

Rhodes University

Education Department

**An investigation of instructional leadership in a Namibian
rural school**

Submitted by

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DECLARATION

I, NAHUM KONDJENI NAMUKWAMBI, declare that the work presented in this document is my own. References to work by other people have been duly acknowledged.

Signed: _____

Student

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate how instructional leadership manifests itself and can be strengthened in a Namibian rural school. As a teacher, head of department and later an education officer, I have long held the view that committed school leadership is essential for the school's instructional and academic success. Equally, I have always been aware of the impact of the past segregation and the unequal education provided by the colonial government in South Africa and South West Africa/Namibia. The inferior education provided to Africans posed a serious challenge to the leadership and management of schools, as would be principals were not adequately trained to provide the necessary "ingredients" relevant for instructional success.

Given this background, I attempted, using a case study of one secondary school, to investigate how instructional leadership is manifesting itself and could be strengthened in a rural school in the Omusati region of Namibia. Research questions that framed the study were: firstly, how does the leadership approach in the school promote teaching and learning; secondly, what is the role of external players in enhancing instructional leadership and thirdly, what are the strengthening and inhibiting factors of instructional leadership. The population of the study was composed of an Inspector of Education, a school principal, a head of department (HOD) and four teachers from a secondary school, located in the Omusati region in Namibia. Data were collected through interviews, document analysis and observation. With regard to data analysis, I first immersed myself in the data. I developed themes that formed the basis of my discussion with my research questions in mind.

The analysis revealed that instructional leadership is strongly evidenced at the case study school. However, it emerged that despite the existence of strong instructional leadership at the school, as with all other organisations, there are several challenges that limit the effective implementation of the teaching and learning programme. These challenges vary from indiscipline, poor time management, to lack of teaching and learning resources. Participants

also provided a number of possible solutions to the problems identified, including that the principal should be a good role model for the staff and that an enabling environment for both teaching and learning should be created. The study also strongly suggested that participative leadership and management is a cornerstone to the academic success of the school.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to both my late paternal and maternal grandparents Oskar “Shileyi” Kagadhinwa and Tamukondjo “Lusino” Namukwambi, Endelina “Gwakashele” Shaningwa and Reinhold Hango Amunyela and my late brother Oscar “Shileyi” Namukwambi who sadly passed away while I was busy putting this work together.

ACRONYMS USED

ALI	African Leadership Institute
CASS	Continuous Assessment sheets
CCPs	Cluster Centre Principals
DOE	Department of Education
EO	Education Officer
ETSIP	Education Training Sector Improvement Programme
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
HOD	Head of Department
ICDL	International Computer Driving License
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IOE	Inspector of Education
JSC	Junior Secondary Certificate
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MOE	Ministry of Education
NAMCOL	Namibia College of Open Learning
NIED	National Institute for Educational Development
NSPI	National Standards and Performance Indicators
PAAI	Plan of Action for Academic Improvement

SDP	School Development Plan
RIPS	Regional Performance Improvement Strategy
UNAM	University of Namibia
USA	United States of America

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study which is an investigation of how instructional leadership manifests itself in a successful rural school in Namibia and how the instructional leadership can be strengthened. I first of all look at the context of the study and the motivation for the study. Thereafter I introduce the research goals, aim of the study and the methodology employed. The final part of the chapter gives an outline of the whole thesis.

1.2 Background and research context

The policy of apartheid in South Africa and, by extension, in South West Africa (Namibia) provided a very poor standard of education for the majority of the citizens and this legacy continues to haunt the management and leadership of schools today. The inferior and sometimes irrelevant curriculum affected instructional delivery as African teachers were not adequately trained to take on the responsibilities of teaching and learning. The apartheid government made it clear that Bantu education was designed to teach African learners to be “hewers of wood and drawers of water” for a white-run economy and society, regardless of an individual’s abilities or aspirations (Bantu Education, 2004, p. 1).

Following the independence of Namibia in 1990, the new government introduced educational reforms and development based on the four overarching goals of access, equity, quality and democracy, to reverse the colonial legacies (Namibia. Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC], 1993, p. 32). As a democratic state, Namibia adopted a more democratic and participatory approach to teaching and learning. This is highlighted in the policy document, *Towards*

Education for All: “A democratic education system is organised around broad participation in decision-making and clear accountability of those who are our leaders” (Namibia. MEC. 1993, p. 41). This necessitated the need for an urgent call for school improvement which is a key component towards the realization of *Vision 2030, a Policy Framework for Long-Term National Development* aimed at making Namibia a developed country by 2030. It also became necessary that the governance and management of education, and particularly schools, is reformed from authoritarian to democratic in line with the country's governance.

Schools, like any other organisation, need strong leadership to succeed or achieve their set goals and objectives, hence the need for effective school leadership and management. Bush (2007) defines leadership as “influencing others’ actions in achieving desirable ends and leaders as people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others” (p. 392). Leaders are tasked with the mammoth task of initiating change to reach existing and new goals set for organisations. According to Davidoff, Kaplan and Lazarus (1994), educational leadership “entails awareness about developments in the educational field, together with the wider social, economic, and political environment within which it is located. It also involves the capability to guarantee quality education in unstable circumstances, to evoke and sustain staff motivation, creativity and accountability, to promote staff and organisational development, and to act as a role model in terms of values, which they regard as important” (p. 16).

The most important function of educational leaders must be their focus on quality teaching and learning, the core function of the school. In this regard, instructional leadership is a concept which is critical to an understanding of the leadership involved in teaching and learning.

James Weber (as cited in Lashway, 1995) views “instructional leaders as facilitators of collaboration and identifies five main functions of Instructional Leadership: defining school mission, promoting a positive learning climate, observing and giving feedback to teachers, managing curriculum and instruction, and assessing the instructional program” (p. 1). In this instructional endeavour, collaboration and teamwork from those who are involved in the teaching and learning programme is very important, as teaching is a group effort. This is in line with current leadership and management theory which emphasises sharing of power and

participative leadership. According to Glanz, (2006) “instructional leadership is about encouraging best practices in teaching and to do so requires principals to become familiar with innovative teaching theories and practices and to encourage teachers to model them in classrooms” (p. 12).

The principal ensures that an environment conducive to both learning and teaching is created and enhanced by making timely interventions in the provision of teaching/learning materials, facilities and budgets necessary, for teaching and learning to take place effectively. This does not mean that the principal is solely responsible for instructional leadership but that they influence others to model their best practices. According to Blase and Blase (1999), “effective instructional leadership should avoid restrictive and intimidating approaches to teachers and administrative control should give way to the promotion of collegiality among educators” (p. 137).

Instructional leadership is associated with the collegial model as it promotes idea sharing, shared decision-making and assistance in professional growth, which in the end, benefits the students. According to Bush (2003) collegial model emphasises that “power and decision-making should be shared among some or all members of the organisation” (p. 64). Collegiality has its roots in the human relation management approach where members actively participate in decision-making which leads to both human satisfaction and the achievement of goals. Sharing of power minimises the load on one person, especially the principal. Bush (2007) argues that “the burdens of leadership will be less if leadership functions and roles are shared and if the concept of leadership density were to emerge as a viable replacement for principal leadership” (p. 397). As head of the organisation, the instructional leader is to be highly accessible to staff and engage in frequent classroom observations. Blase and Blase(1999) argue that “principals who are attempting to develop as effective instructional leaders work to integrate reflection and growth to build a school culture of individual and shared, critical examination for instructional improvement”(p. 138).

Although some Namibian scholars (Ipinge, 2004; Kapapero, 2007 and Tjivikua, 2006) question the effectiveness of the current in-service professional development of principals and teachers in Namibia, they fall short of investigating it from an instructional point of view. I am also aware of courses run by the African Leadership Institute (ALI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Old Mutual Namibia in Namibia, but they are not pedagogical or comprehensive and enrol very few principals, hence the need for a study of this kind. This research therefore investigates how instructional leadership manifests itself in a rural school in Namibia and how different stakeholders are involved and is thus likely to help to fill the gap that exists in the literature. Mushaandja(2006) argues that “unless school managers and leaders are equipped with responsive leadership and management skills, knowledge, behaviours, actions, attitudes and values in order to offer school leadership that make a difference, learner performance and education standards are unlikely to improve”(p. 5). Strong instructional leadership in schools is essential for good academic performance and improvement.

1.3 Research motivation

This study is motivated by my own experience as a teacher, head of department (HOD) and, more recently, as an education officer (EO) which provided me with insight into how this critical phenomenon is dealt with. Many a time, as instructional leaders, we neglect the critical issues of teaching and learning while occupying ourselves with the more mundane administrative responsibilities. My position as teacher, HOD and EO put me in a position to see how instructional leadership, or the lack of it, could lead to good or poor school performance. This study hopes to inform policymakers, implementers and institutions responsible for teachers’ training and teachers themselves, of some potential variables related to effective continuous development of instructional leadership skills.

1.4 Research goal

The study set out to investigate how instructional leadership manifests itself in a rural school in Namibia and how it could be strengthened.

The study is framed by the following research questions:

- a) How does the leadership approach in the school promote teaching and learning?
- b) What is the role of external players in enhancing instructional leadership?
- c) What is inhibiting effective implementation of instructional leadership in schools and what are the suggestions to strengthen instructional leadership?

1.5 Research methodology

The research takes the form of a case study conducted in the interpretive paradigm using a qualitative approach since the goal is to investigate instructional leadership in a rural school. According to Merriam (2002), "qualitative researchers conducting a basic interpretive qualitative study would be interested in (1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences"(p. 38). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) contend that the interpretive paradigm gives the researcher an opportunity to understand and interpret the world in terms of its actors (p. 22). I assumed that participants would provide me with information related to the phenomena being studied. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), qualitative researchers do not simplify what they observe but recognize that the issue they are studying has more than one dimension and layer, so they always try to portray the issue in its multifaceted form (p. 133). This is done so that the phenomenon being studied is understood from different angles and generalisation is eliminated.

I used a case study approach, investigating one school using structured-interviews, document analysis and observation as data collection tools. Researchers always try to be as objective as possible and attempt as much as possible not to be influenced by perceptions, impressions and biases. I began my data collection by interviewing the Inspector of Education, the school principal as instructional head, one HOD and four teachers. Relevant questions were set and cross-checked before the interview process began formally. Apart from interviews, I also employed observation and document analysis as further data collection methods.

With regard to data analysis I first immersed myself in the data. I developed themes that formed the basis of my discussion with my research questions in mind.

1.6 Thesis outline

This study is presented in six chapters. Chapter one deals with the general overview of the research, the research context, research motivation, research goals, methodology and outline of the thesis.

Chapter two presents the literature on instructional and other leadership theories relevant to my research topic.

Chapter three examines the methodology used to conduct the research and provides a detailed description of the approach, the procedures and instruments used for data collection. This chapter looks at the validity of the research, ethical issues and the limitations of the study.

Chapter four is a presentation of the raw data collected from interviews, document analysis and observation.

Chapter five is a presentation of the analysed data in relation to the research goals and questions. This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the findings in relation to the literature reviewed.

Chapter six gives a summary of the main findings, it suggests some recommendations and it provides suggestions for future research in the area of instructional leadership. It concludes the study as a whole.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Changes in the education landscape have focused attention on schools and classrooms as critical influences on improving student achievement. Since curriculum and instruction are the main elements of school business, there is a need for school leaders to be more than managers who supervise the day to day operations of the schools. This is due to the great interest in educational leadership in the early part of the 21st century and the widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and student outcomes. According to Adams and Kirst (1999), “policy makers, educational leaders, practitioners, and parents also continued to seek better student performance and accountability through management practices, professional standards, teacher commitment, democratic processes, and parent choice” (p. 466). Similarly, Stewart (2006) argues that “school reform and accountability movements pressure school principals to improve student achievement” (p. 7).

Bush (2007) states that in many parts of the world, including South Africa and Namibia, there is recognition that schools require effective leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their learners (p. 391). He argues further that as the global economy gathers pace, more governments are realizing that their main assets are their people and that remaining, or becoming, competitive depends increasingly on the development of a highly skilled workforce (ibid). To realize this vision, schools need trained and committed teachers who, in turn, need the leadership of highly effective principals and support from other senior and middle managers. A school leader should also be a transformational leader as advocated by Stone, Russell and Patterson (2003) that he/she:

Articulates the vision in a clear and appealing manner, explains how to attain the visions, acts confidently and optimistically, expresses confidence in the followers, emphasizes values with symbolic actions, leads by example, and empowers followers to achieve the vision (p. 4).

This research is aimed at investigating how instructional leadership manifests itself in a rural school in Namibia and how it could be strengthened. Against this background, this chapter presents an overview of the literature relevant to my research area by looking at the concept of Educational Leadership and Management, Instructional Leadership (evolution of the IL theory, definition, role of principals as instructional leaders, participative management and leadership), skills necessary for effective instructional leadership and the last section is a discussion of the challenges facing instructional leadership and a conclusion.

2.2 Educational leadership and management

Over the past four decades, the concepts of leadership and management have become more complex and considerable debate has emerged over the most suitable model for educational leadership. Though they are used interchangeably by many researchers, for this research it is important that a distinction is made between the two terms as they are overlapping and complementary. Cuban (as cited in Bush, 2007):

Links leadership with change while management is seen as a maintenance activity. Leadership is about influencing others' actions in achieving desirable ends and leaders as people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others and initiating change to reach existing and new goals for organisations while management as maintaining efficiently and effectively current organisational arrangements(p. 392).

Davidoff, Kaplan and Lazarus (1994) argue that:

Educational leadership entails awareness about developments in the educational field, together with the wider social, economic, and political environment within which it is located. It also involves the capability to guarantee quality education in unstable circumstances, to evoke and sustain staff motivation, creativity and accountability, to promote staff and organisational development, and act as a role model in terms of values, which they regard as important (p. 16).

In this vein, instructional leaders need to be multi-talented to be able to cope with the responsibilities of school leadership and management today. For the envisaged change to be realized, school leadership plays a major role in transforming educational institutions from

closed to open systems; failing which the status quo will continue unabated and reverse the vision needed for effectiveness and improved instructional leadership.

For Moelanjane (2004), management is more concerned with setting up systems and administering them and about structures needed to achieve the direction and vision (p. 13). One can thus argue that management is an element of leadership, in that the ability to delegate management responsibility and roles is a leadership function. *The South African Task Team Report on Education Management Development* (South Africa. Department of Education [DoE], 1996) suggests some assumptions about management as follows:

Management in education is not an end in itself. Good management is an essential aspect of any education service, but its central goal is the promotion of effective teaching and learning... The task of management at all levels in the education service is ultimately the creation and support of conditions under which teachers and their students are able to achieve learning... The extent to which effective learning is achieved therefore becomes the criterion against which the quality of management is to be judged (p. 27).

Contrasting leadership and management, Bennis(cited in Luthans, 1995) argues that “leaders conquer the context-the volatile, turbulent, ambiguous surroundings that sometimes seems to conspire against us and will obviously suffocate us if we let them-while managers surrender to it” (p. 342).

I tend to disagree in some ways with the quote above, as it seems to separate the roles of leadership and management too sharply. In my view, both leaders and managers need to incorporate or apply both management and leadership skills to succeed in their role as leaders and managers of educational institutions. Bush (2007) similarly argues that “leadership and management need to be given equal prominence if schools are to operate effectively and achieve their objectives” (p. 392).

Equally, school leaders/managers are required to demonstrate strong instructional leadership skills, besides their managerial duties, if schools are to achieve the desired academic results. My research will take this route, taking into account the interest linking educational leadership and

management and the perceived importance of their role in developing and maintaining successful schools and educational systems.

Next I will explore the origin, meaning, roles and skills necessary for effective instructional leadership.

2.3 Instructional leadership

2.3.1 The evolution of instructional leadership theory

Instructional leadership emerged from the human relations movements which contested the view of scientific management and other traditional approaches, which viewed people as production blocks or machines. It developed out of a yearning to challenge the trait theories and their views of the super/great man, as well as their 'leaders are born' convictions. According to Owens (2001), "since the dawn of organizational studies in the twentieth century, two major perspectives on educational organizations emerged namely, bureaucratic views and human resource development (p. 61). Bureaucratic organisations are characterised by top-down authority which is mainly hierarchical in nature and that focuses on the task rather than on the person. However, the task-person tension came to dominate the world of organisations in the twentieth and twenty first century (ibid). Schools like other organizations today have shifted away from bureaucratic management as the dominant organizational concept of schools, toward a transforming concept - learning organizations. In bureaucratic organizations, people in authority tend to direct others and make decisions for them. According to Owens (2001), two trends in understanding leadership expanded and accelerated with the passage of time in twentieth century America:

- Growing recognition of and acceptance of the perception that the members of an organization constitute extremely valuable resources-rich in ideas, knowledge, creativity, and an astonishing level of human energy-that are available to the organization in the pursuit of goals and purposes that members accept as their own.
- Growing recognition of the relative ineffectiveness of command and coercion as forms of leadership, in contrast to the development of organizational environments that are

motivating, caring, inclusionary, and empowering of members as forms of leadership (pp. 252-253).

Current views converge on the idea of embracing most, if not all organization members and empowering them by making them part of the organization's leadership, which could ultimately lead to improved performance and job satisfaction for all.

According to Stewart (2006), the instructional leadership model emerged in the early 1980's in the research on effective schools and it focused on the manner in which leadership improved educational outcomes (p. 5). The government of the United States of America (USA) was concerned with the poor academic performance and mediocrity in public schools. As an attempt to arrest the problem, a National Commission on Excellence in Education prompted by ***A Nation at Risk*** (Owens, 2001) was instituted and several reports were published on the state of public education in the USA (p. 63). Each of these reports indicated various deficiencies and suggested an array of corrective measures to deal with them and they became a source of considerable popular discussion on the shortcomings of public schooling in the media (ibid). Owens (2001) explains that "these reports stimulated such huge interest that the president elevated the discussion of the condition of U.S. public schools to the level of presidential discourse and politics" (p. 63).

With the recommendations made by the Educational Commission, reform became inevitable. Owens (2001) highlights the recommendations made by the Commission, among others that:

Goals of the schools should be simplified, clarified, and limited, mastery of the English language should be emphasised, teachers should be paid more, trained better, and provided with better working conditions; schools should be more effectively linked to outside leadership groups, professionalising the working environment of teachers; and stronger educational leadership should be developed, chiefly at the level of the school principal ship (p. 64).

With these recommendations, the principal's role changed from being head-master to focusing more on the teachers, as the teachers focus on helping students learn. The rules changed for school administrators in the 1980's from being judged by their ability to manage school

operations with business-like efficiency, to first and foremost being charged with the academic aspects of the school. A study by Lashway (1995) indicates that high-achieving schools had principals who boldly led the academic programme, set goals, examined curricula, evaluated teachers, and assessed results (p. 1).

2.3.2 Defining instructional leadership

There is no single accepted definition of instructional leadership; however, all the researchers focus their attention on teaching and learning as core areas of education. The concept of instructional leadership lacks a widely accepted definition though it emerged over three decades ago. As stated above, the focus of instructional leadership is on one of the most important functions of school organization, which is teaching and learning. According to Cawood and Gibbon (cited in Sinvula, 2009):

Instructional leadership is a process of guiding and encouraging the teacher along a path towards greater professional effectiveness. Such guidance demands very careful, far sighted and effective planning, based on professional insight and constructive and accurate analysis of teaching-learning activity (p. 11).

This implies that the leader and the teacher are partners in guiding teachers towards advanced professional development. Debevoise (cited in Chell, 2001) supports this view by defining instructional leadership as “those actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning” (p. 14). Similarly, Bush (2007) refers to instructional leadership as a focus on the direction of influence which is increasingly concerned with teaching and learning (p. 400). Sinvula (2009) asserts that instructional leadership is not the role of the principal only, but also that of teachers, as it is they who are actively involved in the learning process and therefore have a better understanding of students’ needs (p. 11). The principal is thus a member of a team of teachers who may have different ranks but are working towards a common goal.

Furthermore, Stewart (2006) views school leaders as focusing on the behaviours of teachers as they help teachers to engage their students in learning activities (p. 2). In short, instructional leadership can be described as an approach where school leaders take charge of the

instructional processes of the school, while at the same time creating opportunities for learning and interaction for both teachers and learners. It is also important to note that management and leadership are viewed as supporting roles in developing effective schools and principals cannot be effective instructional leaders if they are not good managers.

Glanz(2006) views instructional leadership as an encouragement of the best practices in teaching and to do so requires principals to become familiar with innovative teaching theories and practices and to encourage teachers to model them in classrooms (p. 12). The definitions provided above all agree that instructional leadership is a very important dimension of education because it targets the school's central activities, teaching and learning. Research on examining instructional leadership qualities varies. Duke (cited in Chell, 2001) concludes from his research on instructional leadership qualities that "there is no single leadership skill or set of skills presumed to be appropriate for all schools or all instructional situations" (p. 5). In this vein, instructional leadership challenges the traditional bureaucratic view of leadership which values individual characteristics. In the next section, I look at the instructional role of principals and the skills necessary for effective instructional leadership.

2.3.3 The role of principals as instructional leaders

School effectiveness studies such as that by Blase and Blase (1998,) emphasize the importance of the principal's instructional leadership role, which concerns the principal's responsibility to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place. Hanny (1987) perceives that "effective principals are expected to be effective instructional leaders... the principal must be knowledgeable about curriculum development, teacher and instructional effectiveness, clinical supervision, staff development and teacher evaluation" (p. 209). It is thus emphasised that there is a need for increased teacher involvement, collaboration and the creation of shared leadership which incorporates the talents and energy of all stakeholders, principals, teachers, learners and parents. According to Graczewski, Knudson and Holtzman (2009):

Principals have been increasingly called to act as instructional leaders in their schools and ensure that teachers have the opportunity to increase their knowledge and perfect their

craft, on the assumption that deeper teacher knowledge leads to change in instruction, which, in turn, produces higher student achievement (p. 72).

By ensuring that teachers have opportunities to increase their knowledge, principals are not only empowering teachers as individuals, but the institution and the whole system is likely to benefit, as they will be tapping into the skills and knowledge acquired.

Parker and Day (1997) view instructional leaders as facilitators of collaboration and identify five main functions of instructional leadership:

- Defining and communicating a clear mission, goals and objectives: Setting, together with the staff members, a mission, goals and objectives to realize effective teaching and learning.
- Managing curriculum and instruction: Managing and coordinating the curriculum in such a way that teaching time can be used optimally. Principals need to support the teaching programme and provide the resources that teachers need to carry out their task.
- Supervising teaching: Ensuring that educators receive guidance and support to enable them to teach as effectively as possible. The focus of the instructional leader should be more oriented to staff development than to performance appraisal. This implies implementing programmes that may enrich the teaching experience of educators or motivating them to attend such programmes.
- Monitoring learner progress: Monitoring and evaluating the learners' progress by means of tests and examinations. Using the results to provide support to both learners and educators to improve as well as to help parents understand where and why improvement is needed. This points to the fact that teaching is a collective responsibility and assessment and evaluation should be used to inform key stakeholders such as parents, teachers and learners of what is happening in schools.
- Promoting instructional climate: Creating a positive school climate in which teaching and learning can take place. In a situation where learning is made exciting, where teachers and learners are supported and where there is a shared sense of purpose, learning will not be difficult (p. 87).

Although these functions relate directly to the instructional role of the principal, all the other management functions tie in with the educational aims and this shows the interrelatedness of the various tasks of school management. Hence collaboration and teamwork from those who are involved in the teaching and learning programme is very important, as teaching is a group

effort. This is in line with current management theory which emphasizes sharing of power and participative leadership.

Blase and Blase(1999) argue that “principals who are attempting to develop as effective instructional leaders work to integrate reflection and growth to build a school culture of individual and shared, critical examination for instructional improvement”(p. 138). Instructional leadership is about encouraging best teaching practices, hence principals need to become familiar with innovative teaching theories and practises and encourage teachers to model them in the classroom. Similarly, for Glanz (2006) successful instructional leaders facilitate best practices in teaching in the following ways, among others:

- Model best practice in teaching as you, the principal, conduct workshops or even conduct meetings with and for teachers (e.g. use of “wait time” and thought-provoking questions).
- Allow fellow teachers to visit with each other so that they can see each other teach and generate and share teaching ideas among themselves. According to Chell (2001) “peer supervision has become an alternative method of improving instruction because teachers often turn to each other for assistance” (p. 16).
- Visit other school sites in the district where best teaching practices are well known, and even encourage teachers to visit in order to bring back fresh ideas and different ways of doing things. It is imperative that the class visits should not be for punitive measures or be a threat to the teachers but should have the following distinct purposes (Blasé &Blase, 1998): to motivate teachers, to monitor instruction, to be accessible and provide support, and to keep informed (pp. 108-109).
- Invite workshop leaders from within and outside the school to conduct sessions on topics that teachers wish to learn about (pp. 12-13).As pointed out earlier in this chapter, teaching is a collective effort and could thus be improved through collaboration and teaming. It is thus recommended that educators work together for the common good of educational delivery.

The principal ensures that an environment conducive to both learning and teaching is created and enhanced by making timely interventions in the provision of teaching/learning materials, facilities and budgets necessary for teaching and learning to take place effectively. This does not mean that the principal is solely responsible for instructional leadership but influences

others to model the best practices. According to Blase and Blase (1999), effective instructional leadership should avoid restrictive and intimidating approaches to teachers and administrative control should give way to the promotion of collegiality among educators (p. 137).

Instructional leadership is also about delegation, as the demands on today's principals make it almost impossible to do the job alone. A school is a complex organisation made up of different people from different backgrounds with different interests. For them to succeed in today's environment it is imperative that educational leaders delegate some of the functions not only to lessen their load but also to empower them and utilise the variety of skills, knowledge and expertise that the organisation has at its disposal. In a school situation, heads of department, senior teachers and different committees that exist provide a platform for members to share responsibilities, learn from each other and carry out tasks as efficiently and timely as possible; however principals as gatekeepers of schools have an important role to ensure the realisation of schools as open systems.

2.3.4 Participative management and leadership

Participative approaches to management and leadership also seem central to instructional leadership, hence a brief discussion follows. Schools leaders are called upon to adopt a participative approach in their leadership. Participative management addresses fundamental issues of governance within organizations and the role of employees and external stakeholders in all levels of organizational decision-making, thus giving them an opportunity to have a voice in matters that affect them, which may ultimately lead to dedication, loyalty, productivity and workmanship.

Crane (cited in Mungunda, 2003) defines participative management as "a management approach, which allows and encourages subordinates to participate in decisions that affect them" (p. 25). Udjombala (2002) concurs with this view by arguing that a "participative style of management and leadership is a philosophy that puts emphasis on involvement, based on the concept that employees closest to the job have the necessary experience and knowledge to develop the best solution to job related problems"(p. 20). Mungunda (2003) argues that "those

close to teaching should make decisions about teaching” (p. 24). This is also highlighted in the policy document: *Towards Education for All*, which calls for a democratic education system organized around broad participation in decision-making (Namibia. Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC], 1993, p. 41). In an organization like a school, teachers’ involvement in decision-making empowers them and they would thus take a renewed interest in the teaching programme of the school.

It assumes that decision-making is distributed and shared by all stakeholders and that participation increases school effectiveness and enhances teamwork and commitment to the organization. Leonard (cited in Mungunda, 2003) states that:

The assumptions underlying this devolution and redistribution of decision-making authority are that greater ownership, morale, and commitment among stakeholders will result, and that decisions made at the local level are likely to be more responsive to the specific individual school context (p. 24).

According to Mungunda (2003), the goal of participative management is to tap into the unique resources of each of these individuals, create a collaborative learning experience, and produce results that are far greater than the sum of the individual (ibid). This view is supported by Ipangelwa (2002) when she states that the practice of participative management enables organizations to “produce high quality decisions and plans by involving the skills of different perspectives and expertise in developing solutions” (p. 22). This presents teachers with an opportunity for team planning, setting of exam papers and assisting each other with chapters or sections where they may have difficulties, which may lead to quality/improved teaching.

The South African Task Team Report on EMD (South Africa. DoE, 1996) asserts that “a supportive management culture can only thrive where the major stakeholders feel ownership of the school’s mission and ethos” (p. 30). Similarly, Mungunda (2003) argues that participative management “allows and encourages subordinates to participate in decisions that affect them or organizational operations” (p. 25). It is generally believed that people are likely to buy into ideas which they are involved in formulating, and that this could have a positive impact on organizational outcomes or performance. Principals should therefore keep in mind that by

involving their subordinates and employing a participative approach, they are creating a flourishing and happy working environment.

2.4 Skills necessary for effective instructional leadership

As a leader, a principal needs to possess certain leadership skills in order to be able to carry out his/her instructional leadership duties satisfactorily. To transform knowledge into active behaviour requires the development of interpersonal and leadership skills from instructional leaders. Chell (2001) suggests the following for school leadership skills: communication skills, people skills, interpersonal/supervisory skills and group decision-making guidelines (pp. 20-23).

2.4.1 Communication skills

Meaningful relationships require clear, reciprocal communication, the product of which is understanding. This occurs through a sharing of thoughts, so that both parties agree to a common reality. Typically, 70 to 80% of our waking hours are spent communicating with others. Of the time spent in listening, we will recall approximately one fourth and, of that, we may not have complete understanding. It is critical to give attention to listening skills by focusing on what is said, by listening objectively, by paraphrasing, and by using aids for recall. Effective communication is essential for meaningful interaction and information dissemination as it could contribute to effective school management which will culminate in improved instructional leadership.

According to Luthans (1995), “when employees are given access to information, their willingness to cooperate and to use their empowerment is enhanced” (p. 39). Luthans further argues that when employees have access to information, work teams are able to manage and control operations more effectively than under the old hierarchical rules and structure where access to information was provided on a need-to-know basis (ibid).

Communication is essential in schools as it is the process by which information is transmitted; however, it is also very important that the information communicated is correctly interpreted.

It is thus equally important that information is communicated in a clear, simple and understandable language or form of communication.

2.4.2 People skills

As an instructional leader, one's position entails interrelating with people at all levels. There are members of the school division, the school board, the trustees, the staff (teachers), and the students, to mention but a few. As a leader who sets the direction taken by the school, the principal's people skills are crucial to the success of the position. To develop positive relationships, there are essentially four areas of interpersonal skills that need to be mentioned: trust, motivation, empowerment, and collegiality.

The first, and most important, is that of trust; without this, relationships cannot be built. According to Bottery (2004) trust is "central to perceptions of individual integrity, and therefore critical to good leadership; it is also essential in building the kinds of student-teacher relationships fundamental to good teaching" (pp. 101-102). It is thus imperative that school leaders should strive to build trust among their teachers if schools are to become successful.

Secondly, a leadership position involves motivating others and one way to accomplish this is through a process of sharing the decision-making. Blase and Blase (2004) view motivating as "providing for the basic psychological needs of members, on one hand, and for the basic cultural needs of members to experience sensible and meaningful school lives, on the other"(p. 167). In relationships where power is viewed as reciprocal (as a unit of exchange), people can become committed, significant, and competent through promoting empowerment. As teachers are the players most affected by change, empowerment enables them to identify obstacles and design strategies for dealing with change. The unification that occurs with having a common purpose often leads to greater satisfaction and motivation. When a school leader demonstrates people skills (trust, motivation, empowerment and collegiality), the workforce is highly likely to be happy and a healthy working environment may prevail which may lead to greater job satisfaction and commitment from the teachers and other stakeholders.

2.4.3 Interpersonal/supervisory skills

Glickman (cited in Chell, 2001, pp. 20-21) outlines four interpersonal approaches which are based on the theory of situational leadership. When working with individuals or groups of teachers, it will require decisive thinking to determine which approach is most suitable for each situation. These approaches range in nature from nondirective, to collaborative, to directive informational, to the strongest-directive control.

A collaborative approach is prescribed when individuals or groups have a balanced range of backgrounds (i.e., moderate expertise, low commitment, and high accountability). Three broad generalizations to note are: (a) experienced teachers prefer the collaborative approach, (b) new teachers initially prefer a directive informational or collaborative approach, and (c) teacher incompetence or situations that involve potential harm to students, require use of directive control. This thinking is based on Hersey and Blanchard's model of situational leadership which views leaders as varying their emphasis on tasks and relationships to best deal with different levels of follower maturity. According to this model, the leader shares ideas (participating style), explains decisions (selling ideas), turns over decisions (delegating style) and gives instructions (telling style). This offers alternative leadership styles and provides a platform to understand the maturity of followers in terms of their readiness for task performance and then to use the style that best fits.

Schools are complex organisations made up of individuals from different backgrounds with different attitudes and expectations, hence principals as instructional leaders should strive to create an environment where organisational members are satisfied, which would lead to effective execution of tasks and responsibilities.

2.4.4 Group decision-making guidelines

There are skills and guidelines that can be helpful when dealing with group decision-making. Basically, there are three categories that describe how decisions are made. Decisions can be concluded unilaterally, consultatively, or collectively as a group decision. A unilateral decision is one that is made without consultation; a consultative decision is one made in consultation with

others but ultimately it is made by the leader, and finally, the group decision involves participation by all members of the group in the decision-making process and in the decisions reached. Depending on the quality of the decisions required, the time allowed, and the commitment necessary, one would typically choose from one of the above types as suggested by Sorenson, McLaren and Skitt (cited in Chell, 2001, p. 21).

Reaching a group consensus can be an onerous task; however, consensus can be facilitated by initially establishing some working guidelines. Firstly, blocking a decision is only allowed if there is a reasonable alternative offered and defended; secondly, habitual blockers must be reminded of the finality of the decision, and thirdly, if they continue to block the process, they will be asked to abstain from participation. Also, when a decision is reached, seventy-five percent of the group should agree and, once made, all participants must support that decision. This is referred to by Luthans (1995) as *the majority-wins scheme* where “the group arrives at the decision that was initially supported by the majority” (p. 456). Teaching is a group effort and there is a need today for schools to become open systems where all members play a meaningful role in decision-making. Generally, people tend to be more committed when they are involved in the running of organisations where they work, hence group decision-making would be an ideal approach to managing and transforming schools from bureaucratic to open systems.

2.5 Challenges facing instructional leadership in Namibia

School leadership in general and instructional leadership in particular, faces numerous challenges in Namibian schools. The apartheid past in South Africa and Namibia has created a legacy where change is not easily accepted and resistance is inevitable. People in management positions were used to receiving and giving out orders without question, hence their struggle today to adapt to the new democratic practices. This legacy continues to haunt leadership in schools today merely because the shift was too big and not enough was done to create an understanding of participatory leadership, democracy and harmony. In line with this thinking, the South African Task Team report on EMD (1996) argues that “principals and teachers have

worked in a regulated environment and have become accustomed to receiving direct instructions from departmental officials” (p. 19). This poses a challenge to the creation of a new culture and practice of teaching and learning, as stakeholders are finding it difficult to embrace change and play their part in transforming the management and leadership of the education system from a segregated to an all-inclusive system where all members participate.

Stewart (2006) indicates that one of the challenges with instructional leadership is that in “many schools the principal is not the educational expert” (p. 6). Many times it is very difficult to find leaders who are good managers and also instructional leaders, though there are exceptional cases. Moreover, there are some principals who perceive their work to be only administrative and, at times, distance themselves from the classroom and the core business of teaching and learning. In this way, school leaders have lost touch and meaning with the real business of the school, which is teaching and learning, and they need to assume their roles of being the master teacher/learner. According to Stewart (2006), “some principals perceive their role to be administrative and, as such, they purposely distance themselves from the classroom environment” (p.6). This happens despite the policy which clearly states that a principal should be qualified to teach the highest grade offered at the school. This situation could be blamed on principals being entrusted with too many responsibilities and sometimes on poor planning or incompetency on the part of the principals to balance management and leadership responsibilities, including instructional leadership.

Stewart (2006) argues further that the reality of the current school system is that principals are politically wedged between the expectations of the classroom, the teachers, the senior management team, and members of the community. It is always a challenge to most principals to strike a balance between the competing and often conflicting demands of various interest groups as they are occupied with managerial and administrative tasks of daily school life and as such, they rarely have time to lead others in the areas of teaching and learning. A study by Blase and Blase (2004) revealed that principals struggle to balance content with direction, human concerns with organizational goals, the need for growth with the press of inertia, and formal structure with creativity (p. 21).

The issue of devolution and decentralization has also diverted the principals' attention from playing their role as instructional leaders. The issue of principals heading cluster centres in Namibia and elsewhere has created more responsibilities for some principals, as they are subject teachers, principals, as well as heads of clusters, whilst also serving as members of the management teams of their respective circuits. This has burdened principals to the extent that teachers are left without instructional leaders and have to find ways to get out of tricky situations they might find themselves in. This is highlighted in a research study by Aiping (2007) where one of the respondents said that currently Cluster Centre Principals (CCPs) were overloaded with work, both at their own schools, as well as outside of their own schools where they operated as Cluster Centre Heads (p. 72).

Despite the general agreement that instructional leadership is a critical skill, few principals have had in-depth training in that role, especially in a standards-based environment. Institutions of higher learning responsible for teacher training are not adequately taking care of this aspect in their training programs. This is highlighted in the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP), document phase 1 (Namibia. MOE, ETSIP, 2006) which points out the challenges facing the Ministry:

- Leaders in the Ministry of Education (MOE) Namibia are not sensitive enough to the fact that organization cultures are determined by their behaviour and are not trained to respond to the needs of staff. The challenge facing the MOE is to reverse this situation.
- Leadership in the Ministry of Education does not follow best practices when it needs to organize work, plan programmes and budget action, coordinate, run meetings, monitor and supervise action, set objectives, create teams, motivate individuals and teams to work well, appraise their performance, reward them for good performance and hold them accountable for poor performance. Many lack the skills and the tools to do so. The challenge is to bring about a behaviour change to introduce best practices and make sure that they all comply with them (pp. 85-86).

Like principals however, teachers also have difficulties assuming roles of instructional leadership as their hectic teaching loads do not give them the time that is needed. After normal classes, they have to plan lessons, take tea or lunch breaks, provide remedial classes to learners with learning difficulties or talk to parents on issues affecting their children and mostly, they

are not trained to help their peers grow professionally. Hoerr (1996) contends that teachers are often reluctant to view themselves as “teachers of teachers” (p. 2).

Lockheed and Levin (cited in Sinvula, 2009) argue that “the challenges facing rural school leadership can be broken down to matters of participation, effectiveness and resources” (p. 23). Rural communities hardly participate in the leadership of schools in their areas due to illiteracy, preoccupation with peasant farming and a lack of understanding of the importance of education.

The lack of adequate teaching and learning resources, qualified teachers and other physical facilities, are just some of the challenges impeding effective instructional leadership and the provision of quality education delivery in Namibia and other developing countries.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter is a review of literature related to my research study. It is a presentation of a discussion of what has been researched by other scholars and published in the area of instructional leadership and forms the basis on which my research is built. I began with a short introduction, followed by the evolution of instructional leadership theory, a brief overview of educational leadership and management, the concept of instructional leadership, roles of principals as instructional leaders and skills necessary for effective instructional leadership. In the last part, I looked at the challenges facing effective implementation and application of instructional leadership.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The term methodology refers to the way in which researchers approach problems and seek answers. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) refer to methods as “a range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction” (p. 47). Kaplan (in Cohen *et al.*), suggests that the aim of methodology is to help us to understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself (ibid).

Therefore, this chapter outlines the research methodology and strategies used to explore how instructional leadership manifested itself in a rural school in Namibia and how it could be strengthened. The purpose of this chapter is to further cover the approach used, the research site, the data gathering process, data analysis, validity and ethical aspects of research and finally, it offers a conclusion.

I begin by discussing the research paradigm.

3.2 Research paradigm

In an effort to understand how instructional leadership manifested itself at the school and how it could be strengthened, I made use of a qualitative research framework, in particular an interpretive approach. I felt that the qualitative interpretive approach would be the most suitable as it seeks to understand social members’ definitions and understanding of situations. According to Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004), the “interpretive paradigm focuses on

the understanding of individual participants' experience and perceptions of their professional roles as experienced in their day-to-day working environment, from the standpoint of their unique contexts and backgrounds" (p. 21). Based on this assertion and to gain a deeper understanding of the views of people regarding the phenomenon under study, I interviewed people occupying different positions with varying experiences of the phenomenon of instructional leadership.

Creswell (1998) defines qualitative research as:

An inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explores a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (p. 15).

According to Leedy *et al.* (2005):

To answer some research questions, we cannot skim across the surface. We must dig deep to get a complete understanding of the phenomenon we are studying. In qualitative research, we do indeed dig deep: We collect numerous forms of data and examine them from various angles to construct a rich and meaningful picture of a complex, multifaceted situation (p. 133).

The use of multiple data collection tools was meant to construct a richer, bigger and meaningful picture of instructional leadership as the phenomenon under study.

Harrington (2005) refers to the application of method as "a systematic use of particular technique or techniques in the pursuit or study of something" (p. 4). Thus, to corroborate, validate and augment the data collected, I used multiple data collection methods, namely semi-structured interviews, document analysis and observation to help answer the research questions. The use of multiple data collection methods provided me with an opportunity to make my data more reliable, ensuring the validity, than when using one method.

3.3 A case study approach

I used a case study approach as it allowed me as a researcher to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events. According to Hitchcock and Hughes (cited in

Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000), a case study method is used in educational research because of its numerous hallmarks:

- It focuses on individual actors or groups of actors, and seeks to understand their perceptions of events.
- It highlights relevant specific events.
- It attempts to portray the richness of the case in report writing (p. 182).

Rule and John (2011) argue that a case study as a process “involves following a number of steps such as identifying a case, reading around the case and its context, gaining access to people, documents and places, gathering information about the case, analysing the data, writing it up and presenting it” (p. 5). They further state that the process of conducting a case study often involves interacting closely with other people and developing relationships with them (ibid).

Cohen *et al.*, (2007) define a case study as a “bounded system which provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles” (p. 253). They further argue that “it is important in case studies for events and situations to be allowed to speak for themselves, rather than to be largely interpreted, evaluated or judged by the researcher” (ibid). Having this in mind, as a researcher, I allowed the data to “speak” to each other with minimum interference. One of the main objectives of this study was to consider the participants’ views and experiences of their instructional roles.

My study employed the strategy of a single case, which was based on interviewing, observing and analysing documents from one school in one circuit, with the intention to investigate how instructional leadership manifested itself at the school.

3.3.1 Research site

The sample for this study was one secondary school in the Okapya Circuit of the Omusati region in Namibia. Omusati is one of the remotest and most rural regions in Namibia. There are nine grade 10 schools in the Okanya circuit where my case study school, Omukumo Secondary School (pseudonym) is situated. The school has a long academic and cultural history dating back

to 1947 during the time when Finnish missionaries arrived in the north-eastern part of what was then known as Ovamboland. The school was then known as a “seminary” and it trained only female teachers. In early 1974, the school relocated from its original site to the neighbourhood where it is presently located. It was then named Oshamba Secondary School, accommodating school level learners, both boys and girls. In the early 2000’s, the school once again went through a name change and it became Omukumo Secondary School, named after a famous local chief. The school has a staff complement of 33 educators, 15 male and 18 female, and a learner enrolment of 778. There are 31 permanent teachers, one volunteer from the United States of America (USA) and one teacher on a one year contract. The school management team is comprised of the principal, three HODs and four teachers. English is the medium of instruction with Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama offered as first languages. The pass rate over the last four years has been very impressive (See Table below).

Year	Number of learners	Promoted	Not Promoted	% pass rate	Ranking in the circuit
2007	41	31	10	75.6	1
2008	36	29	7	81.1	1
2009	52	35	17	67.3	1
2010	67	56	11	84.8	1

Table 1: Omukumo school performance, 2007-2010

The school was the beneficiary of four new classrooms in 2010 built by the Ministry of Education. It has also recently completed the renovation of the school fence and the replacement of broken window panes. The renovations were financed through the School Development Fund (SDF) and other fundraising activities spearheaded by the teachers under the able leadership of the school principal. The school also boasts an internet connected computer laboratory.

The decision to conduct the research at this school was mainly because of its strong academic performance in the circuit in the last few years in the Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) grade 10 results. Its strong performance suggests that the school has effective instructional leadership, hence my interest in investigating how instructional leadership manifested itself at the school and how different stakeholders were involved in the instructional leadership issues of the school.

3.3.2 Sampling and participants

A sample is a limited number of elements selected from a population to be representative of that population. The sampling of the secondary school as well as the participants for my study was informed by the purposive preference in qualitative research. As advocated by Merriam (2009), purposeful sampling is “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 77). Cohen *et al.*, (2007) suggest that “researchers must take sampling decisions early in the overall planning of a piece of research as factors such as time, expense, accessibility frequently prevent researchers from gaining information from the whole population” (p. 100).

The choice of the school was purposive but it was also chosen out of convenience because of its close proximity to my house which saved me time and money. Another reason it was chosen was its impressive academic performance in the circuit over the years, which would assist with the purpose of studying instructional leadership. Merriam (2009) refers to convenience sampling as “selecting a sample based on time, money, location, availability of sites or respondents, and so on” (p. 79).

Participants in this study were the Inspector of Education, the principal, an HOD and four teachers from the case study school. Two of the teachers interviewed were senior teachers with between five to twenty years of teaching experience, while one was a junior teacher with one year of teaching experience. The fourth teacher was a volunteer teacher from the USA with just a few months of teaching experience. I chose the participants purposively because each of

them was able to give me information on instructional leadership because of the positions they held within the education system.

3.4 The data gathering process

The data gathering process took a period of five weeks. I used a number of methods to collect data, namely: interviews, observation and document analysis. This was done for triangulation purposes. According to Coleman and Briggs (2002), “triangulation techniques in the social sciences attempt to map out or explain more fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint” (p. 68). The data collection methods are explained in detail in the following sub-sections.

3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

Rule and John (2011) assert that a semi-structured interview involves “a set of pre-set questions which initiate the discussion, followed by further questions which arise from the discussion” (p. 65). This line of interviewing allowed me more flexibility during data collection and created the opportunity for further probing (ibid).

I used the face-to-face semi-structured interview as one of my primary data collection tools and it provided me with an opportunity to communicate directly with the participants providing me with rich information on the issue being researched while also allowing me to capture individual perceptions and experiences. According to Kawana (2007), semi-structured interviews “allow respondents to talk freely about their experiences and feelings without the researcher losing track” (p. 29). The interview questions were piloted prior to the real interviews to ensure relevance and enable editing. According to Cohen *et al.*, (2000), “interviews enable participants, be they interviewers or interviewees, to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view” (p. 267). Arksey and Knight (1999) are of the view that “interviews are naturally powerful in interpretive case studies because they help respondents to make explicit things that have been implicit” (p. 33).

The interviews were conducted with the Inspector of Education, the school principal, the HOD and four teachers. The purpose of the interview questions was to investigate how instructional leadership manifested itself at the case study school and how it could be further strengthened. As a novice researcher, I understood the limitations of using the interview as a data collecting tool, as people may not always remember all of an event and they might be sensitive to some of the questions asked. One of the possible limitations of the face-to-face interview could include my own bias in setting some of the questions, as they were determined by my assumption of the phenomenon under study. I also found that participants spoke out about other management issues that were not necessarily relevant to the subject under study. As advocated by Arksey and Night (1999), I avoided giving signs of approval or disapproval at the responses received, by allowing the participants to continue talking until they were done (p. 53). I found interviews to be useful as they provided an opportunity for clarification of questions and further probing. I interviewed one participant each day in order not to interfere with the operation of the school and interviews were conducted after normal teaching hours to allow teaching and learning to continue unabated.

Interview questions (Appendix D) focused on the role of leadership in the promotion of teaching and learning, the role of the external players/stakeholders, inhibiting factors for instructional leadership and possible strategies to strengthen teaching and learning.

3.4.2 Observation

Observation was one of my secondary data collection tools that I used to supplement the interviews and the analysis of documents. Cohen *et al.*, (2007) argue that “observation offer an investigator the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data from the natural setting and allow the investigator to look directly at what is taking place *in situ* rather than relying on second-hand accounts”(p. 45). Nieuwenhuis (2010) define observation as “a systematic process of recording the behavioural patterns of participants, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them” (p. 84).

I sought permission from the principal to attend staff, board and departmental meetings at the case study school, where I observed events using a structured timetable as a non-participant

observer. I adopted a passive, non-intrusive role, merely noting down the incidence of the factors being studied (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p. 398). My interest during the observation sessions was to find out whether instructional issues were given the necessary preference and attention they deserved and if other instructional issues such as time on task were respected. Generally, observation helped me to verify and complement some of the data generated through document analysis and interviews.

I spent five weeks at the school and observed morning assemblies, staff briefings, one staff meeting and one parent meeting. I kept a diary where I recorded everything that I observed, including dates and events. I also recorded other school activities such as the movement of learners and teachers between classes, the conduct of HODs and other members of the school management team.

3.4.3 Document analysis

According to Arksey & Knight (1999) pre-produced texts that have not been generated by the researcher are usually an important source of data (p. 17). Merriam (2001) refers to “public records, personal documents, and physical material as the three major types of documents available to the researcher for analysis” (p. 133). In many studies, document analysis has proved to be a very valuable source of data. According to Barzun and Graff (in Bell, 2005) documents are useful because, as one studies sources, one will gradually gain insight and detailed knowledge which give one a “higher common sense” which will, in turn, permit a fuller appreciation of the worth of evidence (p. 133).

I studied memos, briefings, circulars and minutes of the SMT, parents, staff and board meetings from which I gathered information regarding the significance of instructional issues at the school. Documents can provide relevant and accurate information as they have not been prepared for the purpose of research and would at the same time save time, as they are readily available and accessible. I also accessed recent policy documents and newspaper articles to study the official position of the government of Namibia and Ministry of Education regarding instructional (pedagogical) issues in schools.

The other reason why I employed document analysis as one of my instruments for data collection was to verify information from my other two data collection tools, the interviews and observation. Thus, I collected and studied several documents to familiarize myself with how instructional leadership manifested itself at the school. These documents included:

- School vision and mission statement
- School Development Plan (SDP) and Plan of Action for Academic Improvement (PAAI)
- School internal policy guide
- School rules and regulations
- Classroom observation instruments
- Recommendations of the National Education Conference
- Minutes of meetings i.e. staff, management, parents, departmental, subject and school board meetings
- Master, teachers' and class timetables
- Job description of a teacher
- Year calendar of activities
- Class lists

The school principal, HODs and teachers were very helpful as they provided documents I requested without hesitating. I studied the documents to establish their background and relevance to my study.

3.5 Data analysis

Nieuwenhuis (2010) understands qualitative data analysis to be “an ongoing and iterative (non-linear) process, implying that data collection, processing, analysis and reporting are intertwined, and not merely a number of successful steps” (p. 100). He further argues that the process of data analysis “tries to establish how participants make meaning of a specific phenomenon by analysing their perceptions, attitudes, understanding, knowledge, values, feelings and experiences in an attempt to approximate their construction of the phenomenon”(ibid).

I agree with this notion, hence I started with data analysis right from the beginning of the data collection process, to the end. According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (1999), “data gathering involves development of ideas and theories about the phenomenon being studied,

even as the researcher makes contact with gatekeepers and sets up interviews” (p. 323). I read and carefully examined the data generated from the research tools. As a norm in qualitative studies, I kept all the original data for possible verification and to solicit feedback from the participants in the research.

I was aware of the need to sift, reduce, label, interpret and present the raw data that I generated from the field. The raw data I generated was then coded and sorted into categories in relation to the study goals. De Vos and Fouche (1998) refer to this approach to data analysis and interpretation as “a process of breaking data into constituent parts to obtain answers to research questions and to test research hypotheses” (p. 203). It was very important to triangulate data generated from the different data collection methods so as to try and find out to what extent the sets of data were similar or different. This helped me as a researcher to understand the phenomenon from different angles and, in doing so, I also strengthened the validity of the findings.

3.6 Ethical aspects of research

Social science research involves people, so considerable care needs to be exercised by the researcher. I sought permission (Appendix A) from the Omusati Regional Directorate of Education, as well as the individual school to conduct research in this rural state school. I also made sure that letters of consent (Appendix C) were sent to all participants and, as a researcher, I explained and clarified issues relating to relevance, process, and the objective of my study, as well as to inform them that their participation was voluntary.

I guaranteed them confidentiality and anonymity regarding their identities and that the information generated would not be used for reasons other than for my study, without their consent. According to Cohen *et al.* (2007), “consent protects and respects the right of self-determination and places some of the responsibility on the participant should anything go wrong in the research” (p. 52). Participants were assured that their real names would not be used in order to protect their identities. I also saw to it that the data collected was verified and edited by participants before it was analysed.

3.7 Conclusion

The research design and data collection process was an eye opener for me and presented me with an opportunity to learn a great deal about how to conduct research, using different data collection techniques. Through interaction with the participants, I learned a lot about the dynamics of research as well as teaching and learning and the multiple challenges that schools are facing within their daily operations. The data generated is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present the data generated through interviews, document analysis and observation. The research seeks to investigate how instructional leadership is manifesting itself and how it could be strengthened in a successful rural secondary school in Namibia. The following themes were identified from the data and literature: appointment of qualified teachers, provision of teaching/learning facilities, monitoring and evaluation, mission and vision, meetings/briefings, teaming, rewards and recognition, parental involvement, continuous professional development challenges and suggestions for improvement.

Following are the profiles of the participants.

4.2 Coding and profiles of research participants

The participants' teaching experience differed as they started teaching at different times and occupied different positions. For ethical reasons, the names used for participants, circuits and schools are pseudonyms and participants are referred to as the following:

1. Inspector of Education :(IoE)
2. Principal: (P1)
3. HOD: (HOD)
4. Senior Teacher: (T1)
5. Senior Teacher: (T2)
6. Volunteer Teacher: (T3)
7. Junior Teacher: (T4)

Data collection tools have been identified as follows:

- Interview
- Document one: school vision and mission statement – D1
- Document two: school development plan (SDP) and plan of action for academic improvement (PAAI) – D2
- Document three: school internal policy guide – D3
- Document four: school rules and regulations – D4
- Document five: classroom observation instruments – D5
- Document six: recommendations of the national education conference – D6
- Document seven: minutes of meetings e.g. staff – D7 (a), management – D7 (b), parents – D7(c), departmental- D7 (d), subject – D7 (e), and board- D7 (f)
- Document eight: master, teacher and class timetables – D8
- Document nine: job description of a teacher – D9
- Document ten: calendar of activities – D10
- Document eleven: class lists – D11
- Document twelve: school targets for 2011 – D12
- Observation schedule – notes recorded during meetings, briefings and generally during my stay at the school – OS.

4.2.1 Mr Apocho: Inspector

The Inspector of Education started his teaching career as a tutor at the University of Namibia in 1993. He then became a fulltime teacher in 1994 at Omukumo Secondary School where he taught until 1999 when he was appointed as Education Officer, responsible for Mathematics in the region. In 2003, he was assigned to establish the Uutete circuit. After acting for five months in this position, he was promoted as Inspector of Education, a position he occupies to date.

4.2.2 Mr Kano: Principal

This school principal began his teaching career in 2000 at a school in the Oshikoto region and was then promoted as principal of Efuta Combined School in the Ohangwena region in 2004. In 2006 he was appointed as principal of Omukumo Senior Secondary school. Mr Kano holds a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Namibia and is also the cluster head principal of the Omukumo cluster. A cluster is a group of schools that is geographically close and accessible to each other. Clusters were established with the aim of grouping schools to share resources, expertise and improve teaching and learning in general.

4.2.3 Mr Eita: HOD

The head of department (HOD) started teaching at Okanya SS in Omusati region in 2004 until when he was promoted to the position of HOD at Omukumo SS last year. Mr Eita is a graduate of the University of Namibia (UNAM) with a Bachelor of Education degree and is responsible for the department of languages at the school. He is a proponent of teamwork.

4.2.4 Mrs Pewa: Senior teacher

This senior teacher has a teaching career spanning over a decade. She joined the school in 2004. Mrs Pewa started her teaching career in 1990 at Avula SS where she taught until 2000. She is a holder of a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Namibia and is heading the Namibia College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) centre at the school. She lives on the school premises.

4.2.5 Mr Stalin: Senior teacher

Mr Stalin has got five years of teaching experience behind him, having started teaching in 2007. His teaching career started at a different school in the same area upon which he moved to Omukumo SS at the beginning of 2009. Mr Stalin is a graduate of Ongwediva College of Education (today Hifikepunye Pohamba campus) and holds an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE). He is a workaholic and is passionate about teaching. Mr Stalin is also a member of the school board.

4.2.6 Mr Mojo: Junior teacher

Mr Mojo is a junior teacher. He started teaching in January 2010 at the same school where he is presently teaching Physics and Mathematics. He holds a Bachelor of Education degree from UNAM. Mr Mojo is regarded as a computer guru and is always on hand to help others with Information Communication and Technology (ICT). In addition, he is responsible for sports and coaching the boys' football team. He lives at the school.

4.2.7 Ms Ketu: Volunteer teacher

Ms Ketu is a volunteer teacher from the United States of America. She joined the school on the 17th January 2011. Ms Ketu holds a Bachelor's degree in Communication (Broadcasting) and Business Administration. She does not have previous teaching experience and is responsible for English grades 8, 9 and 10 and Computer Skills grades 8 and 9. Ms Ketu lives on the school premises.

4.3 Data presentation

The responses of the research instruments provided a variety of ideas regarding instructional leadership. Having presented the participants in my study, I now move on to present the data around the themes, as outlined in the introduction to this chapter. I begin by presenting the importance of appointing qualified teachers to improve school performance.

4.3.1 Appointment of qualified teachers

As part of its instructional role and responsibility, the school management of the case study school ensures the appointment of qualified teachers. This helps the teaching and learning programme to run effectively as everyone knows and understands what is expected of them with regards to lesson delivery.

According to P1 and T5, the appointment of qualified teachers is making a difference in the performance of the school as it encourages teaching and learning. When asked to explain how he encourages teaching and learning at the school, P1 replied as follows: "First of all you have to support the system by making sure that the school has qualified teachers". Similarly T3 pointed out that one of the reasons for an improved academic performance is the fact that most of the teachers currently employed at the school are University graduates. He states: "I am sure that is positive in terms of teaching and increasing the academic weight of the school".

This view is supported by T4 who felt that "nowadays, we have teachers specifically teaching a subject that he or she was trained for". These views were confirmed by the minutes of the school board meeting held at the school on the 26. 05. 2011 where the board recommended

the appointment of a biology and geography teacher based on her academic and professional qualification: “Her academic record is very attractive and she has performed well” (D7, b).

4.3.2 Provision of adequate teaching/learning materials and physical facilities

Teaching and learning materials are essential for effective implementation of the instructional programme in schools and the school management of the case study school has demonstrated a commitment towards providing such, in efforts to help learning and teaching to flourish at the school. Documents perused indicate that the school management is striving to ensure that a conducive learning environment is created by availing the facilities required for teachers and learners use. The minutes of the management meeting held on the 30. 03. 2011 revealed that the principal informed the management team that the construction of new classrooms were complete and ready for use (D7, b). At the same meeting, they resolved that every staff member who has school furniture in their houses should return them as soon as possible. This clearly indicated the efforts of the school management to make available the much needed facilities for the purpose of teaching and learning.

P1 stated that as principal, he ensures that materials like syllabuses, subject policies, textbooks and reference books are available. He went further to say:

You place orders for stationery, especially textbooks, and other aids like summary books etc. You must have a budget from the school to see to it that you allocate funds to all the necessary departments especially when it comes to teaching and learning. All departments are at least given budget allocations for them to buy stationery and other teaching aids that are useful and helpful for the process of teaching and learning.

He continued by highlighting the assistance of the office of the Inspector of Education regarding the provision of materials by saying that “the Inspectorate has been very supportive in terms of their response in the case of needing some materials such as textbooks”. According to him, the school was privileged to be supplied with computers by the government, which has made it easier for both teachers and learners to search for information and do research on subject related matters. During the staff meeting held at the school on the 19. 07. 2011, “teachers were

encouraged to use the internet at the computer laboratory for research and downloading useful teaching and learning materials” (D7, a).

The HOD argued that:

The principal does not hesitate to buy anything that is learning material related. You go and ask for something and you instantly get it, as long as that something is useful and you can motivate why you want it. Any type of activity that is taking place at this school is there to boost learning and teaching.

This implies that despite limited teaching and learning resources at the school’s disposal, the SMT make it its duty to prioritise instructional needs, by supporting and availing funding to buy teaching and learning related aids.

According to the IoE, teachers need materials such as textbooks and syllabuses and the school itself needs desks and chairs to function effectively. This is highlighted in the minutes of the Natural Sciences departmental meeting of 18. 01. 2011 where subject heads were instructed to “distribute syllabuses, schemes of work, year plans for subjects, continuous assessment sheets (CASS), target sheets and lesson preparation forms” (D7, e).

T1, T2 and T4 commended the role played by the school management and the regional office (advisory services) in providing teaching and learning materials. T1 stated, “I remember in geography our advisory teacher had formulated some materials that we had to use. I remember power point presentations that I am now using in my lessons, which were created by her”. T2 explained how “you tell them your problems and they will try to help you out”, while T4 said “they conduct workshops with teachers”.

4.3.3 Meetings/briefings

Meetings are a very important component of organisational structure as they create a platform for engagement and discussion of issues affecting the organisation and its members.

I observed one staff meeting and several morning briefings during my time at the school. I noticed that meetings were used to share information related to learning and teaching, such as

moderation and invigilation of examinations as well as the discussion of circuit/regional correspondence.

Meetings are very important activities in any organisation as they offer a platform for members to reflect on what is going on, deliberate on issues affecting the operations and look for ways to overcome problems the organisation is faced with. According to the internal school policy, the school conducts morning assembly on Mondays and Fridays and teacher's (staff) briefings on Tuesdays and Thursdays (D3). P1, HOD, T1, T2 and T3 all indicated that they see meetings as a platform on which the school deliberates on issues of concern. P1 said, "You have to engage parents, as this is another way of supporting the system, to take part in the education of their children through parental meetings and parent day".

T1 elaborated on the role of the principal by saying:

Actually he really does a lot through the briefing sessions that we have and by conducting meetings. It really encourages us to carry on with our profession, as well as to do our administrative work well. We always have staff meetings at the end of each and every exam to review how the exam went, where each and every teacher will be given a platform to explain what happened, be it a good or bad performance. They have to account for that and explain to others how they managed it if they scored well, or on the other hand, what went wrong.

Perused documents such as minutes of the school board, management, staff, departmental and parent's meetings, support these views. The English subject meeting held on the 18. 05. 2011 deliberated on subject related issues such as scheming, listening and speech writing. This implies that meetings are very useful in setting the agenda for instructional deliberations.

In addition, the HOD highlighted the importance of coming together when he said, "I like to include my people; we sit around here, we plan on a weekly or daily basis, and we plan together so that everyone can be fitted in". Similarly, T2 indicated that "we always have departmental meetings where they are given guidelines and deliberate on issues concerning subjects in the department".

Answering a question on the role of the regional office, T2 responded that the advisory services unit of the regional office "organises workshops and conferences where teachers share

knowledge on the techniques of marking, with those with experience of marking at the national level". This is a sign that apart from meetings and briefings, other platforms are available for stakeholder involvement such as the conferences mentioned above.

Most of the participants indicated that meetings and briefings at the school are normally used to give feedback and share information between teachers from the same departments, to share materials from training workshops or share other crucial information that members may need to know. T1 said, "After attending the workshop, you share the material with others". When asked as to how the principal encourages teaching and learning at the school, T3 had this to say:

We have meetings where we have the opportunity to plan and discuss issues, make suggestions and have conference time for any questions we have; so I think what they do is just to create an open platform for anyone to raise their concerns.

Thus I conclude that there is a sound working relationship and healthy communication channels where staff members are continuously briefed and given feedback on issues that may affect their work as members of the organization.

4.3.4 Monitoring and supervision

Most of the participants expressed the importance of supervision and monitoring as key aspects of instructional leadership. They indicated that monitoring and supervision is taking place at the school through class visits and lesson observation and that this helps to encourage teaching and learning. T2 confirmed this by stating that "they come to class, they visit and they also look at our files in order to see whether we are preparing for our lessons". The internal school policy on class visits states:

Class visits should be conducted for all teachers at least twice per term by the principal, HODs and senior teachers in both promotional and non-promotional subjects, as per the requirements of the National Standards. Post-discussion conference must be held with visited teachers, preferably not later than two days after the visit (D3).

Answering a question on what he does to encourage teaching and learning, the P1 said, "I have to see to it that the teachers are supported, motivated and guided. This is done through

classroom observation to see that teachers are equipped with all the necessary materials they are supposed to have. The principal has to make sure that materials such as syllabuses, subject policies and textbooks are available”.

He further indicated that the exercise of monitoring and evaluation is not solely his but it is a team effort, as the IoE, HODs and subject heads also play a role. The internal school policy on ‘Topic and Mastery’ tests stipulates that “marking schemes should be jointly set before hand by the relevant subject teachers and approved by the subject head or HOD concerned” (D3).

The IoE also indicated that he does monitor school operations:

What I actually do is monitor what is happening in schools and also train school masters on how to actually interpret the policies regarding the implementation of the curriculum in the school. I also provide on-the-job training to the school managers, mostly principals, to ensure that their leadership style is conducive to the preparation of teaching and learning activities at the school.

In one departmental meeting dated 30. 03. 2011, minutes revealed that Agriculture and Biology were not performing according to expectations and the strategy was taken that, “subject heads should monitor the work of the responsible teachers after every two weeks” (D7, d). Asked on his view regarding the role of school principals, the IoE said:

They should carry out class visits to the classrooms where the teachers are teaching, to get information by observing lessons and find out what the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers are. From there the principal should actually know what to do- such as advising the teacher on how to improve.

I read seven class observation reports written by the principal and HOD. Their comments were mostly positive and encouraging. They provided teachers with advice on areas to be improved upon and how to go about it. The HOD for Natural Sciences commented on the lesson presentation of the biology teacher as follows, “The class was well managed but the lesson presentation needs to be improved, especially the objectives and orientation which needs to be made clearer to the learners” (D5). The principal commented on a grade 8 mathematics lesson plan as, “an ideal lesson plan, however attention needs to be paid to the lesson objectives- use tangible words and both teacher and learner activities should be well detailed” (D5). This is further evidenced by the minutes of the staff meeting of 19.05.2011 where the principal

emphasised, “the importance of timely feedback for those who do class visits and for those visited to take feedback as a way of helping them” (D7, a).

The HOD described his role as that of monitoring the quality of work that teachers present to the learners because that will “reflect on the quality of teaching that they deliver”.

T1, T2 and T4 all stated that the principal and HODs play an important role in monitoring and evaluating the teaching programme of the school. T1 said, “I was one of the people that were visited in class”. He further said the principal also assesses how the lessons are delivered in terms of learners’ activities: “I remember there was a point he asked me to give him all my tests that I had recorded and the progress of each learner”. T2 and T4 indicated that the role of the Inspector is negligible; although sometimes he does visit the school to familiarise himself with how teaching and learning is being conducted.

The National Education Conference held in Windhoek from 27 June to 01 July 2011, amongst other recommendations, recommended that the monitoring of the teaching of all the subjects as specified in the curriculum by Inspectors, school principals and heads of department must be intensified (D6). These findings are a demonstration that monitoring and supervision are taking place in the case study school and those entrusted with this responsibility are doing their work, though it also emerged from the data that it may need more support.

4.3.5 Teamwork

Teaching is a team effort and organisational member’s skills, expertise and knowledge should be utilised to the benefit of the organisation. All the participants interviewed indicated that the school staff is operating as a team. Emphasising the importance of team work, P1 said, “We believe that a one man show never works”. Apart from the school board and management team, teachers are also involved in the day to day running of the school. According to the minutes of the school management meeting dated 30. 03. 2011, “each class teacher whose class will occupy the new classrooms are expected to take full responsibility and manage their classrooms” (D7 (f)).

P1 said it was his job, “to allocate and delegate responsibilities to other staff members”. He further said that teachers plan their subjects together and sometimes invite each other to deliver their lessons, particularly on topics that they find difficult to teach (ibid). There is further evidence in the minutes of the Natural Sciences departmental meeting dated 14. 06. 2011 where they resolved that, “teachers should use common work e.g. common activities for learners, common tests and common books” (D7 (d)).

When asked to elaborate on the use of the term/phrase “we”, the IoE said they work as a team which includes the advisory teachers, principals and teachers in the region, hence the use of the term “we”. The HOD pointed out the benefit of teamwork:

To avoid tension, you must try to build a team and try to make them feel part of the team. Involve others such as subject heads and teachers. I like to include my people; we sit around the table, we discuss issues, and we plan on a weekly and daily basis. As HOD I do not own the department, but am rather a member of the team.

During the English subject meeting of the 18. 05. 2011, the HOD made a call for teachers to help each other to formulate schemes of work for grades 8 – 10 (D7 (d)).

Teamwork is one of the strongest points at the school and teachers are working in a collaborative way to make teaching and learning easier and effective. T1, T2 and T3 indicated that the school management encourages teamwork and as such they plan lessons together, set the same tests and invigilate examinations. T1 stated: “We always come together and do that, and it indicates team work does really exist in the school”. Similarly, T2 said, “we have to come together and plan together, then we give common work to our learners”. According to a report presented during the staff meeting of 19. 05. 2011, a group of teachers from the school, “visited one of the best performing schools in the country to familiarise themselves with what is happening at the school” and this is a sign of collaboration with the outside world (D7 (a)). This meeting was also chaired by a teacher, though the principal and HODs were present.

Elaborating on teamwork, T2 said:

When we are starting a new chapter or a new topic then we have to come together, then give common work to our learners and see if there is anybody who has some materials that others do not have, so that we can share.

T3 mentioned other team building exercises that the school embarks on, like “social gatherings for teachers that are supposed to encourage a sense of teamwork in the community, which will trickle down to our actual work”. During my time at the school, I observed that during the morning assembly each teacher stood at the back of their class, a sign that teachers as team members also have roles and responsibilities at the school.

Highlighting the existence of teamwork, T4 said:

Helping each other has become a culture and it started from the top management. We have created a cycle called “teamwork” at the school. If I can give an example: if one is busy stapling papers for learners and there is nobody to help, another teacher will help with stapling and so on. Also when it comes to the preparation of classes that you do not understand, another teacher will help you.

4.3.6 Mission and vision

Organisations, including schools, should set themselves goals and a vision of where they want to be in the future and how to get there. Organisational members are very instrumental in helping an organisation to realise its vision and mission, however, leaders should strive to direct and convince members to buy into the vision and take ownership. The vision and mission of the Omukumo Secondary School are displayed on the official school documents such as the School Development Plan (SDP) and on the internal school policy guide. It is also written on the logo of the school which is made up of a badge, a graduate and a bow shape structure. The badge symbolises achievement, hard work and perseverance, a graduate represents academic victory and a bow shaped structure represents their foundation and determination.

The school’s vision and mission statements state the following:

Vision: Striving towards academic excellence, promoting cultural diversity and democratic participation among stakeholders.

Mission Statement: Together with other stakeholders, we want to extend our horizons in education, where learning becomes truly accessible to all citizens and we produce resourceful and self-reliant learners while preparing them to become responsible citizens. We also aim at fostering equality and equity in education for all learners to achieve academic and social goals.

The IoE pointed out that for a school to prosper academically, it needs to have a vision:

A school is an organisation set up by different individuals, with different views, different philosophies; so first of all these individuals should have the same vision, meaning that a school should have a direction of where they want to go. These individuals should have a shared vision, whereby whatever they do, they do it to reach that vision.

Answering a question on who should set the vision, he explained that the principal as a leader should set the vision of the school, but emphasised that the vision should be shared with everybody and everybody should contribute to its formulation. T2 said, “It is the culture of the school that it always wants to be the best”.

Perusing through the 2011 school targets, it is clear that the school is striving to do better as reflected on the table below, highlighting the school targets:

GRADE	ENROLMENT	YEAR	TARGET ACHIEVED DECEMBER 2010	%	TARGET SET FOR DECEMBER 2011
8	73	2011	78%		85%
9	70	2011	68%		73%
10	54	2011	85%		90%
11	348	2011	11.2%		16.2%
12	233	2011	12%		17%

These targets are in agreement with the school mission of “striving towards academic excellence” as they are aimed higher than where they are. There is evidence through the conduct of the SMT and teachers of their commitment to improving the school academic performance in line with its vision and mission - that of turning the school around into becoming a centre of excellence.

4.3.7 Rewards and recognition

By recognising people’s hard work and contribution to organisational performance in whatever way, people become more motivated to carry out their duties and responsibilities with vigour and determination.

The Omukumo Secondary School’s internal school policy guide dictates that “there should be an annual planned school awards ceremony beginning of the third term of each academic year” (D3). It further stated that the award categories should include:

- Academic
- Sports
- Culture
- Best performed teachers
- Well behaved learner

Most participants in the study highlighted the importance of motivating staff members. According to the HOD:

Both teachers and learners should be recognised for their efforts. Every day I wake up and go to class to teach. Somebody must at least take note. Recognising everybody’s contribution, in the sense that you give them equal recognition, will ensure that you do not end up creating animosity. You do not want the situation where some are made to feel they are a more superior teacher than others, so rewarding them all will boost their confidence.

As an act of motivation, it was highlighted during the Natural Sciences departmental meeting of the 18.01.2011 that Mr Bonath is a role model when it comes to punctuality in the school and other teachers were asked to follow his good example (D7 (b)).

This is supported by T2 when she said, "At the end of the year those who did well always get certificates of appreciation from the principal's office. But all the teachers receive one from the HODs so as to encourage them to do better next time".

HOD, T3 and T4 argued that things like prize-giving ceremonies, congratulatory letters and trophies, strengthen and renew the mode of teaching and learning. This is emphasised by T4 when he said, "most of the teachers are seriously committed now, and everyone wants to fight for the regional award. I think this is one of the main contributing factors to the improved school performance and as staff we help each other to make sure the school scoops the regional award". The HOD views equal recognition as the best way to motivate teachers by saying, "the best method is to recognise teachers equally".

T4 said this about trophies as a way to encourage teaching and learning:

There is a floating trophy at school for the best learner, for instance we are facing the August examination, the best overall learner will get the trophy and there are some minor trophies and certificates normally given to best performing learners in specific subjects.

He went further to explain the school culture of publicising the names of teachers whose performances are outstanding by "singing their names from the morning devotion to the circuit and to the regional office". This is done to let others know that someone has done very well and they should be emulated by everybody. There was evidence of awards for national achievement. At the parents meeting of the 11.06. 2011, the principal gave a report about a learner who performed very well in Accounting at the school and was rewarded with a scholarship from Lazarus Shinyemba Ipangelwa foundation to continue with grade 11 at one of the prestigious schools in Windhoek (D7 (b)). She will also have a chance to select the university of her choice in South Africa for tertiary studies upon completing her grade 12. He continued to inform the parents that the school was given awards for hard work as five teachers were awarded and the school for achieving the regional target by scoring 87% in the JSC examination for 2010. The regional directorate of education award certificates and trophies to recognise achievement and to encourage schools and teachers to work hard and achieve excellence for their schools and region respectively.

4.3.8 Parental involvement

Parental involvement is an important element in schooling today and parents and other stakeholders are expected to play a meaningful role in the education of learners. It emerged from the data that parents of children attending the case study school are playing their role in the education of their children and this helps the school as instructional issues are being tackled from both within and outside the school. Through school boards, a platform is created for parents to take their rightful place in schools. The Omukumo Secondary School's internal school policy also calls for teachers to liaise with the parents via the principal's office.

P1 said this of parental involvement:

Even this afternoon I spent time on the phone, discussing with parents and giving them feedback regarding learners who need support; you have to engage parents so that they are aware of what you are doing and when you want to do it.

According to the minutes of the staff meeting held on the 19. 05. 2011, a parents meeting scheduled for the 11.06. 2011 was announced and teachers were urged to interact with parents (D7 (a)).

T1 said the following on parental involvement: "I remember last year the principal came up with an initiative for the grade 10s, to have follow up meetings with the parents of the learners who were not performing well". The National Education Conference held in Windhoek from the 27th June to 1st July 2011 also recommended greater involvement of parents and communities so that problems could be resolved collaboratively (D6).

T2 agreed with P1 and T1 by stating that:

Parents used to come to the school to check how their children are doing, they used to come even if the learners did something wrong. You would call them and normally they came and would be really interested in what is happening at the school. Some even come without being called- there was even a time when some parents used to come and spend a day in the classrooms, checking on what is happening.

4.3.9 Staff development

According to Chell (2001, p. 17), if learning is a life-long pursuit and if our goal is to improve the quality of education, then educators too, need to be continually educated. The school management of the case study school is very supportive when it comes to aspects of staff development. I observed that according to the school policy on staff and professional development, “there should be annual scheduled professional and staff development programmes, preferably in the first term”.

Staff development opportunities exist in the Ministry of Education though not as possibly anticipated. All participants indicated their participation in the existing development programmes such as training workshops for teachers, leadership/management courses for school managers and workshops/training related to HIV/AIDS and Information Communication and Technology (ICT). T4 said that “one of the first things that happened when I started teaching, was a workshop meant for the new science and mathematics teachers”. P1 stated that leadership training workshops are not easy to secure, but through personal efforts one can succeed. He stated that:

I attended two leadership training workshops, one in Tsandi (2008) and the other one in China (2010). The one in China was advertised in the local newspapers and I applied, after which I was nominated to go and attend the 3 weeks seminar for principals in the area of leadership development. The one in Tsandi focused on the difference between leadership and management while the one in China gave a broader aspect on what constitutes leadership; how best one can manage a school; human resources; budgeting; how to deal with cultural differences of members and how to market the school as an organisation.

Perused minutes of the school board, parents, departmental and staff meetings indicated some teacher absences from school as a result of attending training workshops and seminars. These workshops range from subject related issues, to leadership and management. An apology was registered at the meeting of the 26.05.2011: “Mr P1, the chairperson is attending another meeting” (D7 (b)).

According to the IoE, one of his responsibilities is “to train principals to ensure that their leadership styles are conducive to the preparation of teaching and learning”. P1 concurred with

this by saying, “we have been receiving support from the Inspector on how to go about carrying out given functions, monitoring others, giving feedback and how to go about assisting new teachers”. All participants referred to workshops organised by the professional development unit (advisory services) of the region, aimed at improving teaching and learning. IoE mentioned two programmes currently running in the region and circuit:

We are running a programme of packaged classes, where we bring the best teachers in the circuit to give classes during the holiday and then invite all the other teachers who would like to attend to see how they teach. At the regional level we have what we call “Regional Performance Improvement Strategy(RIPS).From the Inspectorate’s side, we concentrate on the school managers instructing them on how to provide general leadership to the school and the professional development looks at how they can directly assist the teachers within the classroom to improve teaching.

T2 stated that “there are teachers (facilitators) chosen from the schools that are doing better in specific subjects so that they can help others that are struggling with teaching” and further indicated that “whenever there are new teachers at the school, they are attached to senior teachers for mentoring”.

Apart from subject related workshops, T3 and T4 also referred to ICT and HIV/AIDS programmes meant to inform the teachers on how to handle HIV/AIDS related topics and the possible stigmatisation. T4 explained that “the other programme is on IT. The International Computer Driving License (ICDL) is being conducted in the region and it helps teachers to become acquainted with technology in their teaching, so that they do not always make use of the chalkboard”.

Having discussed issues that emerged as strong elements of instructional leadership at the case study school, I now move to present the challenges that participants pointed out as hindering teaching and learning. They are presented in a summary form.

4.3.10 Challenges facing the implementation of instructional leadership

Like many other schools in rural Africa, Omukumo Secondary is faced with many challenges which continue to hamper the smooth operation of instructional activities. These challenges

include discipline, inadequate teaching/learning facilities, poor parental involvement, increased workload for stakeholders, class sizes and poor time management.

4.3.10.1 Discipline

Good discipline in schools contributes to fewer disruptions of the teaching programme and to a healthier organisational climate. Though listed as a challenge, teachers and learners of the case study school seem to be highly disciplined, as disciplinary cases were quite few at the school. However, two of the participants pointed out ill-discipline as one of the challenges facing the school.

When answering the question on the challenges facing instructional leadership, P1 had this to say:

The other problem is discipline for both teachers and learners, especially working with different people/individuals from different backgrounds; you always encounter different behaviours and attitudes demonstrated by different staff members. For instance, somebody may absent him or herself without reporting at all to the supervisor or a person may fail to give feedback on time to the learners or contravene some of the offences stipulated in the staff rule guide.

P1 continued by indicating that “you sometimes avail information to your colleagues for people to read, but they do not read it until they become a victim of those circumstances”. There is also an element of apathy: “Some colleagues do not want to participate in areas of improvement”. During the staff meeting held on the 19. 07. 2011, concerns were raised about teachers absenting themselves from examination invigilation duties and the management team was asked to look at this very seriously. This is happening despite the availability of the invigilation timetable and the internal school policy on examinations which state that “invigilators are expected to be in their assigned venues 10 minutes before examinations start” (D3).

According to T4, “most learners behave very badly, you can sometimes lose your temper even if you are trying to control yourself and their behaviour is just not conducive to teaching and learning”. This was confirmed by the announcement at the morning assembly on the 08. 07.

2011, when the principal requested learners to be in their classes and at the same time announced the suspension for a few days of learners who had been absent from lessons. I also observed that learners were roaming about around the school ground during class time and there was a high level of noise coming from the block where I was being accommodated.

4.3.10.2 Inadequate teaching and learning materials

For schools to be effective learning organisations, they should be provided with adequate and quality teaching and learning materials. This is essential for positive learning and academic outcomes. At the beginning of this chapter, I discussed the provision of teaching and learning materials as high on the priority list of the school's management and the regional office; however, it emerged from the data that this remains a challenge for the school.

P1 complained about the lack of teaching and learning materials: "We are still living in a situation where learners are sharing textbooks, especially in subjects like social sciences and commerce". Similarly T2, T3 and T4 stated that there are not enough textbooks at the school and sometimes up to four learners have to share one textbook and this compromises quality teaching and learning. T1 commented that, "you devote most of your time trying to look for materials here and there. Almost every day when you go to teach a class, you must have copies made for the learners' on a particular topic, simply because we do not have the learning materials".

T3 had this to say: "I would say quality resources are lacking. When I first came here I was given maybe twenty dictionaries for seventy five grade nine learners and I did not understand what I was supposed to do, as I had been told that there were not enough textbooks".

Apart from teaching and learning materials, there is also a shortage of physical facilities. According to T3, "learners did not have chairs for a while in my class; they were writing exams with six or seven people sharing a table which was an issue". During my time at the school, I observed that some classes such as grade 11 C have up to 42 learners which make it very difficult for effective teaching and learning to take place (D11). One grade 8 class was taught in

the dining hall, due to renovations taking place in the physics laboratory, which they used as a classroom.

The HOD said this of the school laboratory and library: “We have laboratories that are almost defunct because there are no chemicals and libraries with outdated reading/study materials”.

P1 confessed that, “Our classrooms are very old; so much so that teachers cannot leave their materials there because they do not have stable facilities”. A SWOT analysis for the School Development Plan (SDP) indicated dilapidated classrooms without notice boards and cupboards and store rooms without doors, as some of the areas for improvement (D2). The issue of a shortage of physical facilities was also highlighted in the principals’ report during the parents meeting of the 11. 06. 2011, where he indicated that there were not enough classrooms and that lessons were being conducted in the dining hall, for three class groups (D7 (c)).

4.3.10.3 Increased workload for educators

Most of the participants acknowledged that the workload for teachers or expectations from those with vested interests are overbearing, thus making it difficult to execute their duties as effectively as possible. P1 said, “In the past, teachers were used to the chalkboard but today they are required to do a lot of paper work, such as constructing personal development plans, schemes of work and other duties, as required by the National Standards and Performance Indicators”. He further elaborated on how, as a principal, he is expected to use and complete the classroom observation instrument, a document made up of about 18 pages. Each of these pages has up to 20 questions that he has to answer in 45 minutes of lesson observation.

The IoE, in the same vein, explained his workload as excessive: “I have 34 schools and to visit all these schools within a year is a mammoth task as the normal ratio for the Inspector is in fact 20-25 schools”. Reading from a document titled “Job description for a Teacher in the Ministry of Education (MOE)” it is easy to realise the possible loopholes that can lead to a work overload as one of the clauses reads that teachers “perform any other duty or responsibility that might be reasonably requested by the principal”(D12).

The HOD similarly said:

We have too much on our plate; for instance, you spend time planning as a school manager around the table, but as soon as you step out of the office, your role is not one of a school manager per se; you are now a teacher and HOD. It becomes a challenge to find a balance between the implementation of what you have planned and your work in the classroom. I have as many lessons as any other ordinary teacher.

T1 argued that the distribution and sharing of responsibilities is not well coordinated at the school: “You find the same person serving in almost all the committees. I also have some other responsibilities and in my case I do not utilise most of my teaching time because of these other commitments”.

T2, T3 and T4 argued that big class sizes and shortage of materials increase the load of teachers as they spend more time writing summaries on the chalkboards, formulating learning/teaching materials, marking learners’ activities and providing individual attention to a large number of learners.

T3 is of the opinion that large class sizes compromise quality teaching and learning, “in terms of marking and quality feedback, it becomes almost impossible”. T2 views the situation in a similar way:

We have between thirty eight to forty two learners in some of the classes and with such big class groups you are not able to finish marking and then give feedback.

T4 also views class sizes as a very big problem affecting teaching and learning by saying that, “the other thing is the size of the class; the environment is just not conducive if you have too many learners in one class”.

4.3.10.4 Poor time management

P1 conceded that time management is one of the areas that the school is making an effort to improve on. Though it does not seem to be a very big problem, he said that “some people still wait to be told to go to classes”. The HOD shared similar sentiments: “Though we have improved on time management there will always be those that wander off”. I observed that some parents arrived at the school for the parents’ meeting when the meeting was about to adjourn and I also noted that a lot of time was wasted as teachers waited for the bell to ring before they started walking to classrooms, some of which are up to 100 meters away. I also

observed that there are a lot of “free periods” on the master timetable and teachers do not take non-promotional subjects very seriously, thus leading to abundance of time being wasted.

T2 said, “Morning briefings sometimes take up sometime from the first lesson; you can find the briefing may even take up to 15-30 minutes from the first lesson, though this does not happen often”.

T3 observed that time is not properly managed as he said:

A lot of time is wasted, although the principal is trying to get us to be on time and to stop wasting time. For instance, break time is half an hour long, from 10:45 to 11:15, but sometimes it rings late because someone has forgotten to ring the bell on time. Even when the bell has rung, teachers are still socialising. Sometimes teachers do go straight to class but this is because the principal is watching them and trying to make sure that they all do what they have to do.

4.4 Recommendations from the field

The participants made recommendations on how teaching and learning could be strengthened. The recommendations are presented below.

4.4.1 Provision of teaching and learning materials (resources)

All participants recommended adequate funding and provision of teaching and learning materials as a pre-requisite for effective teaching and learning. T2 said, “We must be given enough textbooks so that each learner can have his or her own textbook and we need more classrooms; we do not have enough classes to accommodate all these learners”.

Another participant (T1) explained that the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) is providing books for some subjects but that these are still not enough because of the number of learners at the school. The IoE argued that the provision of teaching and learning materials should be prioritised as he indicated that, “I do not have a photocopy machine here and a printer”.

The issue of inadequate resources in schools can be linked to poor funding which needs to be improved on. P1 recommended that they need to “improve funding per learner; the ratio per learner per year in the senior phase is too low, if you look at the number of subjects offered”.

The problem is not only the shortage of materials but also the quality and sell-by-date of materials. According to the HOD, there is a need for the ministry “to provide quality, up-to-date materials and chemicals for the laboratory”.

T2 and the HOD recommended the construction of more classrooms and employment of more teachers to reduce the teacher/learner ratio and improve the classroom environment.

4.4.2 More stakeholder involvement

Education is a collective responsibility and it is required of all stakeholders to play their individual roles in realising school academic improvement. P1 said stakeholders should play their role and should be seen on site:

It is a common fact that some Inspectors are not even known by their schools by sight, probably only by their name, if at all; they need to come and give support, familiarise themselves with what is happening in schools and give advice.

In addition he said, “The regional office through professional development and even the top management need to know what is happening in schools, because they only emphasise improvement but do not give us any direction”.

4.4.3 Appointment of school counsellors

The IoE called for the “creation of positions for school counsellors in the establishment or structures of the ministry of education, to deal with socio-psychological needs of the learners in schools”. Similarly, T3 said that “it would be nice if there were guidance counsellors to make time to listen to learners’ personal problems”.

School counsellors, I think, would also play a role in the disciplinary aspect of the school as they are professionally trained to deal with that. T4 recommended that “new strategies should be found to discipline learners, without alienating them from attending classes”.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented categorised data obtained from the research instruments used, namely interviews, document analysis and observation. The responses received from the participants

indicated that instructional leadership is indeed manifesting itself at the school with regard to creating an enabling environment for teaching and learning. Those responsible for school leadership are carrying out instructional duties such as monitoring and evaluating the teaching/learning programme, providing the necessary teaching and learning tools and equipment, conducting meetings and briefings, enhancing teamwork, rewarding and recognising achievements, involving stakeholders (parents) as well as creating opportunities for staff development. The responses also revealed that there are challenges that may hinder the effective implementation of instructional leadership such as indiscipline, inadequate teaching/learning materials, increased workload for educators and poor time management. The last section of this chapter offered a discussion of the recommendations from the field.

The relevance of these findings with regards to my research goal will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DATA DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I presented the data generated through interviews, document analysis and observation. I allowed data to “speak to each other” as I triangulated information collected from different research techniques. In this chapter I attempt to make sense of the data in terms of my research goal and the literature I used. It is worth mentioning that the focus of this study was to investigate how instructional leadership manifested itself in a successful rural school and how it could be strengthened. The data collection methods used, namely interviews, document analysis and observation were designed to answer the following questions:

- (a) How does the leadership approach in the school promote teaching and learning?
- (b) What is the role of external players in enhancing instructional leadership?
- (c) What is inhibiting the effective implementation of instructional leadership in schools and what are the suggestions to strengthen instructional leadership?

The discussion of data is framed by the following themes:

- The role of leadership in encouraging teaching and learning. Here I discuss the role of leadership in creating an enabling environment for teaching and learning, guidance and motivation, participation, vision and mission and continuous professional development.
- The role of external players in enhancing instructional leadership at the school.
- Challenges inherent in effective implementation of instructional leadership and suggestions from the participants.

5.2 The role of leadership in encouraging teaching and learning

The school principal as instructional head of the school should create and ensure a conducive and enabling environment is created at school for effective instructional leadership. The next section is an attempt to deliberate on what constitutes effective instructional leadership.

5.2.1 The role of leadership in creating an enabling environment for teaching and learning

The study established that the appointment of qualified teachers is one of the cornerstones to school success. Participants identified a relationship between the school academic performance and the academic and professional qualification of teachers. This has pushed schools to become competitive and to strive to hire the best qualified teachers in the market. Glanz (2006) refers to “good principals as those who attract and hire certified teachers who have specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are essential to promote student achievement; certified teachers are more successful than the unlicensed teachers” (p. 7). He goes on to say that good principals also realise that retaining good teachers is essential because experience counts (ibid).

Answering the question on what he does to encourage teaching and learning, P1 said, “I support the system by making sure that the school has qualified teachers”. It is generally accepted that qualified teachers possess more subject knowledge due to their specialization and this is in line with T3’s linking of the school’s academic performance to teachers’ qualification: “Most teachers currently employed at the school are university graduates”. The appointment of qualified and suitable teachers is very crucial to improving student learning outcomes and it is of utmost importance that stakeholders invest aggressively in the training of teachers. In this regard, Bush (2007) claims that “governments in the world today are realising that their main assets are their people and schools need trained and committed teachers who in turn need the leadership of highly trained effective principals” (p. 391).

The issue of hiring qualified teachers was also reflected in the minutes of the school board meeting (D7 (b)), where the most suitable candidate was recommended based on the following reasons: “Her academic record is very attractive and she has performed well”. This is an indication that education authorities today value skills and knowledge through qualification above any other attribute when hiring teachers, which could have a positive impact on school performance.

Teaching can be seen as a battlefield and teachers as soldiers in the battlefield who need to be sufficiently and efficiently equipped and trained during the time of peace, for them to fight effectively during the time of war. Having qualified teachers is not enough as they need to also

be properly equipped, hence teaching and learning materials are essential for the effective implementation of the instructional programme in schools. Schools need books, computers, desks, chairs and classrooms to conduct their daily business of teaching and learning. The documents I analysed indicated that the school management of the case study school was committed to availing facilities necessary for teaching and learning, for example, new classrooms were built towards the end of last year for use from the beginning of this academic year(D7 (b)). This is line with Glanz's (2006) call that principals should make timely interventions in the provision of teaching and learning materials, facilities and budgets necessary for teaching and learning to take place effectively(p. 13). P1 emphasised that he ensures that materials like syllabuses, subject policies, textbooks and reference books are available.

The school principal and the management team of the case study school acknowledged and appreciated the role of government in providing facilities. This was demonstrated at a staff meeting that I observed where P1 called on teachers to fully utilize the computer laboratory (D 7 (a)). Furthermore, he indicated that they were not alone in the battle for resources: "The Inspectorate has been very supportive in terms of their response in the case of needing some materials such as textbooks".

Parker and Day (cited in Kruger, 2003) view "supporting the teaching programme and providing resources that teachers need to carry out their task" as one of the main functions of instructional leadership (p. 207).

5.2.2 Guidance and motivation

Cawood and Gibbon (cited in Sinvula, 2009) argue that:

Instructional leadership is a process of guiding and encouraging the teacher along a path towards greater professional effectiveness. Such guidance demands very careful, far sighted and effective planning, based on professional insight and constructive and accurate analysis of teaching-learning activity (p. 11).

The participants view monitoring as a very important element of school leadership as it provides an opportunity for guidance and motivation. It emerged from the data that those in leadership or mandated with supervisory roles monitor the teaching process and guide others

on the best teaching practices. All the participants interviewed indicated that guidance is provided through class visits and lesson observation. This is also reflected in the internal school policy guide which explicitly states that:

Class visits should be conducted for all teachers at least twice per term by the principal, HODs and senior teachers in both promotional and non-promotional subjects, as per the requirements of the National Standards. Post-discussion conference must be held with visited teachers, preferably not later than two days after the visit (D3).

The study found that principals as instructional leaders need to be knowledgeable about curriculum development, teacher and instructional effectiveness, clinical supervision, staff development and teacher evaluation. They should also identify teachers who need to be supervised to ensure that educators receive guidance and support to enable them to teach as effectively as possible. Class visits and lesson observations are used to guide and motivate teachers but not to shame or expose their weaknesses. This is emphasised by Blase and Blase (1998) that class visits should not be done for punitive measures but should be done to motivate and support teaching (p. 108).

Similarly, this was also visible in the class observation reports that I studied, where positive and encouraging remarks were made and teachers were provided with advice on how to improve their teaching (D7). Furthermore, the data collected through the documents analysed also revealed that the principal, during one of the meetings, emphasised the importance of timely feedback from those who do class visits and for those visited to take feedback as a way of helping them (D7 (a)).

The Ministry of Education, which is the custodian of education in Namibia, underscored the importance of guidance and monitoring, at the recently held National Conference in Education where it recommended that “the monitoring of the teaching of all the subjects as specified in the curriculum by inspectors, advisory teachers, school principals and heads of departments must be intensified” (D6).

The study further established that the school encourages teaching by keeping the staff motivated by rewarding and recognising their achievements. This is reflected in the internal

school policy guide that “there will be an annual planned school awards ceremony at the beginning of the third term of each academic year” (D3). The data indicated that rewarding achievements and acknowledging performance could help improve performance. One of the participants (HOD) emphasised this by saying:

Both teachers and learners should be recognised for their efforts. Every day I wake up and go to class to teach. Somebody must at least take note. Recognising everybody’s contribution in the sense that you give them equal recognition, will ensure that you do not create animosity. You do not want the situation to arise where some are made to feel they are a more superior teacher than others, so rewarding them all will boost their confidence.

I tend to agree with this finding that motivation and recognition should be handled with utmost care, as it has the potential to create divisions and resentment if not well coordinated. It emerged however from the responses that the school management is aware of this, as indicated by T2 that “at the end of the year we receive certificates of appreciation from the principal’s office” and he further explained that “the principal only rewards those who excelled, but the HODs give one to all the teachers so as to encourage them to do better next time”. The data show that activities such as prize giving ceremonies, congratulatory letters and trophies strengthen and renew the mode of teaching and learning. From the responses, it emerged that teachers are more committed as they are competing for regional awards for themselves and the school. From the documents analysed, it emerged that the school is a recipient of the prestigious Lazarus Shinyemba Ipangelwa Scholarship granted to one of their top learners who excelled in accounting (OS). This can be encouraging for both the teachers and learners as it is testimony that hard work pays and would thus have an impact on the school’s academic performance.

5.2.3 Vision and Mission

According to Stone, Russell and Patterson (2003):

The transformational leader articulates the vision in a clear and appealing manner, explains how to attain the vision, acts confidently and optimistically, expresses confidence in the followers, emphasises values with symbolic actions, leads by example and motivates followers to achieve their vision (p. 4).

The school’s vision and mission statements state the following:

Vision: Striving towards academic excellence, promoting cultural diversity and democratic participation among stakeholders. Emphasising the school's stand on excellence, T2 said "it is the culture of the school that it always wants to be the best". This is further demonstrated by the school targets for the 2011 academic year for each grade which increased by five percent based on the previous year's performance (D12).

Mission Statement: Together with other stakeholders, we want to extend our horizons on education, where learning becomes truly accessible to all citizens and produces resourceful and self-reliant learners while preparing them to become responsible citizens. We also aim at fostering equality and equity in education for all learners to achieve academic and social goals.

The vision and mission of the Omukumo Secondary School are displayed on the official school documents such as the School Development Plan (SDP) and on the internal school policy guide. It is also written on the logo of the school which is made up of a badge, a graduate and a bow shaped structure. These are described as follows: "The badge symbolises achievement, hard work and perseverance, a graduate represents academic victory and a bow shaped structure represents our foundation and determination" (D2). The logo of the school was also visible on the wall at the school entrance and on learners' school uniforms. This representation of the logo at different sites at the school is a clear testimony that the school is committed and is taking teaching and learning very seriously.

I observed during my time at the school that the principal and other members of the management team were always on time during the assembly, briefings and for their lessons, which I believe is a way to encourage and show others the way towards achieving the school vision (OS).

Organisations, including schools, should set themselves goals and a vision of where they want to be in the future and how to get there. Organisational members are very instrumental in helping an organisation to realise its vision and mission, however leaders should strive to direct and convince members to buy into the vision and take ownership.

In line with this thinking, Day and Parker (1997) view instructional leaders as:

Facilitators of collaboration who identify, define and communicate a clear mission, goals and objectives: setting, together with the staff members, a mission, goals and objectives to realise effective teaching and learning as one of their main functions (p. 87).

Similarly, the IoE pointed out that for a school to prosper academically, it needs to have a vision:

A school is an organisation set up by different individuals, with different views, different philosophies; first of all these individuals should have the same vision, meaning that a school should have a direction of where they want to go. These individuals should have a shared vision, whereby whatever they do; they do it to reach that vision.

Answering a question on who should set the vision, the IoE explained that “the principal as a leader should set the vision of the school but emphasised that the vision should be shared with everybody and everybody should contribute to its formulation. It cannot be a vision for one individual”.

It is clear from the assertions above that IoE believed that the crafting of the vision of the school should be formulated by all members as it is generally believed that people are likely to accept and take ownership of processes they helped to build. This view is supported by the *South African Task Team Report on Education Management Development (1996)* which asserts that “a supportive management culture can only thrive where major stakeholders feel ownership of the school’s mission and ethos” (p. 30).

Parents’ meetings and the open door policy of the school are aimed at involving stakeholders as per the school vision and mission, which I think will help the school to achieve its main objective as learners will be continuously monitored by teachers at school and by parents at home.

5.2.4 Continuous professional development

With the fast pace of technology and a high demand for excellence, teachers are required to upgrade their skills and knowledge on a daily basis if they are to provide quality education. This implies that teachers should continuously learn throughout their teaching careers if they are to effectively execute their teaching duties. Graczewski, Knudson and Holtzman (2009) argue that:

Principals have been increasingly called to act as instructional leaders in their schools and ensure that teachers have the opportunity to increase their knowledge and perfect their craft, on the assumption that deeper teacher knowledge leads to change in instruction, which, in turn, produces high student achievement (p. 72).

I agree with the quote above that teachers can only increase their knowledge if school principals are supportive and create an environment where they allow, organise and ensure that teachers attend scheduled development programmes or workshops at school or outside school. This is in line with Glanz's (2006) argument that successful instructional leaders should invite workshop leaders from within and outside of the school to conduct sessions on topics that teachers wish to learn about (p. 13).

I also observed through the internal school policy and the school development plan that staff development opportunities are present, though not as possibly anticipated. All participants acknowledged the existing development programmes such as training workshops for teachers, leadership/management courses for school managers and subject related workshops/training related to HIV/AIDS and Information Communication and Technology (ICT). P1 asserts that since not all teachers can attend workshops organised on a national, regional, circuit or cluster level, every teacher attending a workshop is expected to give feedback and has to file materials collected from such development or training workshops.

It also emerged from the data that new teachers graduating from institutes of higher learning are assigned to senior teachers during their first year of teaching at the school for guidance and mentorship. Through such a mentorship program, they grow in confidence and develop as teachers. A study by Blasé and Blase (1999) established that peer interaction has more impact than outside assistance:

My own confidence levels have increased as I have been developing in an environment in which practice and application are encouraged and assistance is provided through both colleagues and supervisors. Teachers feel free to explore new options, share and learn from both success and failure. I feel appreciated and motivated each day to continue to grow and learn from peers (p. 136).

In the same vein, T2 stated that there is an element of peer teaching and coaching as well, by saying that “there are teachers (facilitators) chosen from the schools that are doing better in specific subjects so that they can help others that are struggling with teaching”.

Perusing through minutes of the school board, parents, departmental and staff meetings, I noted some teachers were absent on the attendance list as a result of attending training workshops and seminars (D7 (f)). This is clear testimony that the school culture and leadership value continuous professional development.

IoE stated that one of his responsibilities is “to train principals to ensure that their leadership styles are conducive to the preparation of teaching and learning”. P1 concurred with this by saying: “We have been receiving support from the Inspector on how to go about carrying out given functions, monitoring others, giving feedback and how to go about assisting new teachers”. All participants referred to workshops organised by the professional development unit (advisory services) of the region aimed at improving teaching and learning in different subjects. T2 argued that such workshops play a big role in their professional and pedagogical improvement and development, as they help them with the latest teaching techniques, marking and setting of standard question papers.

The IoE mentioned two programmes currently running in the region and circuit:

We are running a programme of packaged classes, where we bring the best teachers in the circuit to give classes during the holiday and then invite all the other teachers who would like to attend to see how they teach. At the regional level we have what we call “Regional Performance Improvement Strategy (RIPS)”. From the Inspectorate’s side, we concentrate on the school managers instructing them on how to provide general leadership to the school and the professional development looks at how they can directly assist the teachers within the classroom to improve teaching.

This indicates that continuous professional development is not left in the hands of schools, but other structures, such as the regional office and circuits, are also involved in developing educators to grow and develop.

HIV/AIDS has become a reality today and it is a challenge for schools, like any other social entity. It is thus a task of schools and the ministry responsible for education, to create an

environment where those that are affected and infected do not encounter prejudice. Against this background, participants T3 and T4 also referred to ICT and HIV/AIDS training workshops meant to inform teachers on how to handle HIV/AIDS related topics and the possible stigmatisation. On a completely different topic of training, T4 said that “the other programme is on IT, the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) is being conducted in the region and it helps teachers to become acquainted with technology in their teaching, so that they do not always make use of the chalkboard”. It is an open secret that technology is making life including the teacher’s life, easier and schools are encouraged to integrate technology into their teaching practices.

The study generally indicated that the school management is very supportive in creating opportunities for teachers’ academic and professional development as they encourage them to attend development programmes both inside and outside the school.

5.3 Participation

In the literature chapter, I drew on participative management as one of the theories that inform instructional leadership. Education today has become a shared responsibility as different players have to play their role in school leadership and education in general.

Views of the participants involved in the study, suggest that the school environment allows for stakeholders’ or external players’ participation in different ways such as through meetings, teamwork and parental involvement. It emerged from the research that the school makes provision for stakeholder engagement through staff, management, board and parental meetings. Stakeholder involvement is explicitly highlighted in the school mission statement which states that “together with other stakeholders, we want to extend our horizons on education” (D2).

I observed that meetings are not only used to convey information but are also very useful platforms for stakeholder participation. According to Rivera (2008):

Participative management addresses issues of governance within organisations and the role of employees and external stakeholders in all levels of organisational decision making

thus giving them an opportunity to have a voice in matters that affect them which may ultimately lead to dedication, loyalty, productivity and workmanship (p. 1).

I understand that the employees cited in the above quote are teachers and the external stakeholders are the parents and other stakeholders. It is generally believed that people are likely to buy into ideas in which they are directly involved and that this could have a positive impact on school performance.

According to the internal school policy guide, the school conducts morning assembly on Mondays and Fridays and staff briefings on Tuesdays and Thursdays and they are used as platforms for the principal, hostel superintendent, teachers and learners to make announcements and convey information to the school community (D3). The data obtained from the observation notes show that teachers and learners were provided with a platform to report back to school on the Geography tour undertaken by the grade 11 learners to the Racine Water Fall and feedback on the Regional science fair in which the school participated(OS).

A staff meeting that I observed was chaired by a teacher in the presence of the principal and participants made their contributions and asked questions freely. This was a demonstration of power sharing which according to Bush (2007), “minimises the load and burden if leadership functions and roles are shared “(p. 397).

T1 argued that “during meetings every teacher is given a platform to explain the weaknesses and strengths regarding the performance of their subjects”.

The establishment of the school boards in Namibia (through the Education Act 16 of 2001) and the governing bodies in South Africa (South African Schools Act of 1996) opened up doors for parental involvement in the running of schools where they are today taking their rightful place, despite the numerous challenges they are facing. Hanny (1987) emphasises that there is a need for “increased teacher involvement, collaboration and the creation of shared leadership which incorporates the talents and energy of all stakeholders; principals, teachers, learners and parents” (p. 209). Ideally, this would present all stakeholders with an opportunity to play their role and make a contribution towards the education of the nation and make it truly a shared responsibility.

Education stakeholders need to collaborate and work as a team if schools are to succeed as teaching is a group or team effort. The participants revealed that the advisory services of the regional office also provide them with opportunities through workshops and conferences where teachers share knowledge and techniques of marking and teaching. Participation is associated with the collegial model of leadership as it promotes idea sharing, decision-making and assistance in professional growth which in the end benefit students. According to Bush (2003), collegial models emphasize that “power and decision making should be shared among some or all members of the organisation” (p. 64).

From the documents analysed in this study it emerged that the issue of parental involvement is taken very seriously at the school. The internal school policy guide calls for “teachers to liaise with the parents via the principal’s office” (D3). Similarly, the school calendar of activities for the 2011 academic year indicates scheduled parental meetings (D10). The National Education Conference held in Windhoek between the 27th of June to the 1st of July 2011 also recommended “greater involvement of parents and communities so that problems could be resolved collaboratively” (D6).

The study generally indicated that there is a sound relationship between the school and the parents, as they normally honour calls to the school and even visit on their own to see what is happening. I observed during the parents’ meeting held at the school on 11 July 2011, that a reasonable number of parents turned up for the meeting (OS). Stakeholder involvement is also highlighted in the policy document: *Towards Education for All*, which calls for a democratic education system organised around broad participation in decision-making [MEC].1993. p. 14).

Through participation, an organisation creates teamwork as members are accorded an opportunity to get involved in the day to day activities of the organisation. The data show that teamwork is very evident at the school and the school management is taking the lead in encouraging it. P1 underlined the importance of teamwork by stating that “we believe that a one man show never works”. Most of the participants indicated that the school is operating as a team; they do lesson plans together and visit each other during lesson presentations which

enhance teaching and provide an opportunity for learning. HOD pointed out the benefits of teamwork:

To avoid tension you must try to build a team and make them feel part of the team. You need to involve others such as subject heads and senior teachers. I like to include my people; we sit around the table, we discuss, and plan on a weekly and daily basis. As HOD I do not own the department but I am rather a member of the team of teachers.

The data further revealed that teamwork is not only taking place within the school but also with the outside world as reported at the staff meeting of 19. 05. 2011, where it was noted that a group of teachers from the school visited one of the best performing schools in the Kavango region to familiarize themselves with their best teaching practices (D7 (a)). This is in line with Glanz's (2006) thinking that successful instructional leaders "facilitate best practices in teaching by visiting other school sites where best practices are well known, and even encourage teachers to visit in order to bring back fresh ideas and different ways of doing things"(p. 13).

Though not formalized, the idea of clustering schools is aimed at teaming schools together so that they can share resources and expertise which can lead to schools improving their situations and learning from better resourced schools, in terms of both human and capital resources. Through teaming, school leaders delegate some of their functions, not only to lessen the load but also to empower them and utilise the variety of skills, knowledge and expertise that the organisation has at its disposal through extensive participation by some or all members of the organisation.

The data explicitly revealed how external players/stakeholders are instrumental in enhancing instructional leadership at the school through different platforms such as through the school board, parents' day and meetings, monitoring of the teaching and learning programme by Inspectors of Education, advisory teachers and learners' representative council (LRC) where learners air their views and grievances on issues of an instructional nature.

5.4 Challenges experienced

Effective instructional leadership is essential for school academic success and performance, however, like all other activities there are challenges limiting effective implementation of

instructional leadership in schools. The participants identified several challenges that might hinder the effective implementation of instructional leadership. In Chapter Four the participants cited specific challenges experienced and suggested possible ways these challenges could be overcome.

I now discuss these challenges.

The data revealed ill-discipline among learners and teachers as one of the factors hindering the smooth implementation of instructional leadership at the school. These vary from disobedience, poor time management, loitering and absenteeism. P1 highlighted ill-discipline as one of the challenges by saying:

The other problem is discipline for both teachers and learners, especially working with different people from different backgrounds; you always encounter different behaviours and attitudes demonstrated by different staff members. For instance, somebody may absent him or herself without reporting at all to the supervisor or a person may fail to give feedback on time to the learners or contravene some of the offences stipulated in the staff rule guide.

Glanz (2006) argues that effective principals should establish a safe and orderly environment by communicating their high expectations for student behaviour as you can't have high student achievement in which student misbehaviour is tolerated (p. 92).

I observed that learners roamed around the school grounds and made a noise in the absence of teachers in the classrooms (OS). This I attribute to "free" periods on the timetable and periods allocated for non-promotional subjects that some teachers do not use. However, I noted that the school management is trying its best to curb this problem by punishing learners. This was confirmed by an announcement of the suspension of some learners for missing lessons, made at the morning assembly of the 08.07.2011 (OS).

It also emerged from the responses that there is a poor reading culture at the school which could be seen as a form of indiscipline as well. Commenting on this aspect, P1 said "you sometimes avail information to your colleagues to read but people do not read until they become a victim of those circumstances". Concerns with regards to teachers absenting themselves from their examination invigilation duties, were raised during one of the staff

meetings I attended (D7 (a)) and this happened despite the fact that all teachers were provided with copies of the invigilation time-table where the date, time and venue are clearly indicated (OS). The internal school policy guide on examinations is also very clear that “invigilators are expected to be in their assigned venues ten minutes before the examination starts” (D3).

Most participants conceded that time management is one of the areas that needs improving. Though downplaying this area of concern, P1 hinted to the fact that “some people are still waiting to be told to go to classes”. Another participant (HOD) echoed the same sentiment by stating that “though we have improved on time management there will still be those that wander off”. I observed that time management is not respected by most of the teachers as they always wait for the bell to ring before they start walking to their respective classes (OS). T3 made the same observation:

A lot of time is being wasted, although the principal is trying to get us to be on time and stop wasting time. For instance, break time is half an hour long, from 10: 45 to 11: 15, but sometimes it rings late because someone forgets to ring the bell on time. Even when the bell has rung, teachers are still socialising.

Generally Africans have been associated with poor time management which should be taken very seriously, as time lost can never be recovered. Ornstein (1990) argues that “students of teachers who provide more academic engagement time (as well as actual instructional time) learn more than students of teachers who provide relatively less time”(p. 76).

The study revealed a lack of teaching and learning resources and physical facilities as some of the challenges impeding effective instructional leadership and the provision of quality education delivery at the school. All the participants indicated a shortage of textbooks as one of the biggest problems that the school is facing, as sometimes up to four learners share a single textbook. This compromises quality teaching and learning, as teaching time gets divided between developing materials and actual teaching. T1 commented that “you devote most of your time trying to look for materials here and there; almost every day when you go to teach a class, you must have copies made for learners on a particular topic, simply because we do not have the learning materials”.

According to the responses, the challenge of inadequate teaching and learning materials is further compounded by the shortage of physical facilities. T3 pointed out during the interview session that “my learners were writing exams - six or seven people sharing a table”. As a result of the shortage of classrooms, learners are overcrowded in classes making it very difficult for effective learning and teaching to take place.

T2 view the situation in a similar way:

We have up to forty something learners in some of the classes; you would find a class with forty two and a few others with thirty eight, thirty nine. With such big class groups you won't be able to finish marking and give feedback on time.

The class lists I studied confirmed the large class groups existing at the school, grade 11 A for example has 45 learners, 14 boys and 31 girls which does not auger well for effective teaching and learning at all(D11). I also observed that grade 8 A was taught in the dining hall due to renovations taking place in the physics Laboratory, which they previously used as a classroom. This is despite the teacher learner ratio for Namibian schools being 30/01 for secondary and 35/01 for primary phases.

A SWOT analysis within the School Development Plan (SDP) indicated dilapidated classrooms without notice boards and cupboards and store rooms without doors, as some of the areas for improvement (D2). This forces teachers to keep their materials in and operate from the staff room which further deprives learners of an opportunity to interact and have more access to their teachers.

As indicated in the previous chapter, although some parents are involved in their children's education, there is a need for them to get more involved. The study revealed that only a few parents participate in school activities, although the education act (ACT 16 of 2001) makes provision through the creation of school boards where parents are supposed to play a major role. Perusing through the attendance register of the parents' meeting of 16. 07. 2011, I noted that less than 300 parents attended though there are more than 780 learners registered at the school for the academic year 2011 (D7).

The study pointed out that instructional leaders (teachers, principals and inspectors) are overloaded thus making it difficult for them to execute their duties effectively. It emerged from the responses that a lot of administrative duties are expected of educators today. These include constructing personal development plans, formulating schemes of work and other duties as required by the *National Standards and Performance Indicators (NSPI)*. Most of the participants view their workload as excessive.

The IoE had this to say:

I have 34 schools and to visit all these schools within a year is a mammoth task as the normal ratio for the Inspector is in fact 20-25 schools, whereby you have 25 principals reporting to you.

Upon scrutinising a document titled "*Job Description for a Teacher in the Ministry of Education (MOE)*", I assumed there might be a loophole which may lead to overloading as one of the clauses reads, "...and perform any other duty or responsibility that might be reasonably requested by the supervisor"(D12). I believe this clause is tantamount to abuse if not properly interpreted. T1 views the distribution and sharing of responsibilities as not even and well-coordinated at the school because though there are different committees, "there are some people who are serving in almost all the committees", which, in his view, increases the load on some of the staff members.

The issue of class sizes previously discussed also contributes to the workload of teachers. According to the study, as teachers spend more time writing summaries on the chalkboards compile learning and teaching materials and provide individual attention to individual learners, they are left with less time to fully commit to effective teaching and learning.

Civil strife, diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other socio-economic situations are challenging education authorities today to come up with strategies on how to provide assistance to learners and teachers. The school structures do not have provision for specialised personnel in counselling and social work to offer professional help. The IoE highlighted this by saying:

Within the ambit of teaching and learning, you cannot just teach the learners without dealing with the psychological issues. Teaching is a business which deals with the human

mind, so one needs to have an institution whereby learners and teachers are provided with psychological assistance in terms of how to deal with their daily lives. In schools we need to have somebody like a school counsellor, assisting learners and teachers on socio-psychological issues, but this is lacking in our education system.

At independence the new government of the republic of Namibia introduced some changes to the education system, one of which was the change from Afrikaans as a medium of instruction to English. Twenty one years down the line, this change continues to haunt the education system as teachers and learners are still struggling with English as a medium of instruction. Three of the participants asserted that the majority of the learners are not conversant or fluent in English, thus making it difficult to learn and teach because all but one of the subjects offered at the school are in English. Similarly, participant T4 said that “the English proficiency of the learners is not up to standard”. An English proficiency test conducted by the Ministry of Education on all the teachers in Namibia recently revealed that the majority of the teachers in Namibian schools are not proficient in English and will need training.

During the parents meeting I attended, I noted that communication is also a problem between teachers who are not natives of the area in which the school is situated and cannot speak the local language and the parents who cannot speak English. They had to rely on other teachers to interpret for them (OS).

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the findings of my research against a backdrop of leadership and management theories that are seen to underpin instructional leadership. It emerged that strong instructional leadership is prevailing at the school which is helping the school in maintaining its good academic performance. It also emerged however, that like other organisations, the school is faced with numerous challenges which hamper the smooth implementation of instructional leadership. The next chapter concludes this study.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I provide an overview of my findings in this study. I begin by discussing the key issues arising from the findings, and then move on to considering the significance of the study. The study led to a number of conclusions. It confirmed that instructional leadership is strongly evidenced at the school and that the school leadership is committed to creating an environment where teaching and learning can flourish. The role of leadership and challenges impeding the effective implementation of instructional leadership are presented in this chapter. The limitations of my study and the recommendations for practice and suggestions for future research are also discussed.

6.2 Summary of findings

It emerged from the findings that instructional leadership is strongly evidenced at the school, as both the school leadership and external stakeholders are working together to realise the mission and vision of the school. The data revealed that in an effort to strive for academic excellence, the school management team ensures that qualified and suitable teachers are appointed. It also emerged that apart from appointing qualified teachers, the provision of adequate and quality teaching and learning materials tops the priority list of the school. It was however highlighted that there are problems with regards to the provision of teaching and learning materials.

Participants indicated continuous guidance and monitoring as a very important element of school leadership. While it is taking place, it needs to be strengthened in some of the departments. The study suggests that monitoring and evaluation should be done continuously to help and direct teachers but not to shame or expose them.

Participative management and leadership is a very important aspect in the world today, where organisations are expected to be democratic and to involve members in decision-making. It emerged from the study that there are platforms for stakeholder participation and involvement through meetings and in the school board where parents, learners and teachers are represented. This culminates in teamwork and sharing of responsibilities among stakeholders thus helping to lessen the burden on the school leaders.

It emerged from the data that the school is striving for academic excellence, as one of the participants put it: “It is the culture of the school that it wants to always be the best”. To achieve the level of academic profile that the school is aiming for, there is a need for instructional leaders to articulate the school’s vision, how to attain it and then to lead by example. Leaders were found to be leading by example on issues like time management and they generally encouraged good practices at the school. From the findings, it also emerged that the principal together with the rest of the staff should formulate the vision and mission of the school, if it is to be owned by all.

The school management team is very supportive and encourages teachers to partake in continuous development programmes. Although there were varying opinions on whether or not they are effective, it is the conclusion of this study that continuous professional development is taking place and teachers are responding positively to such opportunities. It however came to light that the planned training workshops would be more effective if educators are involved in first identifying training needs.

The study further pointed out several key issues holding back effective instructional leadership in the school. Ill-discipline among both teachers and learners was identified as one of the major issues impeding teaching and learning. Participants feel that it is an issue that needs urgent consideration. Disciplinary issues alluded to; vary from teachers not giving feedback on time, learner/teacher absenteeism to poor time management.

Another critical issue that has arisen from the findings is the shortage of teaching and learning materials and physical facilities. It emerged that teachers are faced with fundamental problems such as shortage of textbooks, large class sizes and lack of other necessities such as chemicals in

the laboratories. The problem of textbooks is especially serious for learners in rural areas, as they share textbooks while staying kilometres apart. Teachers also find it very difficult to identify and help learners with special needs, as large class groups make it almost impossible.

In addition, educators are expected to do a lot of administrative work today and this has increased their workload according to the findings. The study revealed that educators are likely to focus much more of their attention on instructional responsibilities if their administrative work were to be reduced. The shift from Afrikaans to English as a medium of instruction is another challenge that the country is faced with, as both teachers and learners have difficulties communicating in English.

The study concluded that there is a need for instructional leadership to be strengthened through capacity building and creating an enabling environment for effective implementation of the instructional programmes in the case study school.

6.3 Significance of the study

The findings of this study demonstrated that there is potential for further research on how instructional leadership manifests itself in the Namibian education system. As an educator, I have always wanted to understand what makes specific schools in the same locality excel, while others struggle or even fail. I have now gained greater insight into how effective instructional leadership could lead to improved academic outcomes.

It is my hope that these findings could serve to give guidance and direction to educators and other stakeholders in Namibia and beyond. I also hope that the findings of this study might inform policymakers and institutions responsible for teacher training, as well as teachers themselves, of some variables related to effective continuous development of instructional leadership skills.

6.4 Limitations of the study

Instructional leadership is the backbone of education hence a study covering more schools, regions and all stakeholders would have been more valuable. The scope of this study was

motivated by a master's degree study and the fact that it was conducted in one public school in one region, means that the findings cannot be generalised. The fact that this study was a one year programme also made it very difficult to carry out a bigger study as everything was very condensed and time was limited. The region where the study was carried out is very vast, making it technically very difficult to cover schools in different circuits.

Therefore I had to limit the study participants to one Inspector, a school principal, a head of department and four teachers from the selected public school. This study was also limited in that I could not interview other stakeholders such as learners, parents and advisory teachers. In addition, the other constraint was the timing of my research which coincided with examination time and teachers were very busy and their time was limited to assist in my study.

Other potential research limitations were related to me being an official from the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED). NIED is the curriculum and professional development directorate of the Ministry of Education in Namibia. This had the potential to influence the participants' way of answering questions.

6.5 Recommendations for practice

The study revealed some strong elements of instructional leadership at the case study school but a lot still needs to be done. I therefore recommend that:

- Teachers operate from their classrooms to minimise learners' movements and noise and to save time. They need to seek ways to establish organisational policies to regulate learners and teachers behaviour.
- The school design ways to raise funds to provide for teaching and learning materials and for the construction of more classrooms.
- They reduce the workload of teachers by appointing more teachers and reducing the teacher/learner ratio to 25 learners in the secondary phase and to 20 learners per teacher in the primary phase.
- They appoint school counsellors and social workers to provide professional assistance to both teachers and learners.
- They design continuous professional development programmes for educators on instructional leadership and involve them in identifying training needs.
- They create an awareness of the importance and relevance of stakeholder involvement and participation.

- They invite successful graduates or products of the school to do motivational speeches and to encourage learners to take their education very seriously.
- The Ministry of Education should make use of research studies on instructional leadership to inform policy formulation.
- Novice and volunteer teachers should also be thoroughly inducted in their first year of teaching.

6.6 Suggestions for future research

Instructional leadership is one the many under-researched areas in schools in both Namibia and South Africa. I therefore suggest that future Namibian and South African scholars conduct more comprehensive and large-scale studies involving as many stakeholders in the same area as possible. This could include obtaining the views of other stakeholders such as parents, learners and education officers (advisory teachers and planners) on this topic. A comprehensive study has the potential to provide more information on how instructional leadership could be further strengthened.

The research focused on the role of instructional leadership at a successful rural secondary school in one region in Namibia. Future research might explore the role of instructional leadership at other schools, such as primary schools, private schools and tertiary institutions in the region and the country as a whole.

6.7 Conclusion

This study made an attempt at determining how instructional leadership is manifesting itself at the Omukumo Secondary School of the Omusati region in Namibia. This was necessitated by the interest created, based on the performance of the school in the Junior Secondary (JSC) examinations over the years, as stated in chapter one of this study. The geographical location and its rural setting made it necessary for the researcher to investigate how instructional leadership is manifesting itself at the school and how it could be strengthened.

The study looked at the role the school leadership and external stakeholders play to encourage teaching and learning. According to the research findings, the school leadership and management are committed and working hard to improve the academic performance by creating an enabling environment for effective teaching and learning. It also emerged that the

school climate and culture allows for stakeholder involvement which helps with general school effectiveness.

The study also identified numerous challenges and possible solutions that might impede effective instructional delivery.

The researcher hopes that the findings and recommendations made may help schools and the Ministry of Education in formulating relevant policies and bringing about much needed change in the education system. In addition, the researcher hopes that the findings collected from various sources and recommendations made, will be useful to stakeholders involved in the education sector.

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Appendix A: Letter of permission



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21 June 2011
Mrs A E Nghipondoka
Omusati Regional Council
Directorate of Education
P/Bag 529
Outapi

Dear Mrs Nghipondoka

Permission to conduct research in your region

I am writing to obtain your permission for Mr Nahum Namukwambi (student number 11N5657) to collect data from a school in your region. He is a registered Masters student at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa in the field of Educational Leadership and Management under my supervision. He has reached the point where he is ready to conduct his research. He wants to investigate instructional leadership in a school in your region.

Mr Namukwambi will need access to documents, to observe the school in action to get a sense of its climate and culture, and to interview selected teachers and the principal. He deserves all the assistance he can get for this project. Instructional leadership is an important issue in education in Namibia and the rest of Southern Africa but as yet under-researched. Mr Namukwambi has done well so far in his coursework and I have every confidence that he will produce a good study.

Thank you in anticipation for your permission and support. If you have any queries please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely

(Prof) Hennie van der Mescht (Supervisor)

Appendix B: Letter Granting Permission



-REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



OMUSATI REGIONAL COUNCIL

DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION

Team Work and Dedication for Quality Education

Tel: +264 65 251700

Private Bag 529

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OUTAPI

28 June 2011

Enq: Ms. Apollonia Nakale


To: The Inspectors of Education
The School Principals
Omusati Region

Subject: Permission to conduct a research in Omusati Region.

This letter serves to notify your good office that **Mr. Nahum Namukwambi** has been granted permission to conduct the above said research at your school. The Omusati Education Directorate is pleased to inform you that permission is granted and the research to be undertaken at schools should by no means whatsoever disrupt teaching and learning.

We hope and trust this exercise will enhance quality education in the region.

Yours faithfully


Mrs. Ester Anna Nghipondoka
Regional Director



Teamwork and dedication for
quality education

Appendix C: Letter of consent

P. O. Box 147

Okahao

18 July 2011

The Inspector of Education/Principal/HOD/Teacher

Mr/Ms.....

Omukumo SS

Ministry of Education

Omusati Region

Re: Request for your participation in Research study

Dear Principal/Inspector/HOD/Teacher

I am a master's student at the University of Rhodes, RSA and am busy conducting research on instructional leadership in rural Namibia. It is purely an academic exercise and it is my hope that the study will generate useful data, which will be useful to different stakeholders in education. I further hope that participating in this study in itself is a learning opportunity for the participants.

I have identified you as one whose informed opinions can help facilitate this study. I am therefore humbly requesting you to kindly participate in the study. Last but not least, let me assure you that your responses will be entirely confidential to me and your name will not be identifiable in the final report.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

.....

N. Namukwambi

Appendix D: Interview schedule

1. What do you do to encourage teaching and learning at your school/circuit? Inspector/Principal/HOD.
2. What does your principal/HOD do to encourage teaching and learning at school? Teachers.
3. What role does the regional office play to support teaching and learning at the circuit and school? Please explain. All.
4. Are there any development programs for inspectors/principals/teachers in the region, circuit, cluster and school that you know of? Please discuss. All.
5. In your view how can teaching and learning be strengthened in the context of your circuit/school? Please discuss. All.
6. What do you consider to be a climate conducive to effective teaching and learning in the circuit and school? All.
7. What constraints do you have in effecting an effective teaching program? All.
8. Given the number of hindering factors to effective execution of the teaching/learning program, what would you suggest as possible ways to improve the situation?

Thank you for your time and effort!

Appendix E: Observation schedule

Name of school (Pseudonym): Omukumo Secondary School. Date: 04-29/07/2011

Activity	Prov. Of t/l materials	Monitoring and supervision	meetings	teaming	Parental involvement
Morning Assembly		08/07/2011 assembly , the principal asked teachers to ensure that all learners are in their classes before the commencement of every lesson. The suspension of learners was also announced.	08/07/2011 , the chairperson of the committee responsible for the preparation of the celebration of the "Education for All" week asked members to meet during tea break.	The acting principal emphasized that teaching and learning should continue as usual despite the absence of the principal. 04/07/2011 Each Teacher stood at the back of their classes during assembly.	14/07/2011 briefing , the principal informed the staff of the upcoming parent's day and urged them to contribute towards making it a success. Teachers are expected to discuss with parents issues related to discipline, learners with learning difficulties and other school related issues. Parents to monitor learners work.
Staff briefings/staff meetings (non participant observer)	Staff meeting, 19/07/2011 teachers were encouraged to make use of the internet at the computer laboratory for		05/07/2011 , the principal emphasized the importance of time on task, reminded teachers of the upcoming mock examinations and their responsibility in	06/07/2011 the principal announced the program of the circuit marking whereby each subject should be represented by one teacher.	Staff development, staff meeting 19/07/2011 the SMT accepted an offer by a Namibian scholar based in the USA to introduce the staff to the latest technology.

	research and downloading useful teaching and learning materials.		teaching delivery.		
General observation		05/07/2011 , he made sure all the learners/teachers are in their classes before our meeting scheduled for 07H00.		Pre-wedding party for a teacher and an institutional worker was organized as part of the team-building exercise. 05/08/2011.	16/07/2011 , the parents' meeting was held and a sizable number of parents showed up and had an opportunity to interact and deliberate on issues of learning and teaching concerning their children.

Appendix F: Document analysis schedule

Name of school (Pseudonym): Omukumo Secondary school Date: 04-29/07/2011

Committee's Meetings/Documents	Provision of T/L materials	Monitoring & Supervision	Meetings	Teaming	Rewards & Recognition	Parental Involvement	Staff Development
1.School Management Meeting: 30/03/2011	<p>1. The principal inform the house that the new classrooms are finished and ready for use.</p> <p>2. The house resolved that every staff member who has school furniture in their houses should return them immediately.</p> <p>Nat science</p>	<p>Departmental meeting, 14/06/2011 it was noted that agriculture and biology were not performing according to expectations and strategies were taken that "subject heads should monitor the work of the responsible teachers after every two weeks, teachers should check if the question</p>	<p>1. Used to share crucial information like the appointment of teachers.</p> <p>English subject meeting, 18/05/2011</p> <p>Deliberated on subject related issues like scheming, listening and speech writing.</p>	<p>1. The principal reminded the house to start setting the exam ASAP, because we are not sure if the region will set it.</p> <p>2. Each class teacher whose their class will occupy new classes are expected to take full responsibility and manage their classrooms.</p> <p>Nat sciences meeting, 14/06/2011, it was</p>	<p>Departmental meeting natural sciences, 18/01/2011, it was highlighted that Mr Naboth is a role model in the school when it comes to punctuality, so all teachers are encouraged to come early at school.</p>	<p>1. Parents serve in the school board taking decisions like appointment of teachers etc.</p> <p>Parents meeting, 11/06/2011 the principal announced that one of the HODs was not present because she is attending a workshop.</p> <p>National Education Conference held</p>	<p>Nat sciences meeting, 14/06/2011, three of the teachers could not submit their preparation and resource files because they were attending a workshop.</p> <p>Nat science departmental meeting, 18/01/2011 also resolved that all</p>

	<p>departmental meeting, 18/01/2011, subject heads were instructed to distribute syllabuses, scheme of work, year plan for subjects and CASS sheets and targets sheets plus lesson preparation forms.</p>	<p>papers are set in line with syllabi and moderated, teachers should come up with strategies to improve learner's performance. HODs should check the teacher's activities that they give to learners.</p>		<p>resolved that teachers should use common work (sharing) i.e. common activities, common tests and common books.</p> <p>English subject meeting held, 18/05/2011 the HOD asked teachers to help each other to formulate schemes of work for grades 8-10.</p>		<p>in WHK on 27 June – 01 July 2011, the conference also counted indiscipline among learners in some schools due to loss of moral values in society. It thus recommended greater involvement of parents and communities so that problems could be resolved collaboratively.</p>	<p>teachers must be inducted by their subject heads as from the 18-21 January 2011.</p> <p>School board meeting 09/06/2011, the principal could not attend because he is attending a workshop at another school.</p>
<p>2. Staff meeting: Held on:19/05/2011</p>	<p>1. Oshindonga subject meeting, 16/02/2011 resolved that books should</p>	<p>1. One of the items on the agenda was the analysis of the April exam. The house looked at</p>	<p>1. Used to explain why learners performed poorly in subjects like</p>	<p>1. The school visited one of the best schools in a different region to familiarize themselves with</p>	<p>Invitation for prize award ceremony at Oshuulwa C. S.</p>	<p>1. Parents for the grade 10/12 learners will attend a parent day on the 16 July 2011 and learners</p>	

	be ordered.	<p>how different subjects performed. The principal emphasized the importance of timely feedback for those who do class visits and for those visited to take feedback as a way of helping them.</p>	<p>English due to the fact that they did not have a teacher.</p>	<p>what is happening there. 01 June 2011 minutes.</p> <p>The principal called all the grade 11 teachers through the HODs and subject heads to see to it that question papers are set at the school meaning they are the one that should set papers for August exams. 19/07/2011, teachers were tasked with set/moderating exams.</p> <p>This meeting was chaired by Mr Kanala, a sign of empowerment of teachers.</p>		<p>in the mentioned grades will also be present. Parents will have the opportunity to engage with their children's work. Parental meeting was scheduled for the 11th June 2011.</p>	
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				<p>Departmental meeting (Nat sciences) 14/06/2011, the HOD welcomed all present at the meeting and encouraged them to participate and make positive contribution towards all the discussions.</p>			
<p>3.School board meetings: Held on :26/05/2011</p>		<p>English subject meeting, 18/05/2011 the HOD announced about upcoming class visits will start soon and dates will be communicated</p>				<p>Highlighted the issue of a sick teacher and recommendations were made that a substitute teacher should be accommodated as soon as possible (Appointment).</p>	

		<p>in due course.</p> <p>National Conference 27 June- 01 July</p> <p>recommended that the monitoring of the teaching of all subjects as specified in the curriculum by inspectors of education, advisory teachers, school principals and heads of departments must be intensified".</p>				<p>According to minutes the board recommended a teacher for biology and geography based on her academic and professional qualification "her academic record is very attractive and she performed well"..26/05/2011</p> <p>Parents meeting and day were also announced during the meeting. School board meetings are chaired by the chairperson who is a parent.</p>	
4. Parents meeting: 11					A learner who	Close to 300	

<p>June 2011</p>					<p>performed well at the school was a scholarship from Lazarus Shinyemba Ipangelwa foundation to continue with grade 11 at a prestigious school in WHK. She will have a chance to select the best university in South Africa for further study. The prin. Informed parents of that the school was given different awards for hard work, 5</p>	<p>parents turned up, a big number for rural parents. Teachers introduced themselves to parents; the principal gave a report to the parents on issues like shortage of teachers, examinations (performance).</p>	
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					teachers were awarded and the school for achieving the regional target by scoring 87%.		
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