

GENERAL TRAINING FOR HEADSHIP:.....

## **APPENDIX F**

PERSONAL DETAILS FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENT (HODs)

**PERSONAL DETAILS FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL HEADS OF  
DEPARTMENT (HODs)**

**NAME OF SCHOOL**.....

**GENDER**.....

**AGE**.....

**HIGHEST ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION**.....

**HIGHEST PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION**.....

**FURTHER STUDY**.....

**SUBJECTS TAUGHT**.....

**SUBJECTS OF SPECIALISATION**.....

**LEVEL TAUGHT**.....

**NO. OF YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE**.....

**NO. OF YEARS AT YOUR PRESENT SCHOOL**.....

**NO. OF YEARS AS HEAD OF DEPARTMENT (HOD)**.....

**NO. OF PERIODS TAUGHT PER WEEK**.....

**NO. OF MEMBERS IN YOUR DEPARTMENT**.....

## **APPENDIX G**

### **PERSONAL DETAILS FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS**



**PERSONAL DETAILS FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS**

**NAME OF SCHOOL:**.....

**GENDER:**.....

**AGE:**.....

**HIGHEST ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION:**.....

**HIGHEST PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION:**.....

**FURTHER STUDY:**.....

**SUBJECTS TAUGHT:**.....

**SUBJECTS OF SPECIALISATION:**.....

**LEVEL TAUGHT:**.....

**NO. OF YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE:**.....

**NO. OF YEARS AT YOUR PRESENT SCHOOL:**.....

## APPENDIX H

### PERSONAL DETAILS FOR THE PARENTS

## PERSONAL DETAILS FOR THE PARENTS

NAME OF SCHOOL:.....

GENDER:.....

AGE:.....

HIGHEST ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION:.....

OCCUPATION:.....

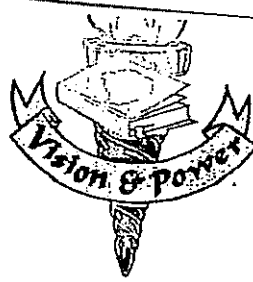
POSITION IN THE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (SDC):.....

NUMBER OF YEARS AS A MEMBER OF THE SDC:.....

NUMBER OF CHILDREN LEARNING AT THIS SCHOOL:.....

## **APPENDIX I**

**CIRCULAR FROM THE PROGRESSIVE TEACHERS' UNION OF  
ZIMBABWE (PTUZ) ON COMMUNITY MEETINGS**



## PROGRESSIVE TEACHER UNION OF ZIMBABWE COMMUNITY MEETINGS

### Introduction

We note with great concern the deteriorating relations between teachers and communities. On one hand, teachers are not amused by the lack of respect and public ridicule they suffer from parents and students and interference of communities in professional matters. On the other hand, parents strongly feel teachers are holding them at ransom through incentive schemes. In the worst of cases, such conflicts have resulted in serious altercations. But, it is common cause that parents need teachers and teachers need parents. **WHY THE CONFLICT?**

To explore these and other allied issues, the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe invites all teachers, School Heads, Education Officers, SDAs, SDCS, CSOs, FBOs, Residents Associations, School Responsible Authorities to come and speak their minds and feelings at the listed community meetings. Let us use dialogue to expose the real issues which separate teachers and parents.

Details of the meetings are as follows:

PROVINCE	DISTRICT (S)	VENUE	DATE	TIME/Hrs
Harare	Chitungwiza	TBA		
	Highglen	TBA	29 July	100
	Northern Central	TBA	29 July	1400
Bulawayo		Nketa Hall	29 July	1000
		Emakhandeni Hall	17 July	1000
Manicaland	Mutare	Dangamvura Community	16 July	1000
	Chipinge	Chipinge Country Club	20 July	0900
Mash East	Chivu	TBA	20 July	0900
	Marondera	TBA	22 July	1130
Mash West	Chinhoyi	Cooks Hall	21 July	1430
	Kadoma	Jameson High	24 July	1400
Masvingo	Gutu	Madondo Hotel	23 July	1400
	Masvingo	Mucheke Hall	24 July	1000
Mat. North	Hwange	Hwange Government	22 July	1400
	Lupane	Tshabalala Hall	22 July	1000
Mat. South	Beitbridge	Beitbridge Country Club	21 July	1100
	Gwanda	Redcross Hall	24 July	1400
Midlands	Kwekwe	Mbizo Youth Centre	23 July	1000
	Gweru	Mkoba 1 Secondary	23 July	1000
Mash. Central	Bindura	Mkoba 1 Secondary	24 July	1400
		Tendai Hall	15 July	1400

For more information, contact the PTUZ National Coordinator on 09 881418 or 0912849730.

**FOR OUR CHILDREN! WE MUST  
ONE DESTINY! ONE ACTION!**

## **APPENDIX J**

FASCIMILE FROM THE ZIMBABWE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION (ZIMTA)



# ZIMBABWE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 1440 Harare, Zimbabwe

Phone: 263-4-795931

ZIMTA House, 190 Herbert Chitepo Avenue Harare, Zimbabwe Fax: 263-4-791042

E-mail zimta@telco.co.zw

E-mail zimta@zol.co.zw

## FASCIMILE

Web: www.zimta.org.zw

Date: 4 May 2009

### CIRCULAR LETTER NUMBER 16 OF 4 MAY 2009:

- TO:
1. ZIMTA National Executive Members (through PEOs)
  2. Provincial Secretaries, Treasurers and Committee Members (through PEOs)
  3. ZIMTA National Sub-Associations; NAEO, NAPH and NASH.
  4. ZIMTA National Secretariat in the Eleven Offices.

RE: APPEAL FOR RESTRAINT AS GOVERNMENT / ZIMTA CRISIS MEETING YELDS NO TANGIBLE RESOLUTION.

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION.

ZIMTA met Minister Coltart, UNICEF country Representative, SIDA, country Representative and a European Commission Representative, who attended the meeting as an observer. The meeting sought to explain and verify efforts that were towards addressing educators concerns.

#### 2.0 DONOR AGENCIES.

- 2.1 UNICEF on its part confirmed its support to education through the following efforts so as to mitigate the myriad of challenges faced by the education sector.
  - 2.1.1 Support of the marking process.
  - 2.1.2 Raising a humanitarian appeal under the Country Appeal Process (CAP) which appeal encompasses the issue of teacher incentives. The issue of education is now under Humanitarian Crisis. The Country Appeal Process will be launched by the UN Secretary General at the end of the month of May 2009. This intervention facilitates the opening of support through multi-donor assistance.
- 2.2 Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) indicated that it usually supports Government to Government co ordinate programs through its own government or country groups. The agency therefore found it awkward to support one sector of Government.

The agency also raised concerns relating to Governance before full scale support to government, eg. Cessation of violence, cessation of farm invasions, cessation of harassment of media and outstanding issues of appointment of Senior Government officers like Governors.

#### STANDING COMMITTEE

- National President *Chikwore T. (Mrs)*
- National Deputy President *Makumbe S. (Mrs)*
- National Deputy President *Tshabalala T. (Dr)*
- National Secretary General *Gundana R. (Mr)*
- National Treasurer *Moyo E. (Mr)*
- Women Teachers' Rep *Zinyamba E. (Mrs)*
- Secondary Teachers' Rep. *Mutze V. (Ms)*
- Primary Teachers' Rep *Mumara S. (Mr)*

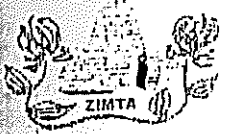
#### SECRETARIAT

- A/Chief Executive Officer *Ndlovu S. (Mr)*
- Finance Officer *Charumbuka L. (Mr)*
- Training Officer *Lunga A. (Ms)*

## **APPENDIX K**

**CIRCULAR FROM THE ZIMBABWE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION (ZIMTA)**





# ZIMBABWE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 1440 Harare, Zimbabwe

ZIMTA House, 190 Herbert Chitepo Avenue Harare, Zimbabwe Fax: 263-4-791042

Phone: 263-4-795931

E-mail zimta@telco.co.zw

E-mail zimta@zol.co.zw

Our Ref: 143/2009

Date: 22 July 2009

The Minister of Public Service  
Honourable Minister Elphas Mukonoweshuro  
Social Security Centre  
P.O. Box CY 440  
CAUSEWAY

Dear Sir

**Re: Review of and Introduction of Basic Salary for Public Service and Resultant Delay in Implementation.**

We write to acknowledge receipt of information regarding the re-introduction of salaries for Public servants. This is a welcome development on which to build future improvements on.

However, we are worried that the salary has been delayed, causing untold inconveniences and suffering to our educators. An advance notice about the delay could have mitigated the damage.

Secondly, we observe that your Press statement created an impression that the salary review took into account costs for, rentals, fuel, school levies and other expenses. An impression that is a far cry from the truth considering costs on the ground. The levels of salary unveiled to us are seriously inadequate and do not meet the objectives of the salary as announced.

ZIMTA would like to put it on record that we reject the quantum given and demand that your Government addresses this issue immediately, by putting measures to engage Staff Associations and the Minister of Finance in order to improve remuneration packages within the shortest possible time.

In light of our observations in paragraph two, we have to inform you that our educators who travelled into the various service centres and cities to access their incomes will be unable to return their stations until they access their income on Monday 27 July. This is a desperate position, and we hope you will understand their predicament so that you can advise supervisors not to be vindictive on this issue.

Thank you,

Yours Sincerely

Ndlovu Sifiso  
**ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

cc. Minister of Education, Sport, Arts & Culture  
Permanent Secretary Education, Sport, Arts & Culture

**STANDING COMMITTEE**

- National President *Chikwora T (Mrs)*
- National Deputy President *Makumba S. (Mrs)*
- National Deputy President *Tshabalala T (Dr.)*
- National Secretary General *Gundane R. (Mr.)*
- National Treasurer *Moyo E. (Mr.)*
- Women Teachers' Rep *Zinyumba E. (Mrs)*
- Secondary Teachers' Rep *Mutize V. (Ms)*
- Primary Teachers' Rep *Kumera B. (Mr.)*
- Tertiary Educators' Rep *Mutiso J. (Mr.)*

**SECRETARIAT**

- As/Chief Executive Officer *Ndlovu Sifiso (Mr.)*
- Finance Officer *Charumbuka E. (Mr)*
- Training Officer *Munge A. (Ms.)*
- Assistant Finance Officer *Muzonogwe M. (Mr)*

**APPENDIX L**

CIRCULAR FROM THE PROGRESSIVE TEACHERS' UNION OF  
ZIMBABWE (PTUZ)



# PROGRESSIVE TEACHERS' UNION OF ZIMBABWE

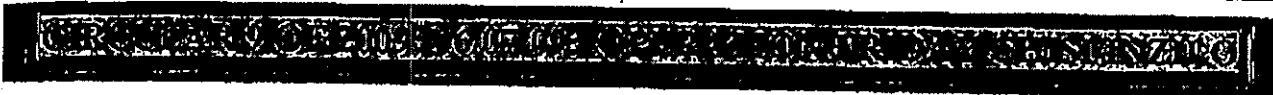
AN AFFILIATE OF THE ZIMBABWE CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS (ZCTU)

14 McLaren Road  
Milton Park  
Harare  
Zimbabwe

P.O. Box CR 620  
Cranborne, Harare  
Telefax: 741937

Cell: 0912 358 274 / 0912 880 307  
E-mail: [progressive\\_zz@yahoo.co](mailto:progressive_zz@yahoo.co)  
[ptuz@africaonline.co.zw](mailto:ptuz@africaonline.co.zw)  
Visit our website at [www.ptuz.co.zw](http://www.ptuz.co.zw)

All Correspondence to be addressed  
To the Secretary General



### Introduction

One renowned scientist, Sir Isaac Newton established that to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. In our circumstances, it stands to argue that to every non-action, there is an equal and opposite form of non-action. Non-cooperation can only be fought by its equivalent; non-cooperation. Who are we to remain angels when the government is a ninja? **FOR OUR DIGNITY! WE MUST!**

### We have demonstrated good faith by:

- Subsidising the government for the past six months.
- Teaching dutifully and sheepishly waiting for a salary review.
- Sacrificing our dignity in exchange of meaningless and humiliating parent incentives.

### Government has not demonstrated good faith by:

- Failing to meaningfully review our salaries when its capacity to generate revenue has significantly improved.
- Pronouncing in the media that it is considering reviewing salaries *marginally* in July without tabling the issue with Unions.
- Failing to implement all agreements it entered into with teacher unions. In fact, the PSC directed the Secretary for Education to issue circulars which either reverse or contradict all the agreements entered between Unions and the Minister of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture.
- Frustrating teachers who were engaged back into the profession through Secretary's Circular No. 2 of 2009 through charges, dismissals and non-payment of salaries for a period of over six months.
- Failing to respond to our petitions handed over to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Public Service on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2009.
- Allowing state corporates like ZESA, Tel.One, City Councils, ZINWA to charge utility bills which are collectively five fold our monthly earnings.

### Way Forward

We now pronounce and announce our campaign code-named **OPERATION FRIDAY CHIS/INZILO!!**

- Our working week is now Monday to Thursday. We shall boycott classes every working Friday starting on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2009. The boycotts shall be accompanied by marches and vigils organised locally. Contact the Union on how you can do this in your area.
- To kick start the campaign, teachers in urban areas shall march in all major towns and cities on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2009 except for Harare where the march will take place on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 2009.
- If government does not respond to this campaign after two successive Friday campaigns, we shall boycott classes on Thursdays reducing the working week to 3 days and subsequently to two days or less.

**FOR OUR DIGNITY! WE MUST!  
ONE DESTINY! ONE ACTION!**

Takavafira Zhou  
**PRESIDENT**

Interim ARV support NOW available, please contact your nearest provincial offices.

## **APPENDIX M**

### **VISION OF MoESAC**



ZIMBABWE



ZIMBABWE

# MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE

**VISION**

OUR VISION IS OF UNITED AND WELL EDUCATED ZIMBABWEANS WITH UNHU/UBUNTU AND ARE PATRIOTIC, BALANCED, COMPETITIVE AND SELF RELIANT

## **APPENDIX N**

### **MISSION OF MoESAC**



ZIMBABWE

# MINISTRY OF EDUCATION SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE

## MISSION

TO PROMOTE AND FACILITATE THE PROVISION OF HIGH QUALITY, INCLUSIVE AND RELEVANT EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD) PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, LIFE-LONG AND CONTINUING EDUCATION, SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE.