

EXAMINING THE NOTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AMONG PUBLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN KHOMAS REGION, NAMIBIA: A CRITICAL
PERSPECTIVE

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION (EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP,
MANAGEMENT AND POLICY STUDIES)

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

BY

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October 2025

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the notion of instructional leadership among public primary school principals in Khomas Region, Namibia. The study drew from Hallinger's Instructional Leadership Theory. The findings from this research study are crucial to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture's (MoEAC) understanding of the perceptions of the principals on the concept of instructional leadership and its influence on learner academic achievement. Moreover, the principles of instructional leadership provide a strong foundation for schools to attain the (7) key areas identified by the MoEAC to improve the quality and effectiveness of schools. The study used a qualitative research design from a critical perspective. The population comprised ten public primary school principals in the Khomas region, from urban and rural schools. To select the sample, a purposeful sampling criterion was employed. The sample consisted of five male and five female public primary school principals. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the required data.

From the findings, the study established that the principals understood the concept of instructional leadership and the key responsibilities that are coupled with it. Another aspect that was revealed through this study is the countless challenges faced by the principals during the process of implementing instructional leadership. However, measures were suggested in order to mitigate these challenges. In conclusion, the findings suggest that primary school principals require assistance in the form of ongoing training and support to execute key aspects of their duties when implementing instructional leadership, even though they tried to the best of their abilities. Therefore, the study recommends that the MoEAC and other institutions render support to principals through targeted professional development, guidance, and adequate resource provision to ensure that effective teaching and learning take place at all public schools.

Keywords: Challenges, Critical Perspective, Effective Teaching and Learning, Hallinger's Instructional Leadership Theory, Instructional Leadership,

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My humble, sincere appreciation and gratitude go to Almighty God who carried me along this journey. It was indeed by His faithfulness that I accomplished this task with great success.

My gratitude also goes to all my lecturers from the University of Namibia who walked alongside me for the duration of the three years to complete this course. Equally, I extend a special thanks to my supervisors who spend endless time guiding, advising and mentoring me professionally.

I would also like to use this space to remember my late mother for her upbringing as a single parent. She had sacrificed a lot to build my character and to make sure that I was able to finish my school and then pursue a career in education.

Next, I want to thank my household. First of all, my other half for believing in me and encouraging me daily with her love by stating, “It will soon be over, others have made it. You will make it too!” Furthermore, I thank my four kids for supporting me with their prayers.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Director of Education for granting me permission to carry out my research at ten different public primary schools. My most sincere gratitude goes to the principals who availed themselves to partake in this research study; surely, without them, it would be impossible to complete this study.

DEDICATION

This thesis is first and foremost dedicated to the Lord who has granted me the gift of life and has blessed me with a caring, lovely wife and a supportive, prayerful family to achieve this great academic milestone.

This is indeed a dream come true. Therefore, all the Honour and Glory belong to God only.

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1 Participants Biographical Details	28
Table 4.2 Matching semi-structured interview questions to research questions	30
Table 4.3 Instructional Leadership Perspectives	30
Table 4.4 Principals Primary Responsibilities	33
Table 4.5 Successful initiatives or practices by principals	42
Table 4.6 External Support to Instructional Leaders	51
Table 4.7 Further thoughts, experiences and suggestions by participants	56
Table 4.8 Challenges and Mitigations	65
Table 4.9 Relationships and Collaborations	72

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1 Methods for Developing Instructional Leadership	48
Figure 4.2 Support from Educational Institutions and Government	54
Figure 4.3 Comparison of Participants Responses	75

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

UNAM	University of Namibia
MoEAC	Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CP	Critical Perspective
ETL	Effective Teaching and Learning
IL	Instructional Leadership
LAA	Learner Academic Achievement
PD	Professional Development
PPS	Public Primary Schools
QS	Qualitative Design
SSI	Semi-structured Interviews
TS	Training and Support

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL PAGE	i
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
DEDICATION	v
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS	viii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the Study	1
1.3 Statement of the Problem	2
1.4 Research Questions	3
1.5 Significance of the Study	4
1.6 Limitations of the Study	6
1.7 Delimitations of the Study	6
1.8 Definition of Terms	7
1.9 Conclusion	8
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.1 Introduction	9

2.2 Theoretical Framework	12
2.2.1 Defining the School's Mission:	16
2.2. 2 Managing the Instructional Program:	17
2.2.3 Fostering a Positive School Learning Climate:	18
2.2.4 Giving Teachers Instructional Input	19
2.3 Principal's Perceptions of Instructional Leadership from Local Context	20
2.4 Research Gap	21
2.5 Conclusion	22
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	23
3.1 Introduction	23
3.2 Research Design and Approach	24
3.3 Population of the Study and study setting	25
3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedures	26
3.5 Research Instruments	27
3.5.1 In-depth Phenomenological Interview	27
3.6 Data Collection Procedures	27
3.7 Data Analysis Tool	28
3.8 Research Ethics	29
3.9 Conclusion	30
CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS	31

4.1 Introduction	31
4.4 Research Question 1	34
4.5 Research Question 2:	38
4.5.1 Delegation	40
4.5.2 Crafting a Positive and Conducive School Environment	40
4.5.3 Developing People	40
4.5.4 Collaboration	41
Summary of Research Question 2	42
4.6 Research Question 3	42
4.7 Research Question 4:	47
Summary of Research Question 4:	53
4.8 Research Question 5	53
Summary of Research Question 5	56
4.9 Research Question 6	57
Summary of Research Question 6	62
4.10 Research Question 7	62
4.10.1. Distributive Educational Leadership:	65
4.10.2. Challenges in Learning	65
4.10.3. Teaching Materials and Environment	66
4.10.4. Engaging Families and Supportive Learning	67

4.10.5. Leadership Involvement and Delegation	67
4.10.6. Supportive Relationships and Communication	68
4.10.7. Personalising Leadership	69
4.10.8. Supportive Learning Environment and Holistic Approach	70
Summary of Research Question 7	70
4.11 Research Question 8	71
4.11.1 Challenge 1: A Furious Parent [P3, Q8]	74
4.11.2 Mitigation	74
4.11.3 Challenge 2: Transition to another School [P5, Q8]	74
4.11.4 Mitigation	75
4.11.5 Challenge 3: Insufficient Time [P6, Q8]	75
4.11.6 Mitigation	75
4.11.7 Challenge 4: A Difficult Teacher [P7, Q8]	76
4.11.8 Mitigation	76
4.11.9 Challenge 5: Teacher Absenteeism [P10, Q8]	76
4.11.10 Mitigation	77
Summary of Research Question 8	77
4.12 Research Question 9	78
4.12.1. Categorisation of Findings:	82
4.12.2 Further Analysis of Participants' Responses	83

4.12.2.1 Common Themes	83
4.12.2.2 Interconnectedness of Themes	83
4.12.2.3 Unique Focus Areas	84
4.12.2.4 Diversity of Approaches	85
4.12.3 Summary of Research Question 9	85
Conclusion	86
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	87
5.1 Introduction	87
5.1.1 Summary of Findings on Theme 1: Perception of Instructional leadership and Approaches to Enhance Learning Outcomes	87
5.1.2 Summary of Theme 2: Developing Instructional Leadership as a Cornerstone for Academic and Holistic Student Success	89
5.1.3 Summary of Theme 3: Building a Culture of Trust and Continuous Growth through Instructional Leadership	90
5.1.4 Integrated Theme: Instructional Leadership as a Driver of Academic and Holistic School Success	91
5.2 Linking Findings to the Theoretical Framework	92
5.2.1 Defining the School's Mission	93
5.2.2 Managing the Instructional Program	93
5.2.3 Fostering a Positive School Learning Climate	95
5.2.4 Giving Teachers Instructional Input	96
5.3 Public Primary School Principal's Perceptions of Instructional Leadership	97

5.3.1 Results Comparison from 32 Countries	97
5.3.2 Perspectives from a Local Study	98
5.4 Conclusion	100
CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	101
6.1 Introduction	101
6.2 Summary of the Findings of the Study	101
6.3 Recommendations	103
6.3.3 Policy Recommendations	104
6.4 Recommendations for Further Research	105
Conclusion	106
7. REFERENCES	107
APPENDICES	118
Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Certificate	118
Appendix B: Interview Schedule	119
Appendix C: Application Letter to Conduct Research	124
Appendix D: Approval Letter to Conduct Research from the MoEAC	125
Appendix E: Informed Consent Letter to Participants	126

DECLARATION

I, Ebeneser Matheus Naruseb, hereby declare that this study is my own work, and that it is a true reflection of my research, and that this work, or any part thereof, has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution.

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2025



October

Name of Student

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Date

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, the research questions, the limitations of the study, the delimitations of the study, and the summary of the chapter.

1.2 Background of the Study

The demand and expectation for better-quality education from the public, governments, and policymakers are constantly growing. As such, schools are facing growing pressure to improve learners' performances under the outcome-based accountability regime that has been adopted by many countries around the world. Therefore, there is renewed attention on the critical role or influences that schools and classroom activities have on improving learner achievement (Du Plessis, 2013; Graczewski et al., 2009). As a result, school principals (leaders) are increasingly urged to act as instructional leaders in their schools. Research has found that principals, as school leaders, play a pivotal role in determining school effectiveness and learners' achievement; they are also seen as essential for executing successful policies and reaching external accountability goals since they are seen as school leaders (Hallinger & Walker 2017; Walker & Qian 2018). Empirical evidence also suggests that the key element in improving learner performance is school leadership (Hockmeyer, 2015). School leadership is, therefore, consequently regarded as very necessary for the effective promotion of learner results (Day et al., 2016).

Instructional leadership has emerged as a critical component of education reform in recent years. Instructional leadership refers to leadership functions that contribute to a student's learning and achievement and the teacher's ability to teach (Du Plessis, 2013). This practice is a departure from traditional conceptions of school leadership that focus on the principal as an administrative leader or inspector of teachers towards that of the principal as a facilitator of teacher growth. This means that principals have the responsibility to create conditions in the school in which learners can receive quality instruction. This occurs when the principal provides direction and support to the teachers and learners to improve the instruction at the school. Geleta (2019) argued that a principal should be a dynamic instructional leader in the domain of education to better the overall quality of education as well as learning, through the following roles: portraying an understandable vision and mission; establishing personnel development; managing curriculum and instruction; provisioning of adequate resources; and fostering a conducive instructional climate at school.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

According to Geleta (2019) many school principals, especially in primary schools, have limited conceptions of and appreciation for instructional leadership. The prevailing view of school leadership is still very traditionalist, and a large number of principals view their roles from an administrative or inspector framework. As such, the core business of schooling, which is teaching and learning, is neglected. Therefore, this research aims to investigate how public primary school principals perceive school leadership in general,

their conception of instructional leadership, and how it influences academic achievement in Khomas Region, Namibia.

The study has significance because instructional leadership is aligned with learner-centred education, which underpins the basic education curriculum (Du Plessis, 2018). Moreover, the principles of instructional leadership provide a strong foundation for the attainment of the (7) key areas of the work of schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of schools as identified by the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture (MoEAC). Therefore, it is the hope and expectation that bringing the concept of instructional leadership to the forefront of educational or school leadership may enable schools in Namibia to emphasise issues such as time on task and thus ensure that the learners excel academically.

1.4 Research Questions

Research suggests that effective leadership contributes to learners' good learning outcomes, yet school leaders do not seem to be sufficiently educated about or exposed to the idea of effective instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2018). Therefore, the following research questions served as a guide for this study:

Main Research Question

How do principals in Namibia's Khomas region perceive and enact instructional leadership in relation to student academic performance?

Secondary Research Questions

1. How do public primary school principals in Khomas Region, Namibia perceive instructional leadership?
2. What activities or approaches can be identified as employed by principals to enhance learning outcomes?
3. How can instructional leadership be developed as a cornerstone for school leadership among public primary school principals to positively impact learners' academic performance?

1.5 Significance of the Study

As with most contemporary and progressive educational theories, the literature on educational leadership and management is predominantly from the global north. The body of research in this area, particularly on instructional leadership in Namibia, is limited (Hallinger, 2018). This study aims to make a contribution to the production of educational leadership and management knowledge in Namibia. The results of this study could be very helpful to many stakeholders when it comes to the principals' concerns regarding managing and implementing instructional leadership in their schools. Knowledge generated from the study can equip principals with the skills necessary to successfully carry out instructional leadership as one of their key responsibilities.

It had also emerged from a recent scholarly study (Theron, 2023) on school leadership training that the University of Namibia (UNAM) was offering a principal training, which has not been evaluated so recently to gauge its impact on its participants. On this basis, the following critical questions have emerged:

- What should be done to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership training offered by UNAM?
- What do students' study throughout the programme and how do they study this programme?
- How are these new skills applied?
- In essence, how effective is the training offered by UNAM, considering that the programme is only offered through distance learning?

Therefore, principals of all public schools where the research study was conducted had the first-hand opportunity to provide information based on their understanding of the phenomena under investigation. This thesis or rather the report of this research's findings, will be available in the public domain via UNAM's scholarly repository. As such principals, academics, and researchers will have access to the findings of this study.

Josua, Auala and Miranda (2022) indicated in their research article that by way forward for both policy and practice as far as the transformation of school curriculum is concerned that an impact research should be conducted on the newly revised curriculum in order to keep track of the impact that it is having on the society. Consequently the new focus for "school" has created a unit whereby principals must now incorporate a conceptually new form of leadership. Sintana (2013) also echoed this statement that an increasing number of research studies attempted to measure school leadership and thus new terms began to appeared in literature such as; shared leadership, teacher leadership, distributed leadership and instructional leadership. Additionally

it is cited by this study that the paradigm of instructional leadership underestimates student welfare and self-esteem which contradicts the National Standards and Performance Indicators for Schools in Namibia which states that, “learners are given opportunities and encouraged to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as sport, cultural and environmental programmes.”

1.6 Limitations of the Study

It was anticipated that time would be a limitation to this study, considering that the researcher is employed as a permanent primary school teacher. So, to overcome this limitation, the researcher applied for study leave during the process of data collection and had reached out to all the participants without that he had to rush back to school to attend classes.

The second limitation was distance. The study aimed to involve only principals of the selected public schools in the Khomas Region, considering the vastness of the region and that some schools are located in rural areas. A third limitation is the relatively small sample size, which limits the study’s generalizability. Furthermore, the lack of multiple rounds of interviews with the participants could also be regarded as a limitation. Finally the potential emotional impact of the interview process, which may have caused discomfort to some participants could be seen as a limitation too.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

In essence, delimitations are the boundaries or limits set by the researcher to ensure the study's objectives are not impossible to achieve (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). Therefore, this study focused particularly on investigating how public primary school principals conceive school leadership in general and on the aspect of instructional leadership in particular, to find out how this particular leadership style influences learners' academic performance. The targeted participants were restricted to public primary school principals in the Khomas Region. The Khomas Education Region is divided into four (4) circuits, and each circuit is further subdivided into clusters (Khomas Schools Summary, 2019).

1.8 Definition of Terms

In this study, the following terms should be understood as follows:

Notion: An individual's conception or impression of something known, experienced, or imagined (Webster, n.d.).

Instructional leadership: Goal-oriented leaders who are able to define a clear direction for the school to motivate others to join in its achievement. The primary focus is on the improvement of student academic outcomes (Hallinger, 2005).

Public: Government-owned school, not private.

Primary school: A school where the students have a few, close teachers and where the learning is focused on the basics of reading, writing and maths (Spernes, 2020).

School principal: school leader who prioritises collaboration and adaptability in crisis management, supports the well-being of school personnel, and implements innovative strategies to address challenges (Uy et al., 2023)

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter provided background information, an explanation of the problem, and research questions. The significance of the investigation, its limitations and delimitation were also presented in this chapter. The next chapter reviews the theoretical framework, and the literature related to the topic in order to brighten the notion under examination.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review is intended to serve two key purposes: Foremost it situated the study within existing scholarship and identified the gaps the research intends to fill. This chapter therefore synthesized both international with an overview of the broader leadership landscape before narrowing the focus to the Namibian context and perspectives on instructional leadership, drawing on empirical studies, theoretical contributions, and policy documents. It is therefore organized to move from broader discussions of leadership in education, to the specific principles of instructional leadership, and finally arrived to the contextual realities of Namibian schools. In doing so, the study highlighted the conceptual foundations that inform the study, examined prior findings and methodological approaches, and outlined where current knowledge remains insufficient.

It also presented the theoretical framework underpinning the study and highlighted the key gaps that the research seeks to address. The review is structured to progress from general international perspectives on leadership, to studies specific to instructional leadership, and finally to literature concerning Namibia. Within each section, the discussion identified recurring themes, methodological trends, and areas of consensus and disagreement among scholars.

According to Fahimirad, Idris, and Komamjani, (2016) leadership in higher education were widely researched, yet many studies failed to adequately address the role of instructional leadership—whether in informal, distributed forms or in formal structures—particularly within higher schools. This omission may reflect the broader priorities of academic circles, which often emphasized managerial or administrative leadership approaches. In Namibia, the limited body of research on instructional leadership often lacks empirical depth, relying on small samples, qualitative perceptions, or conceptual discussion without robust, context-specific data collection or comparative analysis. As such Masuku (2011) highlighted that instructional leadership has become an increasingly important element in restructuring and uplifting schools worldwide, and Namibia is no exception. Yet, previous studies rarely investigate how global instructional leadership models are adapted—or fail to adapt—to the unique socio-cultural, economic, and policy realities of Namibian schools, nor do they explore the relationship between policy directives and day-to-day school practices. These contextual and methodological gaps provided the foundation for the present study, which aims to address them through the lens of a critical perspective examination.

Given these gaps, it is essential to ground the study in a theoretical model that captures the multifaceted role of school leaders in shaping teaching and learning. Hallinger's Instructional Leadership Theory provides such a framework, offering clear dimensions through which the principal's influence on educational outcomes can be examined.

Methodological gaps in previous studies:

- **Limited contextual focus:** With little adaptation to Namibia's unique socio-economic, cultural and policy environment a majority of studies were conducted on instructional leadership in a global context.
- **Overdependence on descriptive or conceptual analysis:** Many studies were found to focus on theoretical discussions only without robustly integrating empirical evidence, thus making it difficult to assess the actual impact of instructional leadership in practice.
- **Narrowed data collection approaches:** It also became evident that some previous research mostly uses small or single data collection methods, limiting the generalizability and depth of the findings.

This chapter further focused on answering the following research questions:

1. How do public primary school principals in Khomas Region, Namibia perceive instructional leadership?
2. What activities or approaches can be identified as employed by principals to enhance learning outcomes?
3. How can instructional leadership be developed as a cornerstone for school leadership among public primary school principals to positively impact learners' academic performance?

The emphasis on understanding the connections between school leadership and teaching has been one of the most significant and pervasive trends in educational leadership and management (Du Plessis, 2018). In the 1980s, scholars began to investigate this relationship in more detail, and the research found that effective schools usually had

principals who stressed the importance of instructional leadership, with some scholars claiming that school leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all related factors contributing to what learners learn at school (ibid.). This research-based focus on instructional leadership, according to Du Plessis (2013), subsequently led to the development of new conceptual frameworks and instruments. According to Du Plessis (2013), the literature on instructional leadership in schools can be divided into three categories: the theory behind instructional leadership activity; research on what instructional-oriented leaders do; and investigations of the effects of leadership efforts on teachers' and students' outcomes (ibid). Stakeholders in education need to understand how instructional leadership influences student academic performance. According to Brad (2016) when Instructional leaders continuously provide clarity on any vision created in the school then this enable teachers to have clear direction on how to follow it.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Theory is explained as a system of ideas intended to explain or predict phenomena (Cohen et al., 2009). This study drew on Philip Hallinger's Instructional Leadership Theory which underscores the critical role of competent school leadership in enhancing teaching and learning outcomes. Hallinger (2011) argues that school administrators should not merely be managers or overseers but should actively engage in the educational process to foster improved student achievement. This theory positions instructional leadership at the core of effective school management, emphasising that the involvement of school leaders in instructional practices directly influences the quality of teaching and, consequently, student

success. Hallinger identifies four essential dimensions of instructional leadership that are pivotal in shaping a school's educational outcomes.

The first aspect is defining the school's mission. A clear mission helps align the efforts of all stakeholders towards common goals, fostering a unified approach to teaching and learning. This, according to Hallinger, describes effective instructional leaders as those who establish a clear and compelling educational vision and mission for their schools. This particular mission serves as the foundation for all school activities, providing direction and purpose. It is, therefore, the instructional leader's responsibility to ensure that this mission is not only well-articulated but also widely understood and embraced by all members of the school community, including teachers, students, and parents. Similarly, Mathew (2015) confirms that the principal's role is deeply involved with setting the school's direction.

The second aspect involves managing the instructional program. By managing the instructional program effectively, leaders can create an environment where high-quality teaching is prioritised, and students are given the best possible opportunities to succeed academically. This aspect of Hallinger's theory highlights the importance of school leaders in overseeing curriculum implementation, monitoring student progress, and supporting effective teaching practices. It is greatly expected that all instructional leaders are actively involved in curriculum decisions, ensuring that the instructional program is aligned with the school's mission and adjusted to meet the diverse needs of students. For that reason Bush (2011) argues that the current approaches and procedures followed in recruitment of principals in South Africa need to be changed. This is the same trend that is being practised

in Namibia. It is therefore suggested that before a person is appointed as a school principal that his or her leadership capabilities need to be confirmed. Shigwedha (2017) is also of the opinion that school principals in Namibia should hold academic qualifications which are fitting to their positions and responsibilities.

The third aspect is promoting a positive school climate. Geoferey (2018) also highlighted that an effective principal interacts with individual members of staff in relation to their day-to-day work. Thus a positive school climate is characterised by high expectations, a strong sense of community, and an emphasis on continuous improvement. Instructional leaders promote this climate by setting the tone for the school, modelling desired behaviours, as well as crafting and implementing policies that encourage positive interactions and a focus on learning. Hallinger further emphasises that a conducive learning environment is essential for student success and that it is the role of the instructional leader to cultivate such an environment. This involves fostering a culture of strong collaboration, respect, and mutual support among teachers, students, and staff.

The fourth and final aspect is developing teacher capacity. Teachers in schools are the ones that contribute an important part in enhancing learning among the learners. Hence, Kapur (2018) strongly believes that it is obligatory for teachers to ensure that teaching methods used in class should at all cost be beneficial to the learners. Also according to Wahyudin (2010), in Indonesia, the role of the principal is to provide instructional and curriculum leadership to the teachers. This involves providing opportunities for teachers to enhance

their skills, stay updated on the latest educational practices, and collaborate with their peers.

According to Cardno (2003), in New Zealand, the Ministry of Education wrote that school principals should demonstrate a thorough understanding of current approaches to effective teaching and learning. In Nigeria, Billard (2003, as cited in Ifeoma 2010) also attests that principals are the driving force behind any school, and it is, therefore, argued that they are key to enhancing the quality of the learning process.

In cognizance of the above, Hallinger's theory strongly asserts that instructional leaders must invest in the continuous professional development of their teachers. By focusing on the development of teacher capacity, instructional leaders ensure that their staff is well-equipped to deliver high-quality instruction and adapt to the evolving demands of education. This aspect recognizes that the success of a school's instructional program heavily relies on the capability and allegiance of its teachers.

In summary, Philip Hallinger's Instructional Leadership Theory underscores the crucial role of school leadership in upgrading educational outcomes. By defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, promoting a positive school climate, and developing teacher capacity, instructional leaders generate the conditions necessary for effective teaching and learning. This theory accentuates the idea that active and engaged leadership is not just favourable, but that it is equally essential for fostering student achievement and overall school success.

2.2.1 Defining the School's Mission:

Leaders, such as school principals, establish a shared sense of purpose within a school community by clearly articulating the school's vision and mission, ensuring that all stakeholders align their actions with these principles. The mission statement defines the fundamental purpose and values of the school, answering why it exists and what it aims to achieve in its daily operations. Hallinger and Heck (1998) emphasise that a school's vision represents its desired future state, encompassing the goals and aspirations that guide its development. Communication of the vision and mission is crucial, requiring leaders to consistently tailor messages to different audiences, such as teachers, staff, students, and parents, through various channels like meetings, newsletters, or workshops. This process helps embed the vision and mission into the school's culture, ensuring they resonate both personally and professionally with stakeholders.

However, according to Hallinger and Heck (1998), communication alone is insufficient. They stress that leaders must ensure stakeholders comprehend and internalise the vision and mission, which requires engagement through forums, surveys, or informal discussions. When stakeholders understand the vision and mission, they are more likely to align their actions with the school's goals, fostering unity and coherence. Leaders play a critical role in reinforcing this alignment by modelling behaviours, setting clear expectations, and recognising actions that support the school's values. Ongoing assessment is also key, as leaders monitor progress, gather feedback, and make adjustments to ensure the school stays on course toward its desired future state (Hallinger & Heck, 1998).

2.2. 2 Managing the Instructional Program:

School administrators play a critical role in overseeing and organising the instructional program, which includes curriculum development, assessment techniques, and the coordination of teaching and learning activities (Hallinger, 2003). Fullan (2015) asserts that administrators are responsible for ensuring that the curriculum aligns with educational standards and meets the diverse needs of students, a process that is essential for continuous improvement in education. Moreover, according to Mbangula (2021) in order to develop a meaningful curriculum, administrators also design and implement assessment techniques that provide valuable feedback for both teachers and students. Darling-Hammond (2006) emphasises the importance of well-designed formative and summative assessments in promoting academic growth and informing instructional decisions.

Beyond curriculum and assessment, administrators coordinate teaching and learning activities, ensuring smooth instructional programs and providing necessary resources and support for teachers. Fullan and Hargreaves (2012) highlight the importance of collaborative learning communities, where administrators facilitate collective inquiry and shared responsibility for student learning. Moreover, Leithwood (2006) links strong leadership in instructional improvement to better student outcomes, while Welsh and Little (2018) underscore the importance of fostering equitable educational environments. Administrators must address disparities, promote inclusive practices, and ensure that all students have access to the resources and support they need to succeed.

Jansen and Middlewood (2003) attest to the above by stating that for principals to be able to successfully manage the curriculum implementation, they need to be familiar with the subject contents and methods of all the subjects taught in their schools to enable them to facilitate change and offer effective support to teachers. The “Namibian handbook for instructional leaders in Namibian schools” (2014) states that school principals have to promote a positive school climate, create effective learning, lead and manage staff, and deploy staff and resources effectively.

2.2.3 Fostering a Positive School Learning Climate:

Since the learning environment's positivity and effectiveness are directly influenced by the cultivation of a welcoming and inclusive school culture, it is a key responsibility of school leaders. It is further believed that leaders can foster this culture through various initiatives such as welcoming ceremonies, establishing open communication channels, and celebrating diversity through cultural events (Wang & Degol, 2016). Such efforts have the potential to promote values like respect, empathy, and inclusivity, helping every member of the school feel valued and accepted. A school climate characterised by belonging and acceptance is linked to improved academic performance and overall student well-being according to (ibid.). In addition, encouraging positive teacher-student relationships is vital, as these relationships foster student engagement and success as stated by (Pianta, 2008). School leaders can facilitate this by promoting a culture of mutual respect and support, providing communication training for teachers, and implementing mentorship programs.

Naama and Lavy (2022) opined that school leaders must also create physically and emotionally safe spaces where students can thrive. This can be done by providing access to resources like counselling services and wellness programs as supportive environments promote positive youth development and resilience. Another strategy is integrating social and emotional learning (SEL) into the curriculum. This is to enhance the school culture by developing students' emotional intelligence and social skills (Durlak, 2015). Gathering feedback from students, parents, and staff through surveys or focus groups allows leaders to assess their efforts and make informed decisions that reinforce the school's positive climate (Cohen, 2009).

2.2.4 Giving Teachers Instructional Input

Effective planning is crucial for enhancing teaching effectiveness and improving student outcomes. Orlich et al. (2010) state that this process begins with the clear identification of goals. Hallinger (2014) adds that instructional leadership emphasises active participation in the instructional process, where principals engage directly with teachers, providing guidance, resources, and feedback to improve teaching practices. This approach goes beyond setting visions and goals, focusing instead on shaping the conditions for continuous improvement and supporting professional development. Leaders can facilitate this process by offering growth opportunities, such as workshops, peer mentoring, and collaborative initiatives, ensuring that teachers stay informed about the latest instructional strategies and are well-equipped to meet students' diverse needs. Whitaker (2019) also asserts that improved teaching and learning should be the primary focus for the principals.

Additionally, constructive evaluations and ongoing observations are important components of proactive instructional leadership. Evaluations should provide actionable feedback, encouraging teachers to reflect on their practices and make improvements (Hallinger, 2011). Instead of being seen as punitive measures, evaluations are opportunities for professional growth. Consistent classroom observations also allow principals to offer real-time feedback, celebrate successes, and identify areas for improvement. By actively participating in the instructional process through these strategies, school leaders create an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes and overall school success.

2.3 Principal's Perceptions of Instructional Leadership from Local Context

The study of Shitana (2018) highlighted several challenges in implementing instructional leadership in Namibian schools, with the key issue being that many principals view their role as primarily administrative. The study indicates that this administrative focus often leads principals to neglect their instructional leadership responsibilities, which are crucial for guiding educational practices and improving student outcomes. Additionally, it is mentioned that principals face the challenge of balancing conflicting demands from various stakeholders, such as teachers, school management, and the community. These competing interests thus push principals to prioritise administrative or sometimes political concerns over instructional leadership, leaving teachers without the support they need from the principal to address classroom challenges effectively.

Decentralisation in Namibia has also compounded these issues, as principals are burdened with additional administrative duties, diverting their attention from instructional leadership and affecting teaching quality and student achievement. Despite these challenges, instructional leadership remains vital for school success. Bush (2014) emphasises that effective instructional leaders are deeply involved in classroom activities and work to develop the capacities of their staff. Leithwood (2017) adds that proactive instructional leadership helps foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, addressing challenges before they escalate. Therefore, to realise the benefits of instructional leadership in Namibian schools, particularly in the Khomas Region, principals need to be more present and engaged in the teaching and learning process (Leithwood, 2010). By addressing the challenges identified by Shitana (2018), Namibian schools can fully leverage the positive impacts of strong instructional leadership.

2.4 Research Gap

The reviewed literature revealed that there is limited research conducted to examine the notion of instructional leadership amongst public primary principals, especially in the Khomas region, Namibia. Instructional leadership can be understood as a process of influencing teachers to teach the curriculum and students to learn, based on clear values and beliefs and leading to a vision for the school. Some of the studies undertaken have mostly been about the benefits, limitations and challenges of instructional leadership. There has not been much focus on the notion of principals as instructional leaders (So-Oabeb & Du Plessis, 2023). The current study captures the perspectives of principals on their

understanding of instructional leadership and how they enact it for learners' academic improvement.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a comprehensive investigation of the theoretical framework, focusing on the four essential dimensions identified by Hallinger's Instructional Leadership Theory. Moreover, a local study was examined to contextualise these concepts within the local educational panorama. The chapter also traversed the perceptions of public primary school principals regarding instructional leadership, offering insights into how these theories are applied in practice. The next chapter details the research methodology employed in this study, outlining the approaches and techniques used to gather and analyse the data.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section describes the methodological aspects relating to this research study. The term ‘methodology’ refers to the general theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of the research (Snyder, 2019). Research is a technique used by scholars to learn more about a field, generate new information, and create new applications (Hale, 2018). Bhattacharjee (2012) suggests that in a pragmatic research study, research design refers to a detailed plan for gathering data. On top of that, a research method is a technique applied to solving a research problem in a methodical manner. It can be thought of as a science that studies how scientific research is carried out (Patel, 2019). The research design and method also demonstrate how the final research result will be obtained in compliance with the study's objectives (Sileyew, 2019).

It is within this framework that methods were determined based on their capacity to yield data that facilitated analysis within the chosen methodology. As such, a qualitative research paradigm is chosen in collaboration with a phenomenological research design as an appropriate approach. Amongst others, research design and approach, population, sample, research instruments, data collection, data analysis and research ethics were discussed in this chapter.

3.2 Research Design and Approach

Given the nature of the chosen topic whereby the notion of instructional leadership is examined, particularly amongst public primary school principals, the researcher viewed

qualitative research design as the most appropriate for this critical perspective. Qualitative methodology aims to get a deeper understanding of the aspects of principals' understanding of instructional leadership (Yin, 2015). Moreover, the use of the qualitative method to collect data focuses on the opinions of the participants. This data is made up of words and analysed by arranging responses according to the research questions; through the inductive approach, the researcher further identified themes and codes from the transcripts (Creswell, 2012). According to Alase (2017), at times, certain researchers who have conducted research projects of various kinds have found it very frustrating to decide which qualitative approach to use. Nevertheless, this research study regards phenomenology as that specific qualitative approach, which is elegant enough and participant-oriented to get to the real lived experiences of the research participants in this study. According to Yüksel and Yıldırım (2015), a phenomenology study pursues how individuals establish meaning and the key concept of the phenomenon. Creswell (2014) is also of the opinion that participants in a qualitative phenomenological study obtain data from the location where the topic under investigation is faced.

In terms of philosophical underpinnings, the adoption of the interpretivism paradigm for this research is considered to be able to provide an in-depth understanding of certain contexts, such as cross-cultural issues to the researcher. This paradigm would also equally enable the researcher to be considerate of the behaviour and experiences of the school principals who are the participants. Through following the interpretivist paradigm, this research study is geared to be strengthened by the following common qualities (Alharahseheh & Pius 2020):

- Firstly, the study would focus on the complete experience.
- Secondly, the research questions are developed by the researcher based on areas of interest.
- Thirdly, by engaging participants in formal interviews, the researcher is able to explore their experiences in depth.

Lastly, based on the aforementioned qualities, the researcher could gain a deep understanding of the study in its specific context.

3.3 Population of the Study and study setting

Different authors explained the concept of population from prominent angles. Firstly, in view of Asiamah et al. (2017), the target population is regarded as the distinct population from which the sample is drawn. Brewer (2015) defines a population as the umbrella term for the broader group from which a sample is chosen or the group to which the investigator wishes to extrapolate the study results. Lastly, Matthew and Ross (2020) considered the population as the total number of cases that might be included in a study. In view of the above definitions, and for the purpose of collecting relevant data for this study, the researcher was cognizant that the Khomas Education Region comprised 48 public primary school principals (Khomash Schools Contact List, 2019).

3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedures

Christiansen (2014) defines sampling as the process of indicating which people, sites, proceedings, or manners should be considered for a specific study by the researcher.

Purposive sampling was used for this study. This study targeted ten principals to participate in the study. Creswell (2015) suggested that when participants are selected for a study, it is important for the researcher to determine the size of the sample. Particularly, in phenomenological research, the number of participants is suggested to range from a minimum of 2 and that it should not exceed 25 (ibid). Additionally, it is stated (ibid) that it is of utmost importance that all participants in the study have a homogenous experience of the phenomenon being studied.

As previously mentioned in the population, a total of only 10 public primary school principals were included in this study. Their years of experience ranged from (20) to (30) years. The study had an equal representation of both genders (5) males and (5) females. Another important aspect from the researcher was to have a school from each of the following localities: an urban school, a school from the informal settlement and a rural school. This categorisation was meant to support the researcher to contextualise the perceptions of the participants in light of their lived experiences in their respective settings. Thus, the sampling of the schools was as follows: Urban (Katutura) - four schools, Urban (Khomasdal) - two schools, Urban (Town) - two schools, Informal settlement - one school, Rural (Farm school) - one.

3.5 Research Instruments

3.5.1 In-depth Phenomenological Interview

This study used an interview guide for data collection. According to Esterberg (2002), an interview guide is a collection of themes or questions the interviewer wishes to address during the interview. Furthermore, Dahal (2021) suggested that three serial in-depth interviews should be conducted with each participant within a phenomenological research study. In the first interview, the previous experience of the participant is assessed regarding the phenomenon. The next interview should be based on the current experiences of the participant. The third interview is a combination which describes the individual's most important lived experience. Also, Kekeya (2021) is of the opinion that a semi-structured interview is a tool to probe, follow-up and explain questions, views and experiences of people.

The interview guide was used for the principals' interviews, which comprised only the third stage where lived experiences of the participants were considered. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim. The structure of the interview guide was Section A: Biographical information, Section B: general questions related to Instructional Leadership, Sections C and D: in-depth questions, and Section E: additional comments.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher received ethical approval from the University of Namibia Ethics Committee as well as a letter of permission from the Director of Education, Arts and Culture to conduct research at a government school. In-depth interviews with participants were the major data collection method in this phenomenological study. In order to create a relaxing and reliable atmosphere, the interviews began with a social discussion. The selected principals were interviewed on-site at their individual schools. Prior meetings were arranged to explain the purpose and methods of the research study, and once the participants volunteered to participate then they were handed the informed consent to complete. Equally, the researcher emphasised to the participants the use of additional notes and recordings during the interview. The acquired data will be safely stored for five years with the University of Namibia, before being destroyed.

3.7 Data Analysis Tool

In a qualitative study, data analysis is a continuous process that is necessary and important at every stage of the investigation (Coy, 2019). It is further asserted by Du Plessis (2018) that data analysis and interpretation are very crucial in any research study. In support of these views, it is stated that the process of qualitative analysis of data requires the inductive analysis technique. According to Patton (2015), inductive analysis begins with particular observations and builds towards general trends. Data were analysed by arranging responses according to the research questions and applying an inductive approach. The open-ended questions from the questionnaires and the qualitative data from the interviews were analysed using content analysis. By using content analysis, the researcher was able to

categorise the data and identify any themes or patterns that were used to draw conclusions (Mezmir, 2020).

Sohn (2017) states that while QDAS (Qualitative Data Analysis Software) is often described as a tool, it could also be referred to as a structure. MAXQDA could also be used to aid the researcher in organising documents, identifying, labelling, indexing, and retrieving text and reviewing the conceptual understanding and development of the data. Another potential challenge, which was experienced with coding in phenomenology, according to Sohn, is that the context of the coded text may be lost. However, MAXQDA enables this text to be retrieved just by a click. According to Richards and Hemphill (2018) and Umanilo (2019), data analysis is further understood to include the following stages:

- Firstly, Data reduction (accurate recording and summarising),
- Secondly, Data display (in the form of charts, graphs and matrices) and lastly, Data verification. An early verification of collected data is believed to make the conclusion credible (ibid).

This research study has used the available software to analyse and interpret its findings. Consequently, data collected from the interviews were collated and tabulated as derived from the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 21).

3.8 Research Ethics

The University of Namibia (UNAM) ethical protocol was followed for this research study to get an ethical clearance certificate from the Research Committee. Next, a letter was sent to the Ministry's Regional Director asking for authorisation from the MoEAC to conduct

research in public primary schools. All research participants after consultation submitted their signed consent forms to take part in the study. The participant's physical, emotional, and mental safety was guaranteed throughout the research study, and assurance was offered regarding the confidentiality and anonymity of their information (Nind et al., 2016). Various coding methods such as labelling and grouping approaches were used to protect the participants' identities when the data was analysed. The data collected will only be used for the study's purpose and no information will be disclosed to a third party. The researcher will store data for 2-3 years in a password-protected folder on the researcher's computer. The data will be deleted afterwards upon the successful completion of the study. The participants were free to refuse or withdraw at any stage since participation was voluntary.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter concentrated on the methods utilised to collect data for this study. The researcher outlined the study methodology, design of the research, population, sample and sampling procedure. The chapter further discussed in detail the data collection procedure, data analysis, and ethical considerations observed throughout. While the study did not provide extensive detail on strategies used to identify and managed the researcher's potential biases during the entire process, still the importance of reflexivity and objectivity were recognized. The researcher is cognizant that a lack of documentation on these measures remain a limitation and that unmanaged bias can have a negative bearing on both the interpretation and credibility of the study. The next chapter describes how the data were analysed.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of this study, which examined the notion of instructional leadership among public primary school principals in the Khomas Region. The chapter further captured the demographic profiles of the ten participants who availed themselves for the interviews. The data comprises the distinct perceptions of the participants on instructional leadership, and how it impacted teaching and learning in particular. The interviews were first recorded, then transcribed, and finally analysed. Consequently, the data collected from the interviews were collated and tabulated as derived from the SPSS to generate descriptive summaries of selected participant characteristics and response trends. The use of SPSS was limited to data management and basic descriptive output, supplementing the primary thematic analysis conducted for the qualitative data (Habes et al., 2021). This information is illustrated in figures and tables to facilitate an easier understanding of the data.

The codes and themes derived from the inductive thematic analysis approach are shared as this methodology was applied to arrive at the results shared below to address the research study objectives. Initially, what the researcher did was read and re-read the interview transcripts to gain familiarity with the data, followed by open coding to capture recurring concepts and significant statements. Similar codes were then grouped into categories, which were refined into broader themes aligned with the study's objectives. To ensure the credibility of the findings, the coding process was cross-checked against the raw data, and themes were verified through peer debriefing and review by a qualitative research expert. This iterative process ensured that the themes accurately reflected participants' perspectives and minimized potential researcher bias. The results of the data collected will be presented later in this chapter.

The main question to be investigated was: How do principals in Namibia's Khomas Region perceive and enact instructional leadership in relation to student academic performance?

1. How do public primary school principals in Khomas Region, Namibia perceive instructional leadership?
2. What activities or approaches can be identified as employed by principals to enhance learning outcomes?
3. How can instructional leadership be developed as a cornerstone for school leadership among public primary school principals to positively impact a learner's academic performance?

Table 4.1 Presents Participants Biographical Details

Participants	Occupation	Gender	Age	Qualification	Experience
P1	Principal	Female	55-60	Honours	30+
P2	Principal	Female	55-60	Masters	30+
P3	Principal	Male	47-54	Degree	20-25
P4	Principal	Male	47-54	Masters	20-25
P5	Principal	Female	47-54	Honours	25-30
P6	Principal	Male	47-54	Masters	25-30
P7	Principal	Female	47-54	Honours	20-25
P8	Principal	Female	55-60	Diploma	30+
P9	Principal	Male	55-60	Degree	30+
P10	Principal	Male	55-60	Honours	25-30

As stipulated in Table 4.1 above, interviews were conducted with ten participants from the four educational circuits within the Khomas Region. These circuits are further divided into nine clusters, and the researcher successfully included participants from seven of these nine clusters, ensuring a broader and more representative sample of the region. The participants came from schools that are located in both urban and rural areas, thereby providing a diverse perspective on educational settings within the region.

A key criterion for participation was that each principal must have served at their respective school for a minimum of five years. This requirement ensured that all participants had a substantial understanding of the school environment and leadership responsibilities over time as a principal. The final group of participants consisted of five male and five female school principals, thus creating a gender-balanced representation in the study. Their ages are in the age category of 47-60 years.

In order to protect the participants' confidentiality as well as to maintain anonymity, each interviewee was assigned a number in the same sequence as how the interviews were conducted. The demographic profile of the participants includes gender, age, years of experience, and academic qualifications. This demographic breakdown provides valuable insight to understand the background and perspectives of the principals involved in the study.

Table 4.2 Presents a matching of semi-structured interview questions to research questions

Research Question	Interview Protocol
Research question 1	Q 1,2,3,8
Research question 2	Q 4,7
Research question 3	Q 5,6,9

4.4 Research Question 1

1. How do public primary school principals in Khomas Region, Namibia perceive instructional leadership?

Table 4.3 Presents Instructional Leadership Perspectives

Theme 1: Instructional Leadership Perspectives	Quotes from interviews
	“A collaborative approach between principal and staff to improve quality teaching and learning” Participant 1
	“Goes hand in hand with supporting teaching and learning” Participant 2

“Supports teaching and learning development; Monitor learning progress; Delegation of task, influence lead and guide” Participant 3

“Directs and encourages sufficient teaching and learning” Participant 4

“Overseeing and making sure the workplace is conducive” Participant 5

“Provides professional learning opportunities; Give praises where it’s due for effective teaching and learning” Participant 6

“Contrast of traditional leadership: Focus on improving teaching and learning: Leaders that strive to give instructions” Participant 7

“An honest and sincere leader who is committed to achieve the vision and mission of the school” Participant 8

“A leader who supports the development of teaching and learning” Participant 9

“Leadership that relates to a leader who does not lead alone, but who embodies inclusivity” Participant 10

Definition of Instructional Leadership

According to Hallinger and Murphy (1985), instructional leadership involves the principal directing efforts to improve teaching and learning. Concurrently, the school leader’s priority is to create a conducive academic environment. The next definition states that during instructional leadership, the leader actively engages in collaboration with the staff, coaching them, and facilitating opportunities for the teachers to reflect on and improve their teaching (Blase, 1999).

In view of Robinson et al. (2008), instructional leadership is known to involve the utilisation of concrete data and evidence to inform the principal and staff regarding decision-making pertaining to the curriculum. It is evident from Table 4.1 above that all ten participants have a clear understanding of what instructional leadership is when aligning their perspectives to the above scholarly definitions. Additionally, the major observation in the participant’s responses was the fact that most principals tried to define instructional leadership in terms of the enhancement of the teaching and learning process.

Summary of Research Question 1

The findings disclose that all ten participants have a clear understanding of instructional leadership, acknowledging its core components such as enhancing teaching practices,

supporting teacher development, and fostering student achievement. These findings concur with those of McNeil (2000) who affirms that effective curriculum implementation becomes possible, especially in a school where the principal is present at the planning stage and remains visible throughout the implementation and evaluation. One participant accentuated the sharp difference between instructional leadership and the more traditional, managerial style of principals, which primarily focused on administrative duties. Unlike the older model, instructional leadership prioritizes direct involvement in curriculum development, classroom instruction, and professional development (Wieczorek & Manard, 2018). This participant stressed how instructional leadership actively promotes collaboration, data-driven decision-making, and a shared vision for academic excellence, in contrast to the often hierarchical and task-focused nature of traditional leadership.

4.5 Research Question 2:

2. What do you consider to be the primary responsibilities of an instructional leader in a primary school setting?

Table 4.4 Presents Principals Primary Responsibilities

Theme 2: Primary Responsibilities	Quotes from interviews
	“Effective and efficient management of the school. Improve teaching and learning methodologies” Participant 1

“Being innovative by thinking outside the box and ensuring that staff are sufficiently resourced”

Participant 2

“Delegation by providing instructional leadership, support, guidance, and direction” Participant 3

“Professional development, creating a conducive positive school environment and climate”

Participant 4

“Working policies to be in place; Conducive teaching and learning” Participant 5

“Promotes effective practices in teaching and learning; Sets clear goals; Allocates resources; Develops people; Redesign organization to be inclusive” Participant 6

“Ensure availability of resources; Oversee curriculum; Data-driven decision-making; Collaboration”

Participant 7

“Have clear goals of responsibilities; Develop staff and institutional workers; Have an award system in place once goals are achieved” Participant 8

“Coaching, mentoring, encouraging and supporting teaching” Participant 9

“Open Mindedness; Groom others to growth; Mentoring; have holistic view of the school; Believe in God” Participant 10

When asked about their primary responsibilities as instructional leaders, the participants indicated and elaborated on their instructional leadership responsibilities by emphasising the multifaceted nature of their roles as illustrated in Table 4.2. The participants indicated the need for effective and efficient school management, which involves not only administrative tasks but also fostering a school culture that prioritises learning and academic excellence. Creativity and innovation were seen as essential, with leaders expected to think creatively and "outside the box" to solve challenges and enhance teaching practices.

4.5.1 Delegation

This theme surfaced as a pivotal component of the participants’ approach to leadership, where they empower others by sharing leadership responsibilities, particularly in providing instructional guidance to teachers (Yukl, 2002). The participants underlined the importance

of professional development for staff, ensuring that teachers ongoingly improve their skills through ongoing learning opportunities, coaching, and mentoring.

4.5.2 Crafting a Positive and Conducive School Environment

The above was yet another major priority attributed to the participants. In their view, attaining this requires the principal to foster a supportive climate that inspires both students and staff while ensuring that “working policies” are in place to guide the school's administration. The principals also stressed the need to avail resources effectively to ensure that both human and material resources are available to meet instructional needs. According to West-Burnham (2011), this provides an opportunity for principals to engage with other educators through dialogue.

4.5.3 Developing People

The participants emphasised the importance of developing people, not just through professional development but by nurturing staff potential and encouraging leadership among teachers. The participants also spoke about redesigning the organisation to be inclusive, creating a structure that supports all learners and staff, despite background or ability. In terms of instructional duties, leaders play a direct role in overseeing the curriculum and ensuring that instruction aligns with educational standards. The MoEAC (2016) shared the same sentiment that curriculum management and changes should be participatory for both principals and teachers. Data-driven decision-making was highlighted as a life and death matter for informed planning and evaluation, ensuring that decisions are based on student performance data and evidence.

4.5.4 Collaboration

Collaboration, both among teachers and between leaders and staff, is regarded as important to their leadership approach. The principals trust in the power of teamwork and shared decision-making. The participants also noted the importance of having an award system to commemorate together when goals are achieved, also motivating staff and students by recognising their efforts.

Over and above academic responsibilities, the participants engaged in coaching and mentoring teachers, offering support, encouragement, and feedback. They also sustain a holistic view of the school, understanding how various academic, emotional, and social elements interconnect to impact the overall school climate and culture.

Eventually, many participants mentioned their belief in God as part of their leadership philosophy, which shapes their values, decisions, and sense of purpose in fostering a nurturing, morally anchored school environment.

Summary of Research Question 2

The ten participants underscore key instructional leadership responsibilities, including effective school management, fostering innovation, delegation, professional development, and creating a positive school environment. Their primary focus was on resource allocation, curriculum oversight, data-driven decision-making, collaboration, coaching, mentoring, and developing an inclusive organisation while emphasising a holistic approach

and belief in God. Similarly, Ambrose (2021) reasoned that the curriculum manager' role is to probe, modify and adapt the prescribed curriculum within the set of values espoused by the school in order to meet the needs of learners.

4.6 Research Question 3

3. In your opinion, what are the main challenges or barriers to effective instructional leadership in your school?

In answering this question, the participants highlighted crucial areas that warrants special attention for future reference. In doing so, the participants provided an extensive insight into the challenges they face as instructional leaders, accentuating several systemic and personal barriers that impede their ability to perform effectively.

Challenge 1: Immense Workload

“It's as you rightfully see in my school. However, I also experienced major barriers in my school that are immense. We talk about the workload of the principals which is a lot.” [P1, Q3]

As even alluded by [P7, Q3] the overwhelming workload that instructional leaders handle is one of the most significant obstacles. On top of their instructional duties, they are also tasked with administrative responsibilities, disciplinary matters, community engagement, and managing day-to-day school operations. This leaves limited time for focusing on enhanced teaching and learning, which is the essence of instructional leadership. The

workload unevenness often forces them to prioritise immediate operational tasks over long-term instructional goals.

Challenge 2: Inadequate Resources:

“And then we come to the finance and the provision of resources. Mhmm. Like lack of resources also make it difficult.” [P2, Q3] “

A repeated theme was the lack of adequate resources. Both materials and humans are needed to implement effective instructional strategies. Schools often have shortages of essential teaching materials, technology, and infrastructure, which directly affects classroom instruction. Without enough resources, leaders struggle to support teachers, enhance the curriculum, or provide the necessary tools for student success (Nande, 2023).

Challenge 3: Lack of Leadership Knowledge:

“If you lack that leadership knowledge, it will become a challenge because now you lead people without knowing where you are leading them. “[P4, Q3]

Some participants expressed that they feel underprepared for the demands of instructional leadership due to insufficient formal leadership training. Quite a number of school leaders are promoted without receiving comprehensive training on leadership principles, curriculum management, and data-driven decision-making, leaving them to learn on the

job. This knowledge spasms can hinder their ability to guide teachers and improve instructional quality.

Challenge 4: Overcrowded Classrooms:

“We do have a lot. Okay. Well, number 1 let me start with the overcrowded classrooms.”

[P5, Q3]

Overcrowding is a great challenge, as it restrains the effectiveness of teaching and makes it difficult for teachers to manage classrooms, provide individual attention, and implement differentiated instruction. Instructional leaders struggle to support teachers in such environments, as the total number of students often leads to behaviour management issues and weakens the impact of instructional strategies. These findings concur with those of the MoEAC (2017) which affirms that overstaffing at some schools and appointment of staff at schools that are uneconomically small have been identified as areas where the Ministry can improve in reducing the spending on remuneration.

Challenge 5: Lack of Ongoing Training for Principals:

“And then the other challenge is also a lack of continuous training. Okay. To me, it's not just for someone to have academic qualifications and so. We need what we call short-term training.” [P3, Q3]

The participants, in particular, noted the lack of consistent, high-quality professional development opportunities. While teachers may receive some training, the principals often lack structured support to refine their leadership skills over time. Ongoing training is

essential for staying abreast with educational best practices, technological advances, and leadership innovations, still, many leaders feel isolated and unsupported in this area. Cardno (2003) argues that most principals lack the knowledge and skills to effectively manage the curriculum.

Challenge 6: Limited Autonomy in Appointing Staff:

“Principals must be allowed to appoint scarcity subjects, real professionals.” [P8, Q3]

Some participants highlighted the lack of autonomy in hiring and appointing staff, especially in subject areas where expertise is scarce. In certain systems, leaders have little control over staffing decisions, which affects their ability to ensure that qualified teachers are placed in classrooms. This can contribute to gaps in subject areas where specialised knowledge is critical, ultimately undermining instructional quality.

Challenge 7: Domestic Challenges:

“We are going through an economic crisis, which I also believe is not going to last forever. Totally, it becomes an obstacle because of some of the problems that you need to initiate Mhmm. So that things can be on a run.” [P7, Q3]

Personal and family challenges, such as stress and lack of peace at home, further entangle the role of instructional leaders. The stress of balancing professional and personal responsibilities can take a toll on their well-being, affecting their focus, decision-making,

and ability to lead effectively. These combined challenges can lead to burnout and reduced motivation, impacting the principal's capacity to create a positive, high-performing school environment.

Summary of Research Question 3

Jointly, these barriers or challenges faced by local principals can be understood through the lens of Hallinger's Instructional leadership Theory, as each of them directly impedes one or more of its dimensions. Viewed through Hallinger's framework, all of these challenges create a complex web that makes it difficult for instructional leaders to focus on their primary mission of improving teaching and learning. For example, a lack of leadership knowledge limits principal's capacity to articulate a compelling vision and equally makes it difficult to align instruction with the schools mission. Addressing these issues requires systemic changes, ongoing support for leaders, and a collaborative effort to minimise personal and professional stressors in Namibian schools.

4.7 Research Question 4:

4. Can you provide specific examples of successful initiatives or practices you have implemented to improve student academic performance through instructional leadership?

Table 4.5 Successful Initiatives or Practices by Principals

Theme 4: Successful initiatives or Quotes from participants practices

“Strict monitoring, clear communication, providing necessary resources”

Participant 1

“Proper planning, training how to implement the syllabus” Participant 2

“Data analysis, utilisation of the latest teaching materials, consider departmental needs” Participant 3

“Improved communication amongst staff and parents” Participant 4

“Setting targets for school, teachers and learners; Review results have clear goals”

Participant 5

“Use SWOT analysis” Participant 6

“Foster partnerships which draw experts on specific topics and liaise with institutions of higher learning” Participant 7

“Daily brain gym for Gr:1-4 learners, praise and award Gr:4-7 learners like excursions” Participant 8

“Assessment, communication, feedback and be a role model” Participant 9

“Help teachers to understand instructional leadership, ability to analyse student results, target setting” Participant 10

When asked about successful initiatives or practices which they had implemented to improve student academic performance at their schools, the participants mentioned that improving student academic performance through instructional leadership presupposes implementing organised and motivated approaches that guide both teachers and students toward success. The following is an expansion on each of the initiatives and practices mentioned by the principals:

Initiative 1: Strict Monitoring

A particular participant mentioned that through establishing consistent monitoring systems for lesson plans, and classroom instruction, student progress, and learner results can improve. This process is explained by Kamaruddin (2015) that it involves conducting

weekly or bi-weekly classroom visits, providing immediate feedback to teachers, and tracking student progress using dashboards or data sheets. Regular monitoring has thus helped the principal to identify areas of improvement speedily, allowing teachers to adjust their instruction in real-time, which eventually leads to better learner results as mentioned earlier.

Initiative 2: Proper Planning

Instructional leaders are advised to have plenary sessions at the start of each term and that it should be reviewed periodically to ensure goals are being met, a sentiment shared by the participant (2). Furthermore, it is suggested by Stronge and Xu (2021) that principals should conduct regular planning sessions with teachers of various departments, where long-term objectives and daily lessons are aligned with curriculum standards and students' needs. The participant is convinced that thoroughly planned lessons create more engaging and effective instruction, leading to better understanding and retention of work by students.

Initiative 3: Data Analysis

Another crucial initiative highlighted for principals is to implement a data-driven approach by analysing student performance data or results from assessments, quizzes, and examinations in order to identify shortcomings in student learning (Öz & Arastaman, 2022; Participant 5). This data is meant to assist in drafting interventions, such as learning support for struggling learners. For example, the TARL programme is geared towards the Literacy and Numeracy improvement of the learners.

Initiative 4: Improved Communication

Participant 4 mentioned that fostering open communication channels between principals, school management, teachers, and learners through regular staff meetings, newsletters, and feedback sessions had greatly helped create opportunities for teachers to share best practices and collaborate on problem-solving. In agreement with the participant, Manafa and University (2018) assert that communication skills are needed by principals for the effective management of schools in any State.

Initiative 5: Setting Targets for the School

Principals should consider working with teachers and students to set clear, measurable academic goals at the classroom, grade, and school levels. These goals should be time-bound and based on results. Progress should be monitored continuously and milestones celebrated whenever the set targets are achieved (Participant 5). In agreeing with this statement, it is mentioned by Meyer et al. (2023) that leading school improvement through goal-setting is also evident from schools in New Zealand schools.

Initiative 6: SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Principals as instructional leaders are required to conduct a SWOT analysis at the beginning of each school year to assess the current state of the school in relation to

academic performance (Özkul et al., 2023). Participant 6 speculated that the findings should be used to develop practices that maximise strengths and opportunities while addressing weaknesses and threats at the same time.

Initiative 7: Fostering Partnerships to Draw Expertise

Another practical example for principals is to build partnerships with local universities, educational institutions, and other organisations to bring expert knowledge into the school. This can inter alia include guest lectures such as motivational gurus, teacher training workshops, or even mentorship programs for learners (Participant 7). At times, community members such as parents can be drawn in to share their expertise and to further develop learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2022).

Initiative 8: Daily Brain-Gym Activities and Excursions

One principal cited the incorporation of short brain-gym activities into the daily routine just before the lesson, such as puzzles, mental mathematical challenges, or physical exercises to stimulate brain activity. Yet, another successful activity mentioned to inspire learners by (Participant 9) is the regular excursions related to the curriculum to provide hands-on learning experiences. Moon Raker Farm was mentioned as a special treat for well-behaved learners. Another educational excursion is taking the Gr: 4 learners to the Daan Viljoen Game Park with the assistance of the Giraffe Foundation. Atmaca (2016), in agreeing with this participant, mentioned the success of brain-based learning practices of teacher educators in an English language teaching programme.

Initiative 9: Assessment and Role Modelling

The establishment of a culture of regular formative and summative assessments is key to tracking progress (Prytula et al., 2013). Therefore, as a leader, modelling best practices by attending professional development workshops, staying abreast about instructional strategies, and demonstrating a commitment to continuous learning is vital for principals (Participant 9).

Initiative 10: Helping Teachers Understand Instructional Leadership

Participant 10 in response to this research question, says that principals should show teachers how to take ownership of their classrooms. Mestry et al. (2013) confirm that principals should lead the teachers with purpose by organising professional development sessions for all staff members which focus on instructional leadership. Eventually, as instructional leaders, they should create mentorship programs where experienced teachers can guide novice staff in instructional best practices.

Summary of Research Question 4:

When primary school principals concentrate on these significant areas, such as monitoring, planning, data-driven decision-making communication, goal-setting, partnership-building, and professional development, then as instructional leaders, principals can most certainly

create an environment where both teachers and learners thrive academically. These practices ensure a strategic, collaborative, and learner-centred approach to school leadership.

4.8 Research Question 5

5. What do you believe are the most effective methods for developing instructional leadership skills among primary school principals?

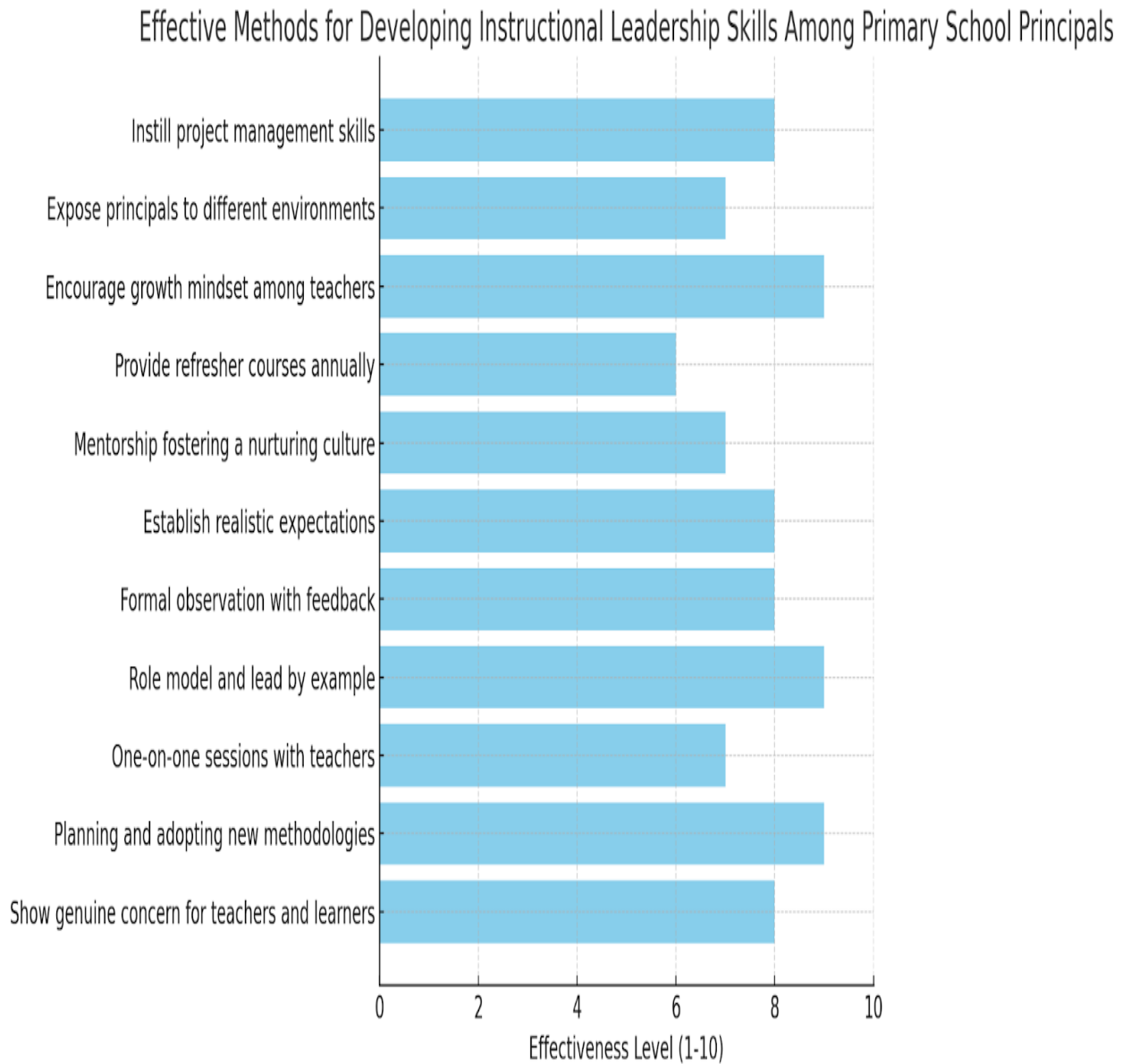


Figure 4.1 Presents Methods for Developing Instructional Leadership

Below is a summary of the methods for developing instructional leadership skills among primary school principals, based on their effectiveness ratings as it was proposed by the ten participants:

1. Show genuine concern for teachers and learners (Rating: 8/10)

Demonstrating care and understanding towards teachers' and learners' values, achievements, and circumstances is crucial for effective instructional leadership.

2. Planning and adopting new methodologies (Rating: 9/10)

Effective planning as well as adapting to new teaching tools, and methodologies are highly effective for fostering instructional leadership.

3. One-on-one sessions with teachers (Rating: 7/10)

Having individual meetings with teachers and treating them as unique individuals, helps in personalised development.

4. Role model and lead by example (Rating: 9/10)

Principals setting a positive example in the school environment as instructional leaders encourage teachers to follow suit and improve leadership dynamics.

5. Formal observation with feedback (Rating: 8/10)

Regulating constant classroom observations and providing constructive feedback is a key method for improving teaching effectiveness.

6. Establish realistic expectations (Rating: 8/10)

Positioning clear and achievable goals helps align the efforts of both teachers and students, leading to better outcomes.

7. Mentorship fostering a nurturing culture (Rating: 7/10)

Initiating a mentorship system that values learning and upliftment, rather than a hierarchical approach, supports professional growth.

8. Provide refresher courses annually (Rating: 6/10)

Providing refresher courses once a year is beneficial but not as impactful as more frequent or integrated professional development.

9. Encourage growth mind-set among teachers (Rating: 9/10)

Stimulating a growth mind-set among staff encourages continuous learning and adaptability, is essential for ongoing instructional improvement.

10. Expose principals to different environments (Rating: 7/10)

Permitting principals to experience diverse educational settings helps broaden their perspective and leadership skills.

11. Instil project management skills (Rating: 8/10)

It is alluded to that teaching principal's project management is highly effective for improving organisational and leadership capabilities.

Summary of Research Question 5

The above-stated ratings reflect the relative importance of each method in developing rigorous instructional leadership skills in primary school principals. Therefore, the bar

graph above is a representation of the effectiveness of various methods for developing instructional leadership skills among primary school principals. The graph pinpointed the key practices as shared by the participants including showing genuine concern for teachers and learners, adopting new methodologies, providing mentorship, and fostering a growth mindset. Each method is rated based on its importance and effectiveness in building strong instructional leadership skills among principals.

4.9 Research Question 6

6. How can educational institutions or government bodies support principals in enhancing their instructional leadership abilities?

Table 4.6 Presents External Support needed by Instructional Leaders

Theme	6: External Support to Instructional Leaders	Quotes from interviews
		“Provide and offer targeted professional development, mentor coach and recognize principal's role, Fund or provide necessary resources, facilitate networking to share best practices, discuss challenges, to improve time” Participant 1 “By providing resources to schools, Training, Providing support” Participant 2

“Short leadership courses, Regular visits with feedback, Have a support system in place, Professional continuous development, Inductions.” Participant 3

“Allocation of resources; Continuous professional development through workshops.” Participant 4

“Finances, lack of accounting skills, courses to enrol principals.” Participant 5

“Continuing professional development; Building principal capacity; Continuous monitoring and assessment; Giving monetary incentives and minimise workload” Participant 6

“Government through real-world leadership; Observations; Inspire; Feedback; situational professional development; Motivation on SWOT analysis; Reduce anxiety.” Participant 7

“By having a supportive caring environment; Having retired teachers to come and support teachers at school; Having professionals such as

nurses, and remedial teachers; Offer music classes to enhance maths and rhythm” Participant 8

“Continuous professional development; Training, Coaching and Mentoring.” Participant 9

“Offer training through Ali: Encompass everybody; Promote processes and systems and synchronise the working relationship among different bodies” Participant 10

How Educational Institutions or Government Bodies Can Support Principals

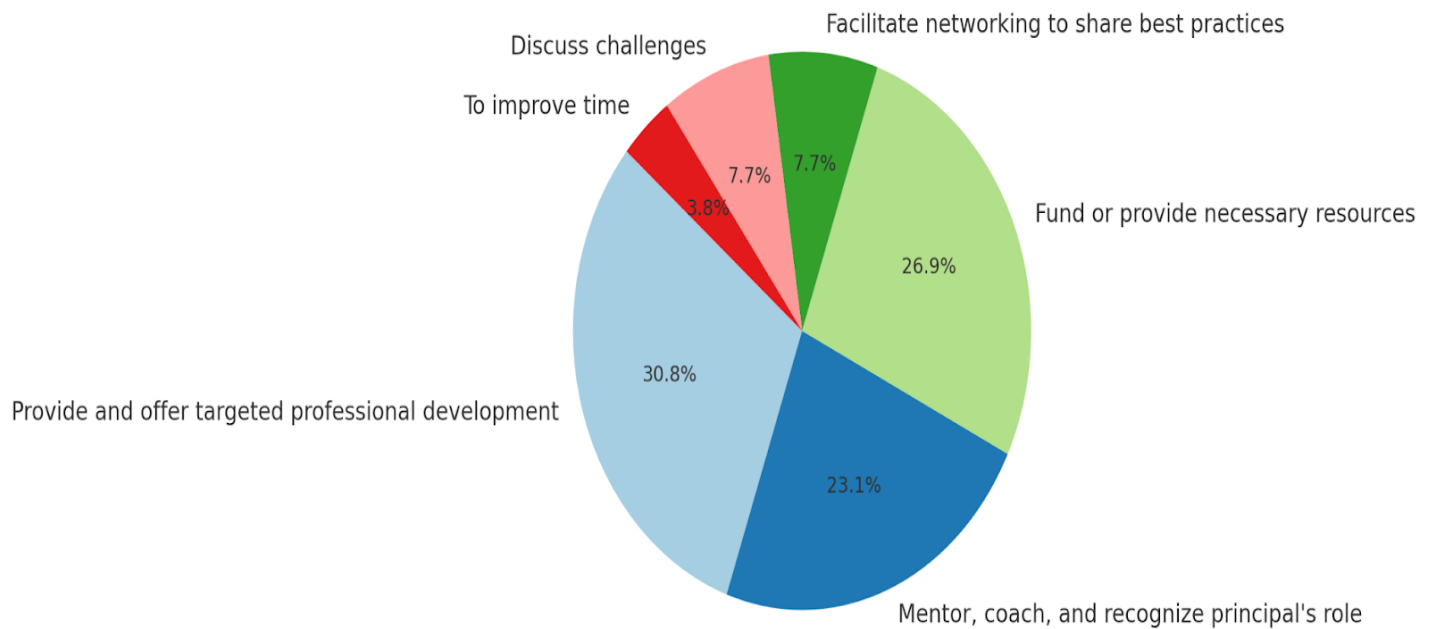


Figure 4.2 Support from educational institutions and government

Figure 4.2 above illustrates the various ways participants strongly suggest in response to ways in which educational institutions and government bodies can support principals externally in improving their instructional leadership abilities. It is noteworthy to mention here that there is an overshadowing of responses to this particular question and its predecessor, but here follows a breakdown projected in percentages to clearly give a brief comparison:

1. Provide and offer targeted professional development (40%): The greatest portion of respondents stressed the need for continuous professional development through training,

workshops, and leadership courses. This shows a strong belief in the importance of structured learning to help principals grow their leadership skills.

2. Mentor, coach, and recognize principal's role (30%): Many participants emphasised the importance of mentoring, coaching, and recognising principals for their leadership. This aspect suggests that principal's benefit from personalised guidance and validation in their roles.

3. Fund or provide necessary resources (35%): A reliable number of respondents highlighted the need for schools to receive financial and material resources. This shows the understanding that effective leadership requires adequate tools and infrastructure.

4. Facilitate networking to share best practices (10%): A lesser number mentioned the need for networking opportunities, suggesting that sharing experiences and strategies among peers can be beneficial for all.

5. Discuss challenges (10%): Some participants pointed out the importance of creating platforms to discuss leadership challenges, implying that open dialogue and problem-solving can help principals manage their roles effectively. WIPSA, a primary school principals association, is a good initiative in this regard.

6. To improve time (5%): Not so many participants noted the need for principals to improve time management, reflecting that this may be a less prominent but still important aspect of leadership support.

Summary of Research Question 6

Overall, the data from Figure 4.2 shows that most participants believe supporting principals through targeted professional development (40%), mentorship and recognition (30%), and

providing necessary resources (35%) are the most important ways educational institutions and government bodies can enhance instructional leadership. Networking, discussing challenges, and improving time management were mentioned by fewer participants in the research study, indicating a lesser focus on these aspects. The all-embracing emphasis is on continuous learning, guidance, and resource provision.

4.10 Research Question 7

7. Please use this space to share any additional thoughts, experiences, or suggestions related to instructional leadership and its impact on student academic performance.

Table 4.7 Further thoughts, experiences and suggestions by participants

Theme 7: Additional thoughts, experiences or suggestions	Quotes from interviews
	“Instructional leadership has a distributive nature to have a positive impact on the entire school set up. Educational leadership has a broader perspective e.g. teacher leadership, transformational and distributive leadership to include the school

community for improvement.”

Participant 1

“Overcrowding classes negative impact,
Social problems at home (poverty,
vulnerability), Reading problems,
Mastering of the previous grades work”

Participant 2

“Provide teachers with various teaching
materials, create conducive learning
environments, Sensitise learners on the
importance of education.” Participant 3

“Foster strong relationships with parents
and learners; Engage families in the
educational process and address students'
individual needs through a supportive
learning environment.” Participant 4

“Always be in the forefront, be involved;
Plan, delegate and monitor.” Participant 5

“Engaged parents and a supportive
community impact student academic

achievement significantly; Set high goals for teachers and learners; Build relationships for effective teaching and learning.” Participant 6

“Take the teacher's concern genuinely without being judgemental: Admit wrong; Build trust; Resolve conflict through open communication.” Participant 7

“Get ideas from all but make it your own.” Participant 8

“In a supportive learning environment, learners perform better.” Participant 9

“Holistic environment, a happy moment type of leadership.” Participant 10

This collection of responses reflects diverse thoughts, experiences and suggestions on instructional leadership and factors affecting school success. Below is a breakdown according to the participants’ perspectives:

4.10.1. Distributive Educational Leadership:

“Instructional leadership has a distributive nature to have a positive impact on the entire school set up. Educational leadership has a broader perspective, e.g. teacher leadership, transformational and distributive leadership to include the school community for improvement.” [P1, Q7]

Instructional leadership, as suggested by Participant 1, along with its distributive nature, involves sharing leadership roles among teachers, administrators, and even learners to enhance the whole school. This collaborative approach promotes collective responsibility for academic success. Educational leadership, in a broader sense, includes various styles like teacher, transformational, and distributive leadership, engaging the entire school community (parents, educators, and partners) to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Botha and Afework (2020) strongly disagreed and mentioned that a distributive approach to instructional leadership had posed challenges for female principals in Ethiopian secondary schools. In the end, this participant is adamant that if principals integrate these practices, schools can bring about positive changes and meet diverse student needs.

4.10.2. Challenges in Learning

“Overcrowding classes negative impact, Social problems at home (poverty, vulnerability), Reading problems, Mastering of the previous grades work” [P2, Q7]

In the opinion of Participant 2, overcrowded classrooms, socio-economic challenges, and learning difficulties are significant obstacles to academic progress. Overcrowding limits individual attention from teachers, making it harder to address students' unique needs. Socio-economic issues, such as poverty and vulnerability, affect students' well-being, concentration, and access to learning resources (Marais, 2016). Learning difficulties, including challenges with reading and mastering previous grade-level content, further hinder academic achievement by creating gaps in foundational knowledge. Together, these factors contribute to a less effective learning environment, making it harder for students to reach their full potential.

4.10.3. Teaching Materials and Environment

“Provide teachers with various teaching materials. Create conducive learning environments, Sensitize learners on the importance of education.” [P3, Q7]

Providing adequate teaching resources and fostering a conducive learning environment are essential for effective education in the opinion of the third participant. Resources such as textbooks, technology, teaching aids, and training materials enable teachers to deliver diverse and engaging lessons that meet students' varied learning needs. A well-equipped classroom promotes active learning and helps students grasp complex concepts more easily. Additionally, a conducive learning environment, one that is safe, supportive, and engaging, encourages student participation, enhances focus, and nurtures a positive attitude toward learning. Together, resources and a positive environment create the foundation for better academic outcomes and overall student development (Vos et al., 2016).

4.10.4. Engaging Families and Supportive Learning

Participant 4 and Participant 6 jointly emphasised the importance of building strong relationships with families and involving them in the educational process:

“Foster strong relationships with parents and learners; Engage families in the educational process and address students' individual needs through a supportive learning environment.” [P4, Q7]

“Engaged parents and a supportive community impact student academic achievement significantly; Set high goals for teachers and learners; Build relationships for effective teaching and learning.” [P6, Q7]

Concurrently, engaging parents and families helps create a more holistic support system for students, ensuring that learning continues both at school and at home. When families are actively involved, it is assumed that they can better understand their children's academic and emotional needs, fostering a stronger connection between home and school. In addition, as suggested by Thompson et al. (2014), it is stated that addressing students' individual needs within a supportive learning environment improves their well-being, motivation, and academic performance, as they feel more supported both personally and academically. This collaborative effort between educators and families is significant to student success.

4.10.5. Leadership Involvement and Delegation

Participant 5 strongly suggests that active leadership, characterised by planning, delegating, and monitoring, is essential for an overall school's success:

“Always be in the forefront, be involved; Plan, delegate and monitor.” [P5, Q7]

Effective planning ensures that clear goals are set, guiding the school's vision and mission. Therefore, as postulated by Morake et al. (2012), delegating tasks empowers staff members, fosters teamwork, and ensures that work responsibilities are shared, preventing leadership burnout. Constant monitoring allows leaders to track progress, identify challenges, and make changes when necessary. This proactive and hands-on approach ensures that the school runs efficiently and effectively, with leadership actively steering continuous improvement and fostering a productive learning and teaching environment.

4.10.6. Supportive Relationships and Communication

Participant 7 strongly advocates for the vital role of open communication, trust-building, and conflict resolution in fostering a positive school climate and culture:

“Take the teacher's concern genuinely without being judgemental: Admit wrong; Build trust; Resolve conflict through open communication” [P7, Q7].

Open communication encourages transparency and inclusivity, allowing all stakeholders (teachers, students, and parents) to express their thoughts and concerns without fear

(Berkovich, & Eyal, 2018). This exchange of ideas instils a sense of belonging and collaboration within the entire school community. Building trust is equally important, as it creates an environment where individuals feel valued and respected, promoting positive relationships among staff and students. Moreover, effective conflict resolution strategies empower individuals to address disagreements constructively, transforming potential disruptions into opportunities for growth and understanding. In conclusion, these elements contribute to a supportive and harmonious school atmosphere that enriches student learning and overall well-being.

4.10.7. Personalising Leadership

Participant 8 suggested that effective leaders should actively seek input from their team members while ensuring that the final decisions align with their own vision for the organisation:

“Get ideas from all but make it your own.” [P8, Q7]

This balanced approach stimulates collaboration and inclusivity, allowing the staff to feel valued and heard, which can enhance morale and engagement. For example, a school principal might hold regular meetings to gather teachers' feedback on curriculum changes or even teaching strategies. However, after considering their input, the principal may choose to implement a specific teaching method that aligns with the broader educational philosophy and objectives for student achievement. By doing so, the principal demonstrates that while collaboration with staff is important, they are ultimately responsible and

accountable for steering the school towards a unified vision, ensuring coherence in the school's vision and mission. McLaughlin (2020) also agrees that personalised principal leadership practices are one of the eight strategies for leading equitable, high-achieving schools.

4.10.8. Supportive Learning Environment and Holistic Approach

In response to this question both Participant 9 and Participant 10 accentuate the critical need to create a supportive, happy and holistic environment for learners to thrive academically:

“In a supportive learning environment, learners perform better.” [P9, Q7]

“Holistic environment, a happy moment type of leadership.” [P10, Q7]

A positive school atmosphere promotes emotional well-being, encouraging students to feel safe and valued, which is essential for effective learning. Furthermore, the two participants believe that by integrating social, emotional, and academic support, schools can address the diverse needs of students, helping them develop resilience and a love for learning. Activities such as team-building exercises, mentorship programs, and celebrations of student achievements contribute to a joyful school culture that enhances student engagement and motivation. When students feel supported and happy, they are more likely to participate actively in their education, leading to better academic performance and personal growth. This will also combat student absenteeism by building a holistic educational environment which is focused on student achievement in the era of technology and globalisation (Fios et al., 2024).

Summary of Research Question 7

All ten participants have emphasised the importance of creating a supportive, happy, and holistic environment for learners, stressing that emotional well-being in a school is cardinal for effective learning. A positive school atmosphere fosters a sense of safety and value among students, which enhances their engagement and motivation and minimises bullying.

Principals can achieve this through collaborative practices such as open communication, trust-building, and conflict resolution, allowing all stakeholders (teachers, students, and parents) to feel heard and involved in the educational process. Instructional Leaders should seek input from their team while making decisions that align with their vision, ensuring coherence in the school's direction. In conclusion, by integrating social, emotional, and academic support through different activities, primary schools can effectively address the diverse needs of learners, encouraging resilience and a love for learning, eventually leading to better academic performance and personal growth.

4.11 Research Question 8

8. Reflecting on your own experiences, can you share a specific instance where you encountered a significant instructional leadership challenge and how you addressed it

Table 4.8 Presents challenges and mitigations encountered by participants

Theme 8: Challenges and Mitigations	Quotes from interviews
-------------------------------------	------------------------

	“Establishing a school climate where disciplinary issues did not dominate instructional issues. Was addressed by sharing the school's vision, code of conduct together with strict control and implementation.” Participant 1 “Have always a vision so you do not need to panic about the situation.” Participant 2
Participant 3	“A child lost school shoes and the parent was furious; The Parent was brought to the office and was calmed down so the matter was resolved.” “Demonstrate a commitment to educational excellence and a positive attitude towards learning; Your dedication can inspire teachers and students to strive for higher academic achievement.” Participant 4
Participant 5	“Coming from a town school discipline was ok; Here limited resources and negative influence from the community (Assaults, drugs, rape, theft); Teachers also bullying one another; Through

collaboration with Wanaheda police significant scale down.”

Participant 6

“Insufficient time to carry out instructional tasks; Through delegation.”

Participant 7

“A difficult teacher who did not want to cooperate: Introspection was done followed by a one-on-one consultation; the principal also did a background check to understand the teacher better through friends. Climate changed drastically.”

“Learn from everybody; the Alphabet has 26 letters. If one fails, go to the next; Be honest with yourself and have strong moral values and norms; Let God be the centre of all your doings; Adjust where it's needed.”

Participant 8

“Teamwork: Open communication; training team building exercises involve team members in decision making; celebrate progress; lead by example; support staff members.” Participant 9

Participant 10

“Do not dictate; Have an open conversation without jumping to conclusions to resolve conflict. Teacher absenteeism.”

From the above responses, only five participants [3, 5, 6, 7 & 10] have cited the instructional leadership challenges which they encountered and the corresponding solutions they have employed to bridge these challenges. The remaining five participants [1, 2, 4, 8 & 9] were not able to give exact answers to address this specific question.

4.11.1 Challenge 1: A Furious Parent [P3, Q8]

One significant instructional leadership challenge occurred when a junior primary learner lost new school shoes, causing the parent to become furious. The parent was brought to the office, visibly disturbed and frustrated.

4.11.2 Mitigation

First by actively listening to the parent's concerns, the school leader addressed the situation, validating the parent's feelings, and acknowledging the inconvenience caused. The instructional leader reassured the parent that the issue would be resolved collaboratively. After examining the matter and taking steps to prevent future occurrences, the principal offered support in finding the shoes. By maintaining calm, showing empathy, and through clear communication, the situation was normalised, and the parent's concerns were effectively addressed, thus restoring trust in the school's leadership.

4.11.3 Challenge 2: Transition to another School [P5, Q8]

A significant instructional leadership challenge arose when Participant 5 was transitioning from a town school with manageable discipline to a new environment in Katutura where limited resources and negative influences from the surrounding community, such as assaults, drugs, rape, and theft, were very much prevalent. Additionally, teachers were experiencing internal conflicts, including bullying one another, which further complicated the school culture, hampering teaching and learning.

4.11.4 Mitigation

Recognising the need for immediate intervention, the school's instructional leader collaborated with the Wanaheda Police Department to address these issues. Through close collaboration with law enforcement, conducting awareness programs, and improving security and safety, the school was able to significantly reduce the negative behaviour both within the school and from outside community influences. This collaborative approach did not only restore a sense of order but also encouraged a safer and more respectful environment for both learners and teachers.

4.11.5 Challenge 3: Insufficient Time [P6, Q8]

Another significant instructional leadership challenge encountered was insufficient time to effectively carry out all administrative instructional tasks, including daily lesson observations, mentoring of novice teachers, and curriculum oversight. With multiple responsibilities warranting rational attention, it became evident that time management was a critical issue.

4.11.6 Mitigation

In order to address this, the school instructional leader deployed a strategy of delegation; this was done by assigning specific tasks to capable staff members based on their strengths and expertise. As an example, department heads were tasked with monitoring weekly lesson plans, while senior teachers took on mentoring roles. This approach not only freed up time for the instructional leader to focus on broader instructional goals but also empowered staff, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and improving overall school efficiency.

4.11.7 Challenge 4: A Difficult Teacher [P7, Q8]

A challenging situation arose with a difficult teacher who was consistently uncooperative and resistant to collaboration.

4.11.8 Mitigation

To address this particular issue, first, the principal engaged in introspection, reflecting on communication strategies and potential leadership approaches that might strengthen a more positive relationship. Following this, a one-on-one private consultation was arranged with the teacher, during which the principal approached the conversation with empathy and active listening, aiming to understand the teacher's perspective. Additionally, a cautious background check was conducted through mutual friends and colleagues to gain insight into the teacher's personal and professional challenges. Equipped with this deeper understanding, the principal was able to design the support and guidance offered. As a

result, the school climate improved drastically, and the teachers became more cooperative and engaged in the school's plans.

4.11.9 Challenge 5: Teacher Absenteeism [P10, Q8]

Another persistent challenge in the school, as mentioned by Participant 10, was teacher absenteeism. This practice affected both learner performance and staff morale. In addressing this situation, the school leader opted for an open, non-judgmental conversation with the teachers involved, instead of taking a punitive or dictatorial approach. By avoiding drawing premature conclusions and creating a space for honest dialogue, the instructional leader was able to uncover underlying issues such as personal challenges and workload concerns that contributed to the teacher absenteeism.

4.11.10 Mitigation

Through collaborative problem-solving and offering support where necessary, the misunderstanding was resolved. This led to a marked improvement in attendance as well as a more positive, mutual understanding atmosphere among staff. This approach, as applied by the instructional leader, encouraged trust and reinforced the value of open communication in amicably resolving work related issues.

Summary of Research Question 8

The five participants faced various instructional leadership challenges, each requiring a thoughtful and strategic approach to resolve. One challenge involved a student losing school shoes, which escalated due to a furious parent. The leader de-escalated the situation

by listening actively and offering a collaborative solution. Another challenge was the negative influence of the community, including issues like drugs, assault, and teacher conflicts. The leader worked closely with the Wanaheda police, which helped restore safety and order in the school.

In the third scenario, the challenge was insufficient time to manage instructional tasks effectively. The leader resolved this by delegating responsibilities to capable staff, improving time management and empowering others. The fourth case involved a difficult teacher who resisted cooperation. After introspection, one-on-one consultation, and understanding the teacher's background, the leader improved the relationship and school climate.

Lastly, teacher absenteeism was addressed through open conversations instead of dictating terms. By avoiding assumptions and engaging in dialogue, the leader identified the root causes and resolved the issue collaboratively, leading to improved attendance and staff morale. These examples highlight the importance of communication, collaboration, and tailored solutions for effective leadership.

4.12 Research Question 9

9. How do you prioritise building relationships and fostering collaboration among teachers, staff, and other stakeholders to support effective instructional leadership in your school?

Table 4.9 Presents fostering relationships and collaborations.

Theme: 9 Collaboration	Relationships and Interview Quotes
Participant 1	“By building trust, collaboration and putting in interventions for academic improvement and also by supporting teacher growth and development individually and collectively. Consistent monitoring, creating a positive school climate. Provide feedback and acknowledgement to stakeholders.”
Participant 2	“Engage with one another, Share ideas, advise each other, Have professional development activities.”
Participant 3	“Team building, Encourage teachers towards formal and informal professional development.”
Participant 4	“Establish regular transparent communication through meetings; demonstrate and build trust and respect;

Acknowledge and value the expertise and contributions of others.”

Participant 5

“Open door policy to enhance communication; To curb misunderstandings, forming of cliques and stem out unhappiness; Teachers are also encouraged to be adventurous they should try out new ideas.”

Participant 6

“Be a role model; Build and focus on every staff through trust and streamline expectations.”

Participant 7

“Be reflective and not reactive; Pray and fast; Get down to the teacher's level and show humility by sitting on the floor and kissing their feet afterward; Assign teachers to monitor and reflect on principals' daily activities.”

Participant 8

“Do teamwork; Let learners share ideas and build a structure of support; Do not solve learners' problems but let them

solve them only give guidance. Have an open-door policy and let staff and learners grow.”

Participant 9

“Know where you want to take the school; have effective communication channels; Employ technology; Recognise individual and team effort; Be consistent and transparent.”

Participant 10

“The relationship is the cornerstone; Foster partnership and inculcate it daily; Recognize and award praise to strengthen team building; Capitalise on cultural diversity purposefully; Tender loving care initiative to support each other physically.”

Figure 4.3 below is a visual representation of the key focus areas and common themes from the responses of the 10 participants regarding fostering collaboration and relationships in a school setting. Each participant emphasises different aspects, such as trust, communication, and professional development, while also highlighting some shared themes across their responses.

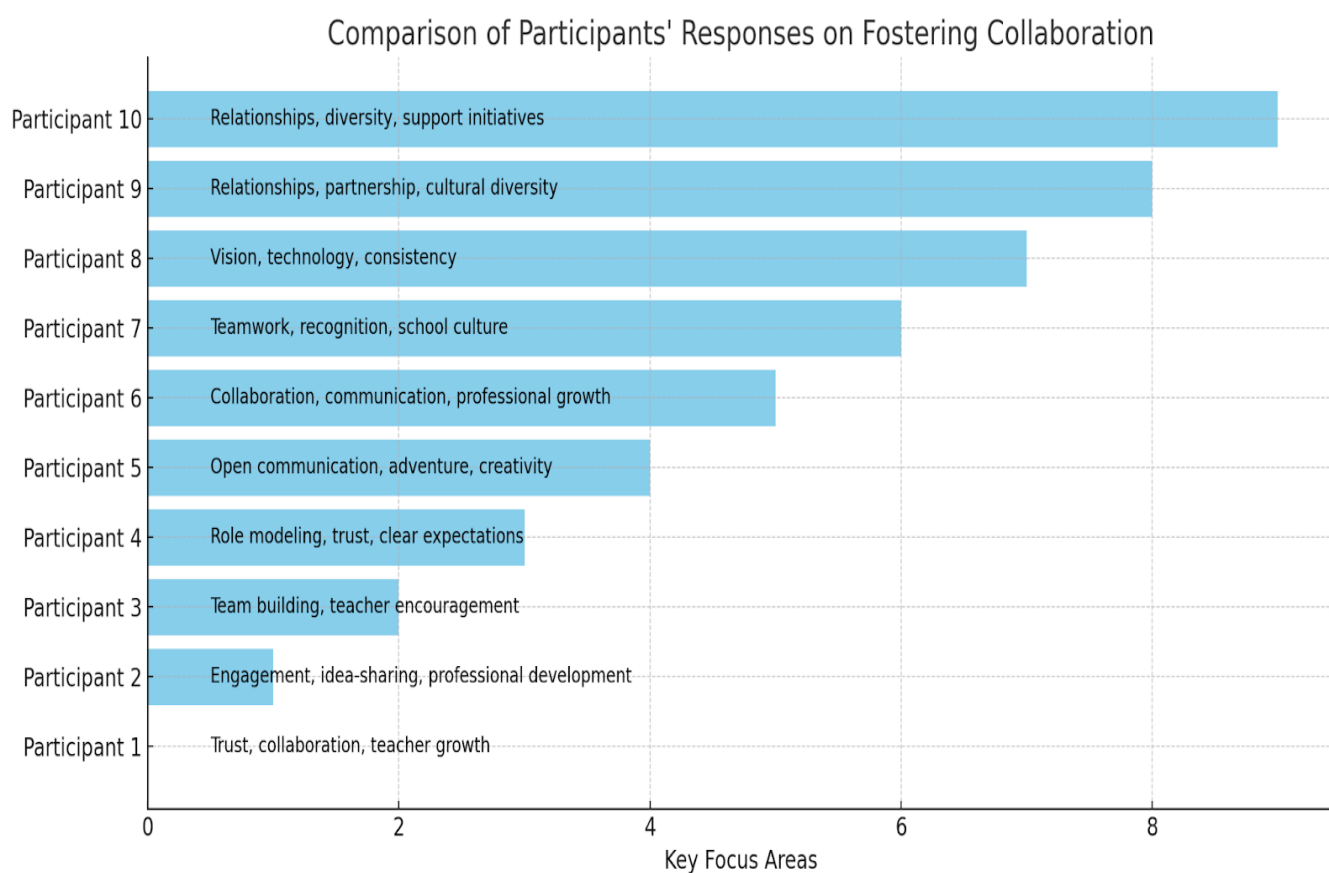


Figure 4.3 Comparison of Participants Responses

4.12.1. Categorisation of Findings:

The following common themes emerged under Research Question 9, namely: Collaboration, trust, recognition, and support. These themes are frequently mentioned across multiple responses.

Diverse and Unique Focus Areas:

Each one of the participants brings unique perspectives, such as the emphasis on technology, cultural diversity, and team-building initiatives. This comparison helps identify both the shared goals and distinct approaches of each participant in enhancing collaboration and relationships within the school community.

4.12.2 Further Analysis of Participants' Responses

4.12.2.1 Common Themes

Collaboration and Trust:

Almost all participants emphasised the importance of fostering collaboration and building trust among staff and stakeholders. This commonality signifies a shared understanding that a supportive environment is needed for effective instructional leadership.

Professional Development:

A majority of participants discuss the need for continuous professional development, both formally and informally. This indicates a collective recognition of the role that ongoing learning plays in improving teaching practices and encouraging innovation.

4.12.2.2 Interconnectedness of Themes

The focus on recognition and appreciation runs through several responses, suggesting that acknowledging individual and team efforts is vital for motivation and morale.

The responses from the participants also reflect a collective aim to create a positive school climate through various strategies, such as open communication, team building, and professional development.

4.12.2.3 Unique Focus Areas

Participant 1: The priority area from this participant is to highlight teacher growth and interventions for academic improvement, focusing on monitoring progress and creating a positive climate.

Participant 2: What is important in view of this participant is stressing engagement and idea-sharing, promoting a culture where teachers feel comfortable exchanging thoughts, and collaborating with all.

Participant 3: Focuses more on team-building and encouraging teachers to be adventurous in trying new ideas, fostering a spirit of creativity and “thinking out of the box”.

Participant 4: Advocates strongly for role modelling and clear expectations, emphasising the importance of leading by example.

Participant 5: Discusses the application of an open-door policy to foster communication and reduce misunderstandings, while encouraging adventurousness among teachers.

Participant 6: Suggests consistency and transparency as key elements for building trust, focusing on setting clear goals for the school.

Participant 7: Highlights the role of teamwork and recognition in enhancing school culture, stressing the importance of celebrating individual contributions such as birthdays and other social events.

Participant 8: Draws attention to the need for a shared vision and the use of available technology to improve communication flow and efficiency.

Participant 9: Underlines the significance of maximising cultural diversity, proposing initiatives to support physical and emotional well-being. This could be achieved by celebrating the annual culture day as stipulated on the academic calendar.

Participant 10: Proposes an initiative such as the Tender Loving Care project, advocating for mutual support among staff as a way to strengthen relationships. This can also be rolled out to the learners whereby vulnerable learners are given a nutritious meal during the school day.

4.12.2.4 Diversity of Approaches

The diversity of approaches indicates that while participants agree on key principles, they equally also recognize the unique context and needs of their school communities. Thus, these variations in strategies allow for a more comprehensive and flexible framework for fostering collaboration. Furthermore, the participants advocate for both formal structures (such as professional development workshops) and informal interactions (such as team-building activities and peer discussions), suggesting a holistic approach to professional growth.

4.12.3 Summary of Research Question 9

In order to prioritise building relationships and fostering collaboration among teachers, staff, and stakeholders in support of effective instructional leadership, schools are urged to create a culture of trust and open communication. This could be achieved by actively engaging all members of the school community through team-building activities and professional development opportunities, encouraging the sharing of ideas and best practices. Also implementing an open-door policy enhances dialogue and reduces conflicts, while recognising individual and team contributions boosts morale and motivation. Moreover, leveraging cultural diversity and supporting staff well-being through initiatives focused on physical and emotional health strengthen community bonds. By establishing clear guidelines and utilising available technology in order to streamline communication, schools can cultivate an all-inclusive environment where collaboration thrives, eventually enhancing academic outcomes.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the findings from the semi-structured interview analysis were presented in alignment with the research questions. The findings are based on the data gathered from the 10 principals. This research study was conducted in urban and rural schools. The participants in the interview clarified their responsibilities. However, these responsibilities could not be carried out without challenges. In order to mitigate those challenges the participants stated provision of training to all primary school principals. This was deemed important because, through training, knowledge and skills are provided to the principals to carry out their instructional duties. The next chapter focuses on the discussions of findings.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the main findings of the research study that examined the notion of instructional leadership amongst primary school principals and how they enact instructional leadership in relation to student academic performance. Furthermore, the findings that answered the following research questions will be discussed:

- How do public primary school principals in Khomas Region, Namibia perceive instructional leadership?
- What activities or approaches can be identified as employed by principals to enhance learning outcomes?

- How can instructional leadership be developed as a cornerstone for school leadership among public primary school principals to positively impact a learner's academic performance?

5.1.1 Summary of Findings on Theme 1: Perception of Instructional leadership and Approaches to Enhance Learning Outcomes

- *How do public primary school principals in Khomas Region, Namibia perceive instructional leadership and what activities or approaches can be identified as employed by principals to enhance learning outcomes?*

The study revealed that all ten participants demonstrated a strong and nuanced understanding of instructional leadership, focusing on primary elements like improving teaching practices, fostering teacher development, and promoting student achievement. Unlike the traditional managerial model which prioritises administrative tasks, participants described instructional leadership as an active, hands-on engagement in instructional guidance, and teacher capacity building. This approach encourages collaboration, data-driven decision-making, and a shared vision for academic success.

Key responsibilities identified by the principals included effective school management, innovation, delegation, professional development, and creating a positive school climate. The responsibilities were closely tied to practical strategies of resource allocation, curriculum supervision, collaboration, and mentoring, often taking a holistic approach

rooted in personal values, including faith in God, which they felt strengthened their moral and ethical leadership.

However, these leadership practices were shaped and at times constrained by contextual challenges such as community issues (drugs and violence), time management, teacher resistance, and absenteeism. Rather than viewing these barriers in isolation, participants described how they adapted leadership strategies to redress them: partnering in close collaboration with law enforcement to safeguard the learning environment, delegation of responsibilities to manage workload, improved communication, and fostering cooperation through dialogue to resolve conflict.

Across these experiences, it became clear that effective instructional leadership in the Khomas Region is not only about implementing best practices, but also about integrating them with adaptive responses to contextual realities. Despite external and internal challenges by aligning instructional priorities with responsive problem-solving strategies, principals were able to create supportive and inclusive environments that advanced the schools' academic goals.

5.1.2 Summary of Theme 2: Developing Instructional Leadership as a Cornerstone for Academic and Holistic Student Success

When principals intentionally focus on key areas such as monitoring, planning, data-driven decision-making, communication, goal-setting, partnership-building, and professional development, they are well-positioned to create a school environment where both teachers

and students can thrive academically. These leadership practices ensure a strategic, collaborative, and learner-centred approach that not only advances academic achievement but also nurtures the emotional and social dimensions of learning. By aligning instructional priorities with strong relational practices, principals create the conditions necessary for sustained improvement in teaching quality and student performance.

Participants consistently emphasised the crucial role of creating a supportive, positive, and holistic environment for learners, highlighting that emotional well-being is fundamental to effective learning. A safe and encouraging environment fosters a sense of belonging, value and motivation among learners, enabling them to focus on their studies and participate more actively in the learning process. Such a school climate reduces disruptive behaviours while strengthening emotional safety and happiness which also improves student participation and motivation. It is possible for principals to achieve such an environment through collaborative leadership practices, including open communication, trust-building, and conflict resolution. Encouraging open dialogue and transparency with teachers also enables school leaders to make all stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, and the broader community) feel heard and involved in decision-making processes. Developing instructional leaders, therefore, play an important role in seeking input from their teams and ensuring that decisions support the school's vision. This inclusive approach ensures coherence in the school's direction and fosters a sense of shared responsibility for achieving academic outcomes.

In conclusion when these strategies are integrated, principals are able to address students' academic, social and emotional needs in a unified manner. This comprehensive approach not only improves academic performance but also builds resilience, fosters a love for learning, and promotes holistic student development. In doing so, principals' instructional leadership becomes the cornerstone of school success, sustaining a thriving educational environment in which all stakeholders share responsibility for achieving the institution's vision and mission alike.

5.1.3 Summary of Theme 3: Building a Culture of Trust and Continuous Growth through Instructional Leadership

- *How can instructional leadership be developed as a cornerstone for school leadership among public primary school principals to positively impact a learner's academic performance?*

The findings from the responses highlight that the development of instructional leadership as a cornerstone of effective school leadership relies on cultivating a culture where trust, collaboration, and continuous growth are embedded in everyday practice. Principals strengthen their leadership impact by showing genuine care for both teachers and learners, adopting innovative teaching and management strategies, and fostering a growth mindset within the school community. Central to this process is providing targeted professional development, mentorship and recognition, and ensuring that necessary resources are available to support principals. In contrast, networking, discussing challenges, and improving time management were noted less frequently.

Equally, these leadership practices extend beyond instructional oversight to the deliberate nurturing of positive relationships and fostering collaboration are also viewed as crucial for effective leadership. Primary schools in particular are encouraged to create a culture of trust and open communication through team-building activities, professional development, and an open-door policy. Recognising staff contributions, leveraging cultural diversity, and supporting well-being are key to promoting a positive school climate. Finally, in addition, utilising clear guidelines and technology can streamline communication, promoting a more inclusive, collaborative environment. This approach ensures that instructional leadership thrives, leading to better academic outcomes and a stronger unified school community.

5.1.4 Integrated Theme: Instructional Leadership as a Driver of Academic and Holistic School Success

Across all three research questions, the findings reveal that public primary school principals in the Khomas Region perceive instructional leadership as a dynamic, hands-on approach centred on improving teaching practices, fostering teacher development, and enhancing learner outcomes. The findings are based on participants' responses about their perceptions of instructional leadership that it goes beyond administrative oversight. The research study took place at some urban and rural schools within the Khomas Region. The interview revealed that the principals are well aware of what instructional leadership entails together with its responsibilities. Furthermore, all principals have alluded that it is crucial for them to create conducive environments for learning and teaching to thrive at their respective schools. Subsequently, the study also highlighted that building relations and

fostering collaborations is needed for leadership. Thus, schools are encouraged to create a culture of trust and open communication to ensure better academic results and a dynamic school community.

5.2 Linking Findings to the Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored within Phillip Hallinger's Instructional Leadership Theory as its theoretical underpinning. Hallinger (2011) suggest that school leaders should not just be managers of schools but that they should be actively involved in the overall educational process in order to improve learners' academic results. The theory of instructional leadership, as proposed by Hallinger, suggests that school administrators have a direct and significant impact on teaching and learning outcomes through their deliberate support of teachers. This leadership influence extends beyond administrative duties, involving a dedication to creating an educational environment that fosters continuous improvement. Hallinger's theory (2011) is consistent and appraising with the broader understanding of school leadership as a critical factor in educational success. In his research, Hallinger has identified the following four essential dimensions of instructional leadership that are key in moulding the school's educational outcomes. Each of them will be discussed in the next part.

5.2.1 Defining the School's Mission

The participants of the research study consider defining the school's mission as the primary responsibility of the instructional leader. They further alluded that the principal should set clear goals for the school. The mission statement consequently defines the fundamental purpose and values of the school, highlighting its unique contributions to education and the

broader community. It provides answers to the essential questions of why the school exists and what it seeks to achieve in its day-to-day operations. Hence to effectively establish this shared sense of purpose, leaders must prioritise communication. On the other hand, according to Hallinger and Heck (1998), the vision of a school is known to represent its desired future state, encompassing the goals and aspirations that guide its development. This vision is a critical element, providing a framework for decision-making and serving as a source of inspiration and motivation for the entire school community. It sets the direction for the school, influencing everything from curriculum design to the school culture. Hallinger and Heck (1998) further emphasise that the vision and mission must be communicated clearly and consistently across all levels of the school community. This communication is not a once-off event but an ongoing process that requires leaders to design their messages to different audiences, including teachers, staff, students, parents, and community members.

5.2.2 Managing the Instructional Program

Inter alia, the responses from the participants confirm that proper planning, training teaching methodology (incorporating ICT in teaching), training on how to implement the syllabus, and target setting are essential elements in managing the instructional programme at their schools.

The primary focus of school administrators has been to effectively oversee and organize the instructional program, a responsibility that encompasses curriculum development, assessment techniques, and the general coordination of teaching and learning activities (Hallinger, 2003). Fullan (2015) further asserts that effective curriculum development is

crucial for promoting continuous improvement in education, as it provides the foundation upon which all teaching and learning activities are built. In addition to curriculum development, school administrators play a critical role in designing and implementing assessment techniques as they help identify areas where students may need additional support or enrichment. Darling-Hammond (2006) also emphasises that well-designed assessments are vital for informing instructional decisions and promoting academic growth.

The coordination of teaching and learning activities is yet another crucial responsibility of school administrators. Fullan and Hargreaves (2012) vigorously highlight the importance of collaborative learning communities within schools, where administrators play a key role in facilitating collective inquiry and shared responsibility for student learning. These communities encourage teachers to continually work together, share best practices, and improve their instructional strategies.

Over and above these organisational tasks, administrators are also responsible for supporting instructional improvement. In his study, Leithwood (2006) suggested that strong leadership in instructional improvement is associated with improved student outcomes and overall school effectiveness. By fostering a culture of continuous improvement, administrators help create an environment where both teachers and students can thrive.

The work of Payne and Welch (2017) is also another example which underscores the importance of leadership in fostering an equitable educational environment, where all students can access the resources and the support they need to achieve their full potential. Therefore, administrators must work hard to create an equitable learning environment

where every student has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their background or circumstances.

5.2.3 Fostering a Positive School Learning Climate

Effective instructional leadership cannot take place if the principal does not foster a positive school learning climate. The participants stated that this is achieved by: building trust, collaboration and putting in interventions for academic improvement and also by supporting teacher growth and development individually and collectively. Consistent monitoring coupled with the provision of feedback and acknowledgement to stakeholders equally results in creating a positive school climate.

Cultivating a welcoming and inclusive school culture is known to be the critical responsibility of school leaders, as it directly in all spheres influences the learning environment's positivity and effectiveness. For example, school leaders might organise welcoming ceremonies for new students and staff, establish open communication channels between educators and students, and celebrate diversity through cultural events and inclusive practices. In their scholarly work, Wang and Degol (2016) states that a school climate that is characterised by a strong sense of belonging and acceptance is associated with improved academic performance and the overall well-being of students. The work of Lavy and Naama-Ghanayim (2020) underscores the importance of supportive school environments in promoting positive youth development and resilience. When students feel happy and secure, they are better equipped to handle challenges and achieve their full

potential. These emotional-safe spaces may also curb bullying among learners and instil a sense of togetherness in them.

In conclusion, one participant mentioned that instructional leadership is a happy-moment leadership that transcends positivity throughout the task at hand.

5.2.4 Giving Teachers Instructional Input

In terms of giving teachers instructional input, the study found that it is critical for instructional leaders to delegate tasks, provide instructional support, provide guidance and direction, promote positive learning environments, encourage teachers to perform their duties, and coach, mentor and lead them. In education, proactive leadership is regarded as crucial for enhancing teaching effectiveness and improving student outcomes. One of the key ways principals can achieve this is by offering teachers valuable input on their educational methods. According to Hallinger (2014), this approach aligns with the concept of effective instructional leadership, which emphasises active participation in the instructional process by school leaders. The theory of instructional leadership, as proposed by Hallinger, suggests that school administrators have a direct and significant impact on teaching and learning outcomes through their deliberate support of teachers.

Ongoing observations are essential for providing continuous feedback and support to teachers. Thus, regular classroom observations allow leaders to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' instructional methods and student-classroom interactions. According to Hallinger's theory, it is asserted that effective instructional leadership

involves active participation in the instructional process, going beyond setting visions to directly influence teaching and learning outcomes. Finally, this approach postulates the critical role of school leadership in shaping the educational experiences of both teachers and students, ultimately leading to improved academic results.

5.3 Public Primary School Principal's Perceptions of Instructional Leadership

5.3.1 Results Comparison from 32 Countries

The study by Liu et al. (2021) titled “The Effect of Instructional Leadership and Distributed Leadership on Teacher Self-efficacy and Job Satisfaction”, excavated into two significant aspects of educational leadership. The first focus of that study was to understand the extent to which instructional leadership and distributed leadership, each with its unique focus, are associated with teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction. For the interest of this question, the focus is more on instructional leadership. Therefore, according to Liu et.al, instructional leadership typically emphasises improving teaching and learning practices, directly influencing teachers' instructional beliefs and their confidence in their teaching abilities.

The findings of the above-mentioned academic work provide valuable insights for school principals, suggesting that they can focus on specific aspects of leadership to achieve desired outcomes. For instance, by emphasising instructional leadership, principals can directly influence teachers' instructional practices and beliefs, leading to improved teaching effectiveness.

This study finds that the participants have a clear understanding of instructional leadership, considering that they acknowledged its core components such as enhancing teaching practices, supporting teacher development, and fostering student achievement. This is in keeping with Liu et al. (2021) who, in their study, claimed that instructional leadership prioritises direct involvement in curriculum development, classroom instruction, and professional development.

5.3.2 Perspectives from a Local Study

In order to explain the issue of principals' perspectives, it is worth considering the advanced study by Shitana (2018). The study revealed several challenges associated with the implementation of instructional leadership in Namibian schools, revealing a complex landscape where the role of school principals often becomes disorganised:

- One of the paramount issues identified in this study is that many principals recognise their role as purely administrative, leading them to withdraw from the crucial work of teaching and learning.

- An additional challenge demarcated by Shitana (2018) is the difficulty principals face in balancing the often-conflicting demands from various stakeholders, including teachers, school management, and the broader community. A third notable issue in Shitana's academic work is the impact of decentralisation in Namibia.

The challenges emerging from the participants' responses in the current research study can be compared to Shitana's findings. Some participants in the current study reported that the overwhelming workload that instructional leaders handle is one of the most significant obstacles mentioned. On top of their instructional duties, the participants assumed that the principals were also tasked with more administrative responsibilities, disciplinary matters, community engagement, and managing day-to-day school operations. They indicated that this leaves limited time for focusing on enhanced teaching and learning, which is the essence of instructional leadership. The workload unevenness often forces them to prioritise immediate operational tasks over long-term instructional goals. On the other hand, some principals even suggested that their workload should be lessened, in terms of relieving them from teaching.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the main findings of the research study using the research questions and the theoretical framework on which the study is built. The synthesis of these findings shows that instructional leadership, when rooted in strong relationships, collaborative culture, and flexible problem-solving, becomes a powerful driver of both academic and holistic learner success. The interplay between leadership roles, contextual realities, and desired outcomes highlights that effective school leadership is neither solely instructional nor purely managerial—it is an integrated, learner-centered approach that addresses academic, emotional, and social needs in tandem. Through this interconnected practice, principals not only enhance teaching quality and learner performance but also strengthen the resilience and unity of the entire school community. The discussion also drew on a comparative study examining distributive leadership against instructional leadership, with greater emphasis placed on the latter. Additionally, insights from a related local study were also included in the discussion to contextualize the findings. Jointly, these insights advance the understanding of instructional leadership in the Namibian context by demonstrating how principals adapt leadership strategies to address unique socio-economic challenges, foster inclusive school climates, and align community engagement with academic goals. This context-specific evidence accentuates that instructional leadership in Namibia is not a stagnant model imported from elsewhere, but a vibrant practice shaped by local realities and aimed at achieving sustainable learner success. The next chapter summarizes and concludes the study, along with recommendations for future research studies.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a synthesis of the study's key findings and offers the overall conclusion derived from the study. The chapter further provides recommendations informed by the evidence focusing on how principals in Namibia's Khomas Region perceive and enact instructional leadership in relation to learners/students' academic performance.

6.2 Summary of the Findings of the Study

The overall purpose of this study was to examine the notion of instructional leadership among public primary school principals in Khomas Region, Namibia, and how the principals perceive and enact this leadership style to enhance the academic results of the learners. The study used a critical case study design as well as a qualitative study approach. A purposive sampling strategy was utilised to select ten participants from ten different schools. All the participants were primary school principals. The principals were chosen for their role as instructional leaders. Data was collected through a one-on-one semi-structured interview. The study found that the principals faced challenges regarding the implementation of instructional leadership at their respective schools. Overall, the following challenges were highlighted: immense workload, inadequate resources, lack of leadership knowledge, overcrowded classrooms, lack of ongoing training for principals, limited autonomy in appointing staff and domestic challenges. Participants indicated that

while these are challenges to the effective employment of instructional leadership, they have a negative bearing on the academic performance of the learners.

Additionally, the participants support the use of some methods to develop instructional leadership skills among primary school principals. The methods can be grouped under two headings: intrinsic and extrinsic. First, the intrinsic method is based on intrinsic motivation (IM), which is defined as the key to persistence at work (Fishbach & Woolley, 2022). In this regard, when principals are intrinsically motivated, then they would experience work activities as an end in itself, such that the activity and its goal collide. The result would be an increased interest and enjoyment of work activities. Therefore, principals have to create self-awareness and develop these methods from within, such as by showing genuine concern for teachers and learners, planning and adopting new methodologies, using one-on-one sessions with teachers, being a role model, leading at all times by example, providing formal observation (such as class visits) with feedback, establishing realistic expectations, providing mentorship and fostering a nurturing culture for novice teachers, encouraging a growth mindset among teachers, and helping the teachers to be passionate and enthusiastic.

The extrinsic methods are not many, but are also relevant and vital in boosting the principals in the execution of their instructional duties. To achieve these, principals have to be provided with refresher courses annually and be exposed to different environments and project management skills be instilled. Elizabeth and Ena (2019) maintain that the most developmentally advanced form of extrinsic motivation is integrated regulation, which involves choice behaviour that is fully assimilated with the individual's other values, needs

and identity. In conclusion to this, the participant should seek opportunities from outside to instil and develop these methods in order to be effective in the execution of their duties.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study titled “*Examining the Notion of Instructional Leadership among Public Primary School Principals in Khomas Region, Namibia: A Critical Perspective*,” the following recommendations are made. These are categorized into theoretical, practical, policy-related, and future research recommendations to ensure that the outcomes of the study contribute meaningfully to scholarly knowledge, educational practice, and policy reform. This will equally strengthen the dimensions of instructional leadership as outlined in Hallingers’ model.

6.3.1 Theoretical Recommendations

- It is recommended that further theoretical exploration be undertaken to contextualize the concept of instructional leadership within the Namibian public school system. This should involve critically analysing existing leadership theories, such as distributed leadership and transformational leadership, to assess their relevance and applicability to the realities of Namibian primary schools.
- Scholars should consider developing an indigenous or Afrocentric framework of instructional leadership that incorporates the socio-cultural and educational dynamics specific to Namibia.

6.3.2 Practical Recommendations

- School principals should be provided with continuous professional development programmes specifically focused on instructional leadership practices, including curriculum leadership, supervision of teaching and learning, and data-informed decision-making.
- A professional learning community (PLC) model should be established across primary schools in the Khomas region to foster peer learning and exchange of best practices in instructional leadership.
- Principals should receive structured support through mentorship initiatives and leadership coaching to enhance their confidence and capacity in leading instruction.

6.3.3 Policy Recommendations

- The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture should review and revise its leadership development policies to include instructional leadership as a core competency in both the recruitment and professional evaluation of primary school principals.
- Instructional leadership roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined in national policy guidelines to ensure uniform implementation across schools.

- A standardized national framework for instructional leadership training and assessment should be developed to support school improvement and learner academic achievement.

6.4 Recommendations for Further Research

- Future research should replicate this study in other regions of Namibia to assess whether similar instructional leadership challenges and perspectives exist across the country.
- Comparative studies should be conducted between public and private school principals to explore differing perceptions and
- Originality, novelty, and significance contribution to knowledge. In the case of a Master's thesis, examiners comment on the significant contribution to the field of study approaches to instructional leadership.
- Further investigations should explore strategies for developing and strengthening instructional leadership skills that can improve learner academic outcomes, particularly during the critical transition from primary to secondary school.
- Longitudinal studies could be undertaken to examine the long-term impact of effective instructional leadership on learner performance at national exit levels and readiness for tertiary education.

Conclusion

Regarding how principals in Namibia's Khomas Region perceive and enact instructional leadership, it can be concluded from the findings that instructional leadership is effectively employed by the principals at their respective schools. However, most participants regard the overwhelming workload of principals as a challenge; therefore, they recommend a reduction in administrative and teaching duties for principals across the board. Some participants even proposed that principals should be relinquished from teaching at all. However, this may have a "double-edged challenge" in special relation to instructional leadership. First, in the context of instructional leadership, the principal is expected to be fully aware of the academic programme at his or her school and give guidance to its implementation. Second, from a different angle, even if principals do not teach any subject but are also not office-bound and do regular monitoring and class visits that are supported by guidance and timely feedback to teachers, then instructional leadership can still be enacted effectively and efficiently.

Lastly in conclusion, looking from a methodological perspective, the study engaged semi-structured qualitative interviews to capture participants' lived experiences and perspectives, which allowed for rich, context-specific insights. However, the thematic

findings are reported separately to maintain clarity and ensure the results are presented without blending interpretation with research design. In summary, the research objective: examining principals' perceptions and enactment of instructional leadership, was adequately addressed, and the results contribute valuable understanding to the dissertation on school leadership in Namibia.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Certificate



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: WKC0055 **Date:** 11 July 2024

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Decentralized Ethics Committee (DEC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the **School of Education (Windhoek & Khomasdal Campuses) Decentralized Ethics Committee**.

Title of Project: Examining the notion of instructional leadership among public primary schools in Khomas region, Namibia: a critical perspective.

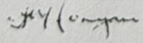
Researcher: Ebeneser Matheus Naruseb

Student number: 221415459

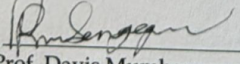
Take note of the following:

1. Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the ethics committee. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
2. Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the ethics committee.
3. The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the ethics committee (through the Chairperson) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by the ethics committee.
4. The ethics committee retains the right to:
 - i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
 - ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

The ethics committee wishes you the best in your research.



Dr. Job U. Hengari (Chairperson, Windhoek & Khomasdal Campuses Decentralized Ethics Committee)



Prof. Davis Mumbengegwi (Head, Multidisciplinary Research)

Appendix B: Interview Schedule

University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia
340 Mandume Ndemufayo Avenue, Pioneerspark
☎ +264 61 206 3111; URL: <http://www.unam.edu.na>



INTERVIEW

Please answer the following questions as openly and honestly as possible.

All answers will be treated in the strictest confidence. It will take no longer than 20 minutes to complete.

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Gender

1.1

Male	
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1.2

Female	
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2. Age

2.1	Below 21	
2.2	21 - 28	
2.3	29 - 37	
2.4	38 - 46	
2.5	47 - 54	
2.6	55-60	

3. Total years of working experience

3.1	Below 5 years	
3.2	5 - 10	
3.3	10 - 15	

3.4	15 - 20	
3.5	20 - 25	
3.6	25 - 30	
	30+	

4. Qualifications

4.1	Certificate	
4.2	Diploma	
4.3	Degree	
4.4	Honours Degree	
4.5	Master's Degree	
4.6	Doctoral Degree	

SECTION B: GENERAL QUESTIONS RELATED TO INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

1. What is your understanding of the concept of instructional leadership?

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2. What do you consider to be the primary responsibilities of an instructional leader in a primary school setting?

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3. In your opinion, what are the main challenges or barriers to effective instructional leadership in your school?

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SECTION C: PRACTICES OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

4. Please provide specific examples of successful initiatives or practices you have implemented to improve student academic performance through instructional leadership.

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SECTION D: DEVELOPING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

5. What do you believe are the most effective methods for developing instructional leadership skills among primary school principals?

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6. How can educational institutions or government bodies support principals in enhancing their instructional leadership abilities?

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SECTION E: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

7. Please use this space to share any additional thoughts, experiences, or suggestions related to instructional leadership and its impact on student academic performance.

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8. Reflecting on your own experiences, please share a specific instance where you encountered a significant instructional leadership challenge and how you addressed it.

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9. How do you prioritise building relationships and fostering collaboration among teachers, staff, and other stakeholders to support effective instructional leadership in your school?

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We have reached the conclusion of the interview. Your time is greatly appreciated!

Appendix C: Application Letter to Conduct Research

P O Box 99117
Tauben Glenn
Windhoek
Namibia
06 August 2024

The Director
Khomas Education Region
Ministry of Education
Private Bag 13236
Windhoek

Dear Mr. Nghikembua

Re: Request for permission to carry out a research study at Selected Primary Schools in Khomas Region, Namibia

I am a determined upcoming education researcher, currently employed as a teacher at People's Primary School, which is located in Katutura Central, Hans Uirab street.

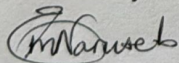
Simultaneously I am a final year student at the University of Namibia in partial complement of the Masters Degree in Educational leadership, Management and Policy Studies. My interest is to research in the area of: **Examining the notion of instructional Leadership among Public Primary school Principals in Khomas Region, Namibia: A critical Perspective.**

Henceforth I am seeking your permission to collect the necessary data which is required to accomplish this study. The study's objective is to interview 10 (ten) public primary school principals, randomly from the four circuits. The researcher intends to come see the principals by virtue of consultation through prior appointments, merely to avoid disrupting their official duties. The data is intended to be collected over a period of two weeks.

The ethical clearance certificate is attached for your perusal and to support this request.

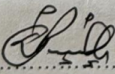
Looking forward to a favourable response.

Yours sincerely



Ebeneser Matheus Naruseb (0812706535)

Appendix D: Approval Letter to Conduct Research from the MoEAC

	
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA	
KHOMAS REGIONAL COUNCIL	
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE	
Tel: [09 264 61] 293 4356 Fax: [09 264 61] 231 367/248 251	Private Bag 13236 Windhoek
06 August 2024	
PO Box 99117 Tauben Glenn Windhoek	
For Attention: Mr. Ebeneser Matheus Naruseb	
REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SELECTED SCHOOLS IN KHOMAS DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS & CULTURE	
Your letter dated 06 August 2024 on the above topic is hereby acknowledged.	
Permission is hereby granted to you to research " <i>Examining the notion of instructional Leadership among Public Primary school Principals</i> ": <i>Acritical Perspective</i> at ten (10) primary school principals randomly in Windhoek, Khomas Region under the following conditions:	
❖ The Principal of the selected schools to be visited must be contacted in advance and agreement should be reached between you and the Principal. ❖ The school programme should not be interrupted. ❖ The teachers and learners participating in this exercise will do so voluntarily. ❖ The Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture should be provided with a copy of your thesis/ findings.	
We wish you success in your research.	
Yours sincerely,	
 Paulus D. Nghikembua Director of Education, Arts and Culture	KHOMAS REGIONAL COUNCIL PRIVATE BAG 13236 WINDHOEK 12/08/2024-08- 12 DIRECTOR DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION ARTS AND CULTURE

Page 1 of 1

Appendix E: Informed Consent Letter to Participants

Informed Consent

Department of Education Management and Policy Studies
Faculty of Education, University of Namibia

Dear Participant

Selection and Participation in a Research on: “Examining the Notion of Instructional Leadership among Public Primary School principals in Khomas Region, Namibia: A Critical Perspective.

I have read, understood and considered the letter explaining your purpose and aim, and requesting my participation in your study. I understand that I will be interviewed for a period of about 30-60 minutes on your appointment date and time of visit to my school. I, therefore, indicate my willingness to participate in this research project by signing in the space provided below, knowing that I can withdraw at any time. I also agree that the data collected for the research may be published in a manner that does not disclose my identity in any cause.

Participant’s Name and Signature

.....

Student Researcher’s Signature and Date

.....

