

EXAMINING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND
PERCEPTIONS IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LUSAKA
DISTRICT, ZAMBIA

By

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A Dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in Partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the master of Educational Administration and
Management

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

LUSAKA

2025

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation of Howard Njovu is hereby approved as partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Master of Educational Administration and Management degree

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DECLARATION

I, Howard Njovu, declare that the work presented in this report titled Examining Instructional Leadership Practices and Perceptions in Selected Secondary Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia is my original work, and has not been plagiarised. All the sources of information that have been used in this report have been acknowledged and cited accordingly. I further declare that this report has not been submitted in whole or in part for the award of any other degree or diploma to any other institution, except where otherwise stated.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Mr. Amon Njovu, whose selfless hard work made my education possible. I am deeply grateful for the sacrifices he made and the unwavering support he provided. To my mother, Mrs. Matildah Njovu, I offer my heartfelt thanks for her love, care, and constant encouragement throughout my journey. I also want to express my deepest appreciation to my sisters Vivian, Harriet, Rose, and Sally whose love, understanding and encouragement have strengthened me. Your support has meant the world to me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

All praise, honor, and glory belong to Almighty God Jehovah for His guidance, divine direction, and the gift of good health throughout my life. His undeserved kindness made the completion of this dissertation possible. I extend my sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of my study program. First and foremost, I am deeply indebted to my supervisors, Dr. H. Daka and Dr. K. Mwelwa and, for their invaluable assistance, insights, and constructive criticism, without which this study would not have become a reality. I am also grateful to my friends—Justina Mutale, Beatrice Mwiinga, and Gertrude Sikabumbu Muchindu—whose encouragement motivated me during my studies. My heartfelt thanks go to all the participants who took time out of their busy schedules to assist with my research. Lastly, I acknowledge my academic colleagues for their love, advice, and unwavering encouragement throughout my academic journey.

ABSTRACT

The focus of the study was to *Examine Instructional Leadership Practices and Perceptions in Selected Secondary Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia*. The total sample of this study was fifty six (56) that's 30 head teachers, 26 Teachers from the schools that were identified as research fields. The sample size of 56 was used because it had nearly a good representation of the key population and desired level of statistical power or accuracy supported it. Interviews and focus group discussion were used because their help to explain, better understand, and investigate research subjects' perspectives, behaviour, experiences, and phenomena. The interview questions were open-ended, allowing for the collection of detailed information. This study examines the critical role of head teachers in enhancing teacher effectiveness and overall school success. The findings indicate a need for a better balance between head teachers' instructional and administrative responsibilities. Schools should support delegating administrative tasks to optimize their impact, allowing head teachers to focus more on instructional leadership. The research also highlights the importance of expanding professional development opportunities and implementing recognition and reward systems to enhance teacher motivation and performance. Although head teachers are generally perceived positively in areas like motivation, feedback, communication, and commitment to student progress, the study reveals that consistency in these areas needs improvement. Prioritizing clear communication of the school's vision, providing balanced feedback, and actively recognizing student achievement will help maintain high teaching standards. The study concludes that head teachers are essential in fostering a positive school climate and improving teacher performance, with opportunities for growth in professional development and teacher recognition. Closing these gaps will help head teachers carry out their roles as instructional leaders and school managers more effectively, leading to better outcomes for teachers and pupils.

Key words: *Head Teachers, Instructional Leadership, Practices, Perception, Teachers,*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COPYRIGHT	i
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL	ii
DECLARATION.....	iii
DEDICATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Background	1
1.3 Statement of the Problem.....	4
1.4 Aim of the Study.....	4
1.5 Research Objectives.....	4
1.6 Research Questions	5
1.7 Justification of the Study	5
1.8 Theoretical Framework.....	5
1.9 Definition of Key Terms	6
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
2.1 Overview	8
2.2 Instructional Leadership	9
2.3 Head Teachers' role in leadership.....	15
2.4 Instructional Leadership Perception.....	15
2.5 Instructional Leadership Practices.....	16
2.6 Summary.....	17
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	18
3.1 Overview	18
3.2 Research Design	18
3.3 Study Sample.....	19
3.4 Data Collection Instruments	20
3.5 Data Collection Procedure	20

3.6 Data Analysis.....	21
Coding of Participants.....	21
3.7 Trustworthiness.....	22
3.8 Ethical Consideration.....	22
3.9 Summary.....	23
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.....	24
4.1 Overview.....	24
4.2 Demographic data.....	25
4.3 Practices head teachers use to promote instructional leadership in schools.....	26
4.4 Head teachers' actions to ensure quality education in schools.....	28
4.5 Influence of head teacher's instructional leadership practices on instructional delivery by teachers.....	31
4.6 Perceptions of head teachers on instructional Leadership in secondary schools.....	35
4.6 Barriers associated with the effective exercise of instructional leadership by head teachers.....	37
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.....	39
5.1 Overview.....	39
5.2 Practices head teachers use to promote instructional leadership in schools.....	39
5.3 The influence of head teacher's instructional leadership practices on instructional delivery by teachers.....	43
5.4 Perceptions of head teachers on instructional Leadership in secondary schools.....	45
5.5 The barriers associated with the effective exercise of instructional leadership by head teachers in selected secondary schools in Lusaka.....	50
5.6 Proposed Solutions.....	53
5.6.2 Summary.....	54
CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	55
6.1 Conclusion.....	55
6.2 Recommendations.....	56
6.3 Proposed Areas for Future Research.....	56
REFERENCES.....	57
APPENDICES.....	62
Appendix I: Interview guide Head Teacher.....	62
Appendix III: Consent Form for Head teachers.....	67
Appendix IV: Consent Form for Teachers.....	68

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4. 1: Showing Genders of the Respondents.....	25
Figure 4. 2: Showing qualifications of Head Teachers.....	26
Figure 4. 3: Showing work experience of Head Teachers	26

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter contains background of the study, a statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. The objectives, research questions, justification, and theoretical frame work were also explained. Finally, the chapter includes the operational definition of key terms used in the study.

1.2 Background

Numerous educational innovations have been implemented in the twenty-first century to improve student performance. As a result of these advancements, school leadership has received much attention. School leadership positively or negatively impacts the teaching and learning processes, depending on how it is carried out. This focus has typically been on elementary and secondary school head teachers. In order to improve the standard of teaching and learning in schools, the policy places a high focus on instructional leadership by head teachers. At the same time, the policy statement acknowledges the importance of instructional leadership in delivering of high-quality education. However, high-quality and successful teaching and learning must be demanded in all schools.

In these appeals for high-quality education, the Ministry of General Education (MOE) has struggled over the years to find strategies to boost educational standards and achieve high student accomplishment by improving classroom teaching and learning quality. The Ministry of Education's (1996; p159) national policy statement, "Educating our Future," outlines the crucial role that school leaders must play in pursuing of educational excellence and quality. It recognizes that the Head teacher bears primary accountability for this excellence.

Moreover, every student is held to a high standard of performance. Standards that are both reachable by all and upheld are set, and no student is written off. They prioritize learning, making good use of class time while taking a methodical approach to teaching and learning. All other activities are subordinate to the tasks of the school. They have a structured environment with a well-defined set of general principles. The school's fundamental teaching

and learning tasks can be completed within a predictable framework that is established by clear but flexible school discipline.

According to the policy statement *Educating Our Future* (1996; p159), schools that are active in their pursuit of excellence will better guarantee the quality of education. The following traits of a successful school are listed in the policy: They have a strong leader who continuously monitors the caliber of instruction. Assessment and evaluation are applied consistently. Learning is continuously monitored so that teachers and the head of school are always aware of students' progress in respect to set goals.

Two conclusions may be drawn from these school-level excellence measures listed in the Zambia National Policy on Education-*Educating Our Future* (1996; p159). One is the important function the head teacher must perform. A school does not become excellent by accident. It is something that needs to be purposefully and painstakingly made and kept up. The head teacher bears the primary accountability for. The policy statement also emphasized head teachers to act as instructional leaders to raise the education standard. "Educating our Future," a policy paper from the Ministry of Education, asserts the following: Excellence must be purposefully and meticulously generated in order to be sustained; it does not just happen in schools.

According to the Ministry of Education (1996; p159), in order to improve the standard of education in schools, the policy places a high focus on instructional leadership by head teachers. Before everything else, the head should be an educational leader who can educate instructors and students about their roles as teachers and learners.

Among the crucial components that influence the efficacy of both external and internal influences in education improvement are school leadership practices. Results from earlier research demonstrate the significance of instructional leadership head teachers in managing change (Shafinaz, 2017; Nor Azni, 2015; Jameela Bibi, 2012; Hazura, 2009). When there are changes in education, instructional leaders, with the assistance of teachers, are in charge of achieving the school's academic objectives. They are also prepared to devote their time and energy to implementing the changes, with a focus on pedagogical elements, teaching strategies, and learning to raise the academic standard of the institution. This shows that in order to catalyze changes among teachers, school leaders should also serve as instructional leaders. As

a result, instructional leaders are one of the key factors in the success of change implementation in schools (Fullarton, 2002).

A school administrator is first and foremost a person with a personality, character, and a set of fundamental values and beliefs. These individual traits do matter since they serve as the basis for all professional interactions and choices, affecting the school environment. In a sense, they serve as the school's "filter" and establish the tone. Being a school administrator requires flexibility in balancing the various duties expected of them. If the school administrator is able to balance being an instructional leader, a manager, the creator of a positive climate and culture, a visionary, an ambassador, a communicator, a collaborator, and a real person, then success is being attained and achieved, according to research from interviews, books, journal articles, and observations (Whitaker, 2003).

The processes that have an impact on the lives of children, teachers, support staff, parents, stakeholders, and the community include the practices and perceptions of school administrators. Due to their influence, school administrators can significantly affect student accomplishment by collaborating with teachers to create a learning environment in the classroom (Bottoms & Fry, 2009). According to Tschannen-Moran (2004) school's success depends on having a reliable leader in place. The school's administrators build trust by being kind, truthful, forthcoming, dependable, and competent.

In many ways the school administrator is the most important and influential individual in any school. He or she is the person responsible for all activities that occur in and around the school building. The school administrators' leadership sets the school's tone, the teaching climate, the level of professionalism and morale of teachers, and the degree of concern for what students may or may not become (Stronge, Richard & Catano, 2008).

Head teachers have been the subject of extensive research to establish if they are instructional leaders, and the Ministry of Education's policy statement recognizes their significance in delivering high-quality education. The bulk of studies on head teachers in Zambia have tended to focus more on their managerial and administrative practices, therefore there is a need for a study to analyze the practice and perception of Zambian head teachers on instructional leadership as specified in the policy document.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In secondary schools, teaching and learning are the main priorities. Literature provides evidence that, in addition to skilled managers, people who engage in instructional leadership are necessary for effective teaching and learning. An educational leader's action on to others to foster improvement in student learning are known as instructional leadership, according to Neal (2011), the results of students are more significantly impacted by instructional leadership. According to O'Donnell and White (2005), instructional leadership often focuses on teachers and a series of actions in guiding learning to "create good settings where all children learn" (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). Over the years, numerous studies have been conducted on the instructional leadership strategies and effectiveness, both globally and within the context of Zambia. Researchers such as Powell (2017), Kabeta (2015), Abreha (2014), Hutton (2013), and Chishimba (2017) have explored various aspects of instructional leadership practices, contributing valuable insights into how leadership can support teaching and learning. Nevertheless, not much is known about the practices and perception of such leadership in Zambian secondary schools. This lack of context-specific knowledge is a hindrance to developing effective leadership strategies for Zambia's peculiar educational context. However, many studies have been conducted on the implementation of instructional leadership in schools, there was very little known about instructional leadership practices and perceptions in Zambian secondary schools hence creating the need for this study.

1.4 Aim of the Study

This study aimed to assess the practices and perceptions of instructional leadership among head teachers in selected secondary schools in Lusaka district.

1.5 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To ascertain the practices head teachers use to promote instructional leadership in schools.
2. To assess the influence of head teachers' instructional leadership practices on instructional delivery by teachers.

3. To explore the perceptions of head teachers on instructional Leadership in secondary schools.
4. To investigate the barriers associated with the effective instructional leadership by head teachers in selected secondary schools in Lusaka.

1.6 Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

- I. What practices do head teachers use to promote instructional leadership in selected secondary schools?
- II. How do the instructional practices of head teachers influence teacher delivery?
- III. What are the opinions of head teachers regarding instructional leadership?
- IV. What challenges do head teachers face in exercising instructional leadership?

1.7 Justification of the Study

The data from this study might act as an eye opener for head teachers, helping them to enhance their roles and responsibilities. Additionally, this might assist them in developing a deeper awareness of their own instructional management and leadership practices and perceptions, which can help them improve both themselves and their school significantly.

This study aided teachers in understanding the value of the instructional management implemented by their school administrators in order for the institution to become efficient, favourable to learning, and capable of turning competent and productive students.

The findings of this study will help policymakers and researchers better understand the characteristics of school administrators in relation to instructional leadership practices and perceptions.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This study used the instructional leadership theory by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). The researcher points to the three dimensions in the instructional leadership theory. The stated three domains are defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program and promoting a positive school-learning climate. This theory resonated so well with the study in the sense

that the perception and practice of instructional leadership were brought to light by the three domains. Therefore, the study was based on the following characteristics curriculum and instruction, coordinating, supervising, evaluating, and monitoring progress. These were chosen because they showed instructional leaders' perception and practices.

However, amendment was made to the name of the first dimension. The researcher names it as defining and communicating goals. These three dimensions of head teachers' activity consist of ten types of specific instructional leadership job functions with its related behaviors (Hallinger and Murphy, 1985). They are explained in detail as follows: Instructional Leadership Dimension 1- Explains and Communicates Goals, this outlines the mission in Hallinger and Murphy, 1985).

In addition, defining and Communicating Goals (or defining the school mission) consists of two specific job functions: frame goals and communicates goals. Secondly, Instructional Leadership Dimension - Manages curriculum and instruction. According to this theory, Managing the curriculum and instructional behavior has four specific job functions, which are knowing curriculum and instruction, coordinating curriculum, supervising, evaluating, and monitoring progress.

Lastly, Instructional Leadership Dimension Promotes a conducive school climate, promoting the school learning climate also has four specific job functions: sets standards, sets expectations, protects time, and promotes improvement. According Hallinger and Murphy (1985) each of the stated functions includes a variety of principal practices called as behaviors and these behaviors are related to the core tasks carried out in daily duties of leaders in schools.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

School Leader/Head teacher/Principal: This refers to a person in charge of a school. In Zambia the term used commonly is head teacher while in many other countries the term principal applies. The three words have been used interchangeably in this study.

Instructional leadership practices are leadership roles that are directly related to the teaching process, involving the interaction between teachers, students and the curriculum (Quah, 2011).

Instructional leadership perceptions are thoughts or mental images that head teachers have about their professional activities and their students, which are shaped by their background knowledge and life experiences and influence their professional behavior.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This chapter presented other authors' literature on their views on instructional leadership practices and perception of head teachers or principal. The researcher examined literature in Zambia and principal abroad in order to find the gap for this study. The combination of literature, both local and international helped the researcher to have an insight of what had already been studied. The literature review is presented according to the following sub-themes: the practices head teachers use to promote instructional leadership, the influence of head teachers' instructional leadership practices on instructional delivery by teachers, perceptions of head teachers on instructional Leadership, finally the barriers associated with the effective instructional leadership by head teachers. Instructional leadership has emerged as a significant factor in improving school performance and student accomplishment. Historically, leadership in educational settings was centered on administrative and managerial responsibilities; however, recent research indicates a change toward leadership strategies that prioritize instructional quality and student learning outcomes.

School head teachers and administrators are common examples of instructional leaders, who shape teaching practices, develop collaborative settings, and set high expectations for both instructors and students. This literature review investigate the expanding role of instructional leadership, focusing on how varied practices affect instructional effectiveness and how stakeholders in the educational community perceive these roles. The examination begins by examining the fundamental principles and models of instructional leadership, charting its evolution as a separate approach to educational leadership. Following that, it looks at recent empirical research on the specific behaviors that constitute good instructional leadership, such as classroom observations, teacher mentoring, and data-driven decision-making. Furthermore, the review looks at how teachers and administrators perceive instructional leadership, finding elements that influence these perspectives such as school culture, professional development opportunities, and administrative support. By combining findings from various domains, this review attempts to provide a thorough picture of both the behaviors and views that shape instructional leadership in today's educational landscape.

2.2 Instructional Leadership

Additionally, the head teacher significantly impacts students classroom learning ability'. Mazibuko (2003) agrees that whether intentional or not, head teachers have an impact on teaching and learning. As a result, the primary responsibility of head teachers should be to ensure that learners receive quality instruction by ensuring that educators have the necessary knowledge and resources to facilitate learning. Along with the general and specific objectives of the educational program, the principal or head teacher should establish supervisory objectives. Similarly, to how educational goals guide the selection, organization, presentation, and evaluation of student learning experiences, supervisory objectives guide the selection, implementation, and evaluation of supervisory behaviors (Burke & Krey, 2005).

Furthermore, the principal or head teacher should collaborate with educators to define curriculum goals and strategies for achieving those goals, observe educators in action to provide support, and provide educators with instructional guidance. This implies that head teachers should always prioritize their role as instructional leaders because it addresses the school's core purpose namely teaching and learning. The principal or head teacher must be an informed individual who can facilitate staff development and create opportunities for professional growth. He or she should be well-versed in motivating educators, as the implementation of the curriculum has an emotional impact on them. Educators with low morale may perform poorly in their duties. As such, motivation as the role of the school principal is dealt with in the ensuing section (Burke & Krey, 2005).

Instructional management leadership is a struggle that all school administrators face in the Philippines. The truth is that school's core purpose within the school system (Kuzma, 2004).if school administrators do not possess characteristics that define their instructional management leadership they are most likely to cause problems in schools' instructional management leadership (Lyons, 2010).

A school administrator is critical in creating a learning environment that is both necessary and conducive to learning (Educational Research Service, 2003, On the other hand, the school administrator works in collaboration with factors that can contribute to an effective school learning climate. All institution members must collaborate to achieve common goals; this includes supporting students' learning and achievements. To be effective in any function,

particularly instructional management, the institution's goals must be clearly understood and agreed upon by all members involved in the process (Cheng and Townsend, 2000).

The school administrator is the pivotal element within the school that influences the quality of teacher instruction and the level of student achievement (Lindahl, 2010). The instructional management leadership of the school administrator is required to keep the school focused on the activities that have paved the way for high student achievement. Furthermore, education stakeholders must consider how to emphasize instructional leadership management (Cheng and Townsend, 2000).

Presented in this section are the indicators of instructional management as categorized by Nkonge, and Mudulia, (2023) frame the school goals, communicate the school goals, supervise and evaluate instruction, coordinate the curriculum, monitor student progress, protect instructional time, maintain high visibility, provide incentives for teachers, and promote professional development and provide incentives for learners.

Set the school's objectives. According to Fite, (2023), Torres and Chrispeels, (2022), and Latip (2006), framing school goals refers to a principal's role in determining where the school staff's attention and resources will be focused during a given school year Tshabalala, and Faremi (2023).

According to Howard (2010), school administrators involved in instructional effective schools generally have a clearly defined mission or set of goals that center on student achievement. A few well-coordinated objectives, each with a manageable scope, appear to be the most effective. The goals should include data on previous and current student performance and staff responsibilities for meeting the goals. Participation of staff and parents in the development of the school's goal appears to be important. Performance objectives should be stated in measurable terms (Saleh, 2012).

Conferring with Johdi (2012), framing school goals refers to the responsibility of a school administrator in determining the areas on which the school staff will focus their attention and resources during a given school year. The emphasis is on fewer goals that can mobilize staff energy and other school resources. A few coordinated objectives, each with a manageable scope, appear to be the most effective. The goals should include data on previous and current student performance as well as staff responsibilities for meeting the goals. Staff and parent input appear to be important during the development of the school's goals. Performance objectives should be stated in measurable terms (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). The most

important function where schools require a vision to achieve reform is activities that define the school goals (Uchiyama & Wolf, 2002).

Agreeing with Powel and Napoliello (2005), visions are intended realities that reinforce the school's focus. According to McEwan (2003), instructional leaders are also guides while defining school goals. As a result, when framing school goals, it is preferable to involve school staff and teachers because their experiences will serve as a foundation for determining school goals. Furthermore, the participation of school staff and teachers in an organization will provide important information about their skills and knowledge in defining school goals. Effective leaders, according to Purkey and Smith (1983), Leithwood et al. (1999), and Quinn (2002), will involve staff in determining and defining school goals and objectives to be implemented and evaluated at the end of the year. This condition increase their commitment to working together to achieve the school's goals. As a result, each school will be confident in its ability to succeed if it has a clear vision, mission, and teacher commitment (Johdi, 2012).

Conferring to Hallinger and Murphy (1985) and Ubben, Hughes, and Norris (2007), after defining school goals, school administrators must communicate those goals to the school community. One of the most important roles of the school administrator as an instructional leader is to communicate and explain school goals. One of the characteristics of an effective school is the common sharing of clear goals and high expectations among the school community (Torres, Chrispeels, 2022). If nothing else, common sense suggests that a clearly defined purpose is required for any endeavour that hopes to succeed. Within the constraints imposed by the common public-school philosophy, schools must prioritize the tasks that they deem most important. This allows the school to direct its resources and shape its functioning towards the realization of those goals (Sigilai, 2023).

The school administration communicates the most important goals of the school to teachers, parents, students, and the community (Johdi, 2012). School administrators can ensure that the importance of school goals is implicit by discussing and reviewing them with staff on a regular basis throughout the school year, particularly in the context of instructional, curricular, and budgetary pronouncements. According to Hallinger and Murphy (1985) and Ubben, Hughes, and Norris (2007), after defining school goals, school administrators must communicate those goals to the school community. One of the most important roles of a school administrator as an instructional leader is to communicate and explain school goals. One of the characteristics of

an effective school is the common sharing of clear goals and high expectations among the school community.

Common sense, if nothing else, indicates that a clearly defined purpose is necessary for any endeavor hoping for success. Within the limits imposed by the common public-school philosophy, schools must focus on the most essential tasks. This permits the school to direct its resources and shape its functioning towards the realization of those goals (Johdi, 2012).

Supervise and evaluate training. One of the most important responsibilities of school administrators is to ensure that the school's goals are put into practice in the classroom. This entails coordinating teachers' classroom objectives with those of the school, as well as evaluating classroom instruction (Howard, 2010). Furthermore, it entails providing instructional support to teachers monitoring classroom instruction through several informal classroom visits. Marzano et al., (2005) identified several responsibilities of school administrators that fell under the function of managing the instructional program. The first responsibility, curriculum, instruction, and assessment involvement, was defined by being directly involved in curricular design activity and assisting teachers in addressing assessment and instructional issues. The concept of involvement in these instructional areas is also noted as a crucial leadership dimension (Lyons, 2010).

Today's schools must be centered on teaching and learning, and organizing for teaching and learning (Stronge, et al., 2008). However, in order for a school administrator to provide curriculum and instruction leadership, he or she must be committed to self-improvement through self-learning. School administrators must serve as role models for their staff and participate actively in staff development (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Fullan, 2001; Lyons, 2010). Teachers who support curriculum and instruction are developed through role modelling, demonstrating professional practices, and providing assistance to those who require it (Cotton, 2003; Leithwood, 2005; Lyons, 2010).

The high degree of curricular coordination is a distinguishing feature of instructionally effective schools (Howard-Schwind, 2010). School curricular objectives are closely aligned with both classroom content and the school's achievement tests. Curricular series used across grade levels appears to have a high degree of consistency. More significant Interaction among teachers within and across grade levels on instructional and/or curricular issues often supports this aspect of curricular coordination (Howard, 2010).

Monitoring and evaluating students' progress is further defined by Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) as the extent to which school administrators monitor school practices in relation to their impact on student achievement. Individual performance evaluations, observing the implementation of a new curricular initiative, or examining student performance on local or state standards-based assessments and providing feedback to staff are all examples of monitoring (Lyons, 2010).

According to Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005), monitoring students' academic performance is critical for improving the effectiveness and qualities of learning. Both standardized and criterion-referenced testing are heavily used in instructionally effective schools. The tests are used to identify programmatic and student weaknesses, to assess the impact of changes to the school's instructional program, and to assist in classroom assignment. In this regard, school administrators play an important role in several ways. He/she can provide teachers with test results in a timely and valuable manner; discuss test results with the entire staff, grade level staff, and individual teachers; and provide interpretive analyses for teachers concisely detailing the relevant test data (Howard, 2010). Several other researchers and theorists have emphasized the importance of tracking and evaluating progress, and encouraging teachers to do so (2000; Cotton, 2003; Robinson, 2007; 1989; Whitaker, 2003; Lyons, 2010). Lyons (2010) discovered that one of the most important factors in student achievement is the amount of time school administrators spend observing classrooms and instruction.

Protect Instructional Time.

According to Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005), a primary role of the principal is to keep instructional time free of interruptions. According to Howard-Schwind (2010), improved classroom management and instructional skills are not used to their full potential if teachers are frequently interrupted by announcements, tardy students, and office requests. Control over this area is exercised by school administrators through the development and enforcement of school-wide policies concerning the interruption of classroom learning time (Whitaker, 2003).

Maintain High Visibility. Maintaining high visibility by talking informally with students and teachers and visiting classrooms informally (Lyons, 2010). The significance of principal presence and visibility throughout the school has long been recognized as a key to successful schools (Cotton, 2003; Whitaker, 2003). In fact, students have reported that visible and approachable school administrators influenced their academic achievement (Gentilucci & Muto, 2007).

According to Howard (2010), the contexts in which the school administrator is seen to provide one indicator of his/her priorities to teachers and students. Although a significant portion of the school administrator's time may be beyond his or her control, the school administrator can establish priorities for how the remaining time is to be spent. Visibility on campus and in classrooms increases interaction between school administrators, students, and between teachers and students (Howard-Schwind, 2010). This has the potential to improve student behavior and classroom instruction (Lyons, 2010).

Provide Incentives for Teachers. School administrators should use both formal and informal methods of rewarding teachers when they deserve it (Howard-Schwind, 2010). This could be accomplished through the use of a bulletin, an official district recognition program, or informal cards, verbal statements, or awards.

Conferring to Figlio and Kenny's (2007) study, students learn more in schools where individual teachers are given financial incentives to do a better job, though it is unclear whether this relationship is due to the incentives themselves or to better schools also implementing merit pay programs. Several indicators were combined to determine whether schools provide these financial incentives (Lyons, 2010).

Additionally, it has been proved beyond reasonable doubt that students appear to learn more in schools where teachers provide a specific mix of schooling and experiences that earn a wide range of wages, or where a small number of teachers receive targeted bonuses or raises, and this relationship is most vital in schools serving low-income populations (Figlio & Kenny, 2007).

According to Figlio and Kenny (2007), the estimated gains in test scores associated with the prudent use of salary incentives are modest but comparable to those associated with other prominent variables in the education production function literature. Evidence of a positive relationship between merit pay and student performance should be interpreted cautiously (Howard, 2010).

It could reflect students learning more in schools where the use of merit pay is associated with more teaching innovation, for example, and where higher student achievement is due to teaching innovation rather than the use of merit pay. The study of Figlio and Kenny (2007) demonstrated that the positive correlation between teacher incentives and test scores persists even after controlling for three sources of heterogeneity in the use of merit pay - teacher unionization, school sector, and state educational reform. However, these efforts fall short of

removing all doubt that the estimated association between teacher incentives and student performance in the cross-sectional identification strategy is due to unobserved school quality rather than teacher incentives.

2.3 Head Teachers' role in leadership

The head teacher should assist educators in changing, rearrangement, and reinterpretation of the curriculum. The principal should organize an effective instructional program, foster a positive school climate, demonstrate effective management behaviour, and effectively overcome community constraints or manage community inputs. As an instructional leader, the head teacher must lead the curriculum implementation in a school Mazibuko (2003). According to Hoy and Miskel (2005:40), instructional leadership includes actions taken by the head teacher or delegated to others to promote student learning growth. The head's instructional leadership has a direct and positive impact on student achievement. The purpose of the head teacher's instructional leadership role is clear: to promote effective teaching and learning.

2.4 Instructional Leadership Perception

Promote Professional Development. According to Howard (2010), the school administrator has several options for assisting teachers in their efforts to improve instruction. He or she can organize, provide, or inform teachers about relevant opportunities for professional development. The school administrator can also encourage specific staff development types closely related to the school's goals.

An effective school administrator focuses on a variety of management skills (Dessler, 2008). They involve teachers, parents, and other stakeholders in school advancement and achievement planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and evaluating (Bernardin, 2007; Everard, et. al., 2004). Effective school administrators ensure efficiency and enforce consequences when standards are not met. They adhere to "due process" when implementing the governing board's policies for teacher recruitment, selection, appointment, ranking, appraisal, and discipline (Bernardin, 2007; Dessler, 2008).

Effective school administrators provide teachers opportunities for professional growth and development by providing feedback (Sergiovanni, 2007). They use intrinsic and extrinsic reward and recognition to empower their teachers and staff (Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Sergiovanni,

2000). Effective school administrators provide teachers and students with training, seminars, conferences, workshops, and other services in order to raise organizational standards (Blasé & Blasé, 2004). They clarify procedures and reinforce positive interactions in the classroom (Mandel, 2006; Robbins, 2005). By developing caring relationships, effective school administrators care for people inside and outside the school (Reed & Johnson, 2000).

Effective school administrators maintain and communicate with students, parents, colleagues, school leaders, supervisor, board members, and the community who are directly or indirectly related with the teaching profession. They nurture collegiality and collaboration among stakeholders to generate respect and credibility (Barth, 2006). They unite teachers to increase professional commitment and minimize doubt, competition, and uncertainties among teachers and other administrators (Blasé & Blasé, 2004).

Provide Incentives for Learners. By providing frequent opportunities for students to be rewarded and recognized for their academic achievement and improvement, school administrators create a school learning climate in which students highly value academic achievement (Howard-Schwind, 2010). The recognition in front of teachers and peers is more important than fancy or expensive rewards. Students should have opportunities to be recognized for their accomplishments both in the classroom and in front of the entire school (Howard, 2010). Fullan (2002), on the other hand, asserted that school administrators must provide the necessary incentives for new learning opportunities for students as well as teaching staff (Boyd & Govey, 2006).

2.5 Instructional Leadership Practices

The concepts discussed in the following paragraphs discussed school administrators' instructional leadership practices and approaches in relation to their duties and responsibilities as instructional leaders. School leadership has become a priority in the educational system because it is critical to improving school performance and influencing school climate (Lyons, 2010). As a result, schools are frequently long shadows of their school administrators (Howard, 2010). The school has the appearance and feel of its leaders. As a result, it is critical for school administrators to understand what it means to be a leader (Lyons, 2010).

To sum it all, in order for the school system to be effective and productive, the school administrators' scope of duties and responsibilities must be appropriate, balanced, and

maintained (Hallinger, 2003). The school administrator does not need to be an expert in a particular field, but rather must demonstrate genuine interest, knowledge, and remove barriers to those whose function it is to provide professional growth and development (Lyons, 2010).

2.6 Summary

The literature review in this study aided the researcher in making a critical choice of topic, research method, sampling, and research instrument formulation. The review demonstrated the need to close the research gap on Instructional Leadership Practices and Perceptions in Selected Secondary Schools in Lusaka. The review included theories and research from the previous decade to establish the instructional leadership practices and perceptions. Furthermore, the majority of the references, such as journals and books, have been peer reviewed to ensure the credibility of this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter highlighted the methodology that was used in the study. It consisted of the research design, target population, sample size, sampling procedures, research instruments and study limitations. It described the data collection procedures and how the data was analyzed to answer the research questions.

3.2 Research Design

According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), research design denotes to the overall strategy that is chosen to integrate the different components of the study coherently and logically, thereby, ensuring that it will effectively address the research problem; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. This study employed a Phenomenological research design to explore participants lived experiences. Additionally the researcher employed a qualitative research design because it provided detailed descriptions of complex phenomena, tracked unique or unexpected events, illuminated the experience and interpretation of events by actors with widely disparate stakes and roles, and gave voice to those whose opinions are rarely heard. Qualitative research focuses on figuring out the whys and how's of the phenomenon under study. As a result, qualitative research is sometimes characterized as subjective (as opposed to objective), and its conclusions are recorded in writing instead of numerically.

This means that because there could not be any commonalities among the numerous collected findings, the data gathered from a qualitative research project cannot typically be examined in quantitatively using statistical approaches (Heaton, 2008). However, if common categories can be found through analysis, a coding process can be put into place. In addition, qualitative research reveals the nature of a situation, setting, or process in the descriptive sense; in the interpretative sense, it aids in the discovery of new insights, concepts, and issues that exist in a particular situation; in the verification setting, it aids in the experimentation of certain assumptions; and in the evaluative sense, it aids in the provision of the means by which to assess the efficacy of specific practices, innovations, and processes. The qualitative research paradigm is a well-suited comprehensive technique of inquiry that can inquire into a

phenomenon of the sort that tries to unravel the lived experience of the quality assurance systems in this study. This is true in the context of the four aforementioned purposes. All four of Peshkin's purposes were involved to understand the quality assurance study in secondary schools. They are as follows: To disclose the quality assurance system(s) that are in place, it is necessary to provide a description. It is necessary to provide an interpretation to gain a deeper understanding of the situation and the present issue. During the verification and evaluation phases, opinions from key players are sought to confirm that the set plans correspond to the actual conditions on the ground. The exact goal and study type one chooses will largely determine the route that qualitative research will take because it is generic and needs one (Peshkin, 1993).

Furthermore, Borg and Gall (1989) specified that a research design refer to “all the procedures selected by a researcher for studying a particular set of questions or hypothesis.” That indicates that a research design is a program that guides the researcher as he or she collects analyses and interprets data. It is a logical model of proof that allows the researcher to draw suggestions concerning fundamental relationships among the variables under investigation. In addition, Kothari (2004) described a research design as a pre-plan of the methods to be used for the data collection. It considers techniques to be adopted in the analysis while adhering to research objectives and the time or monetary resources available. Consequently, a research design is not a rigid plan to be followed without deviation, but a series of flexible guideposts to help the research maintain the focus of the study (Ghosh, 2003).

The primary goals of phenomenological research are to seek reality from people's narratives of their experiences and perceptions, and to produce detailed descriptions of the phenomenon. This description concludes with the essence of the experiences of several people who have all witnessed the phenomenon. This design has strong philosophical foundations and usually entails conducting interviews (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994).

3.3 Study Sample

The Study Sample consisted of selected head teachers and teachers of secondary schools in Lusaka District of Zambia. According to Bless and Achola (1990) a study sample is the set of elements that the research focuses on. The total sample consisted of 54 participants: 30 head teachers and 26 teachers from the selected schools. The sample size of 54 was used because it

provided a nearly good representation of the key population and the desired of statistical power or accuracy supported it. In this study the researcher used purposive sampling to select the informants because it involves the deliberate choice of informants based on specific qualities that endow them with special knowledge that the researcher values. In addition, Hoberg (1999:58) states that generally in qualitative research a small, distinct group of participants will be investigated to enable the researcher to understand the problem in depth. According to Blatchford and Anthony (2020), the purposive sampling method is based on the researcher's judgment regarding the characteristics of a representative sample. Strain, and Raesly (2012) also agreed that in purposive sampling a researcher uses his/her own judgment or intelligence to handpick the cases to be included in the sample based on their typicality or possession of the particular characteristic been thought to meet the researcher's requirements.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments refer to devices used to collect data such as questionnaires, tests, structured interview schedules and checklists. Kombo and Tromp (2006) identify the following as some of the research instruments that a researcher may use to collect data from the respondents. These include interviews schedules, Observations and focused group discussions. For this study, observations, focus group discussions and interviews were adopted because they helped explain, better understand, and explore research subjects' opinions, behavior, experiences and phenomenon. Interview questions were open-ended questions to ensure that in-depth information was collected. Additionally, the researcher facilitated focus group discussions to solicit information and experiences of the teachers on the topic under study. The information that was obtained from focus group discussions with the teachers was useful in cross checking the data that was obtained from interviews. Four focus group discussions were held, one from each of the four participating schools and the sessions ranged from 50 minutes to one hour. The researcher organized focus group conversations to elicit information and experiences from teachers on the topic under study.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Head teachers were interviewed individually in their offices and teachers were grouped together to in a systematic manner. Similar questions were asked to each participant, although

supplementary questions were also asked as appropriate. The researcher allowed the respondents to choose a convenient time for the discussion. The personal interview procedure was employed because it promoted the highest response rate allowed the researcher to ask questions for adequate answers, and followed complex instructions that clarified issues where things were unclear because it might confuse the respondents. Probing was used because it helped to clarify issues where things were unclear during the interviews. The structured interviews were characterized by more flexibility and freedom in interacting with participants as data was being collected.

3.6 Data Analysis

In relation to this study, thematic analysis was used to analyze all the responses obtained on the topic. This is because thematic analysis enabled the researcher to identify the themes. Responses to open ended questions were recorded and then grouped into categories or themes that will emerge and interpreted in line with the research objectives. The emerging themes become the categories for analysis. The researcher carefully categorized data from the focus group discussions, and interviews and looked for keywords trends, themes, or ideas that helped to outline the analysis. Thereafter, emerging themes were identified and reported in a narrative form as the findings of the study (Threlkeld & Easterly, 2021). Data analysis as a process of studying the organized materials so as to determine inherent or meaning. Therefore, it involves breaking down complex factors into simpler ones and parting the parts together in new arrangements for interpretation (Heaton, 2008).

Coding of Participants

Coding of participant is done to ensure differentiation and confidentiality among the participants so that their personal identity is not discovered (Fisher, 2013). For easy identification of the participating schools and the participants, codes were assigned to all the participants as follows: Head teacher 1 (HT-1), Head teacher 2 (HT-2), Head teacher 3 (HT- 3) Focus group discussion 1 (FGD-1), Focus group discussion 2 (FGD-2), Focus group discussion 3 (FGD-3). The researcher made sure that the coding were accurately done, matching participants across data collection period.

3.7 Trustworthiness

Macnee and McCabe (2008) stipulated that trustworthiness is the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings. Trustworthiness establishes whether the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants' original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants' original views Rittenhofer and Povlsen, (2015). Therefore, credibility, deals with the question, "How congruent are the findings with reality?" Moon, Brewer, Januchowski, Adams, and Blackman, (2016). Contend that ensuring credibility is one of most important factors in establishing trustworthiness.

To ensure trustworthiness, extensive literature reviews were conducted on relevant literature of instructional leadership practices and perceptions of head teachers and teachers (HODs). In addition, the questions were constructed in a simple, clear and precise way to give clear and precise answers, bringing respondents out their knowledge and perceptions. Furthermore, interviews were recorded; reflections and participants' validations were done to ensure the correctness of the data collected. Furthermore, structured interviewing enabled the repetition of the interview process with various respondents, which standardized the questioning. Participants were informed of on the nature and purpose of the study.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

Research ethnics refer to values, norms and rules that help constitute and regulate research conduct (Ellis, 2016). In this research the researchers strictly observed the acceptable norms of the research catchment areas within the areas of study. Therefore, before the interviews were conducted were made aware of the research's methods, aims and expected values so that they could decide to either be part of it or not. The researchers were sensitive to age, gender, culture, religion, tribe and social class of the participants to avoid misunderstandings between the two parties, for instance, dress code, respect and use of language, which the participants are conversant with. Furthermore, the participant assured that the information they provided to the researcher was confidential. In addition, the researcher respected all the respondents whether young or old as consent was taken first from all the respondents before carrying out the research to maximize total willingness and the researcher was time conscious.

3.9 Summary

This chapter shows the methodology that was used to conduct this study. Thus, the research design, location, target population, sample size, sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical issues of the study that were considered. Chapter four will present the study's findings and these in qualitative form. Chapter four will present the findings in relation to the objectives of the study

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

The role of instructional leadership has become a pivotal focus within educational practices, emphasizing not only the administration of schools but also the active fostering of teaching and learning quality. This report investigates the practices and perceptions surrounding instructional leadership, providing insights into how leaders support teacher development, influence pupil outcomes, and build positive learning environments. By examining the current data, this report aims to highlight trends, challenges, and opportunities that instructional leaders face, shedding light on perceptions among both leaders and teachers regarding effective strategies for driving academic success. The findings presented here seek to inform best practices, identify gaps, and support data-driven decision-making for continuous improvement in instructional leadership across educational institutions.

This chapter presents the findings of the study, which are organized around the themes that emerged from the research questions. The research objectives, which guided the study, were:

- i. To ascertain practices head teachers, use to promote instructional leadership in schools?
- ii. To assess the influence of head teacher's instructional leadership practices on instructional delivery by teachers.
- iii. To explore the perceptions of head teachers on instructional Leadership in secondary schools
- iv. To investigate the barriers associated with the effective exercise of instructional leadership by head teachers.

The findings are presented to address each research question, and the themes that emerged from the data are woven throughout the narrative. The chapter begins with an overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants, followed by a presentation of the findings related to each research question. The findings are supported by quotes from participants, where appropriate, and are discussed in relation to the literature review in Chapter two. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings and implications for future research.

4.2 Demographic data

GENDER

Out of the 30 schools visited, 20 had male head teachers, while 10 had female head teachers, highlighting a gender imbalance in school leadership positions.

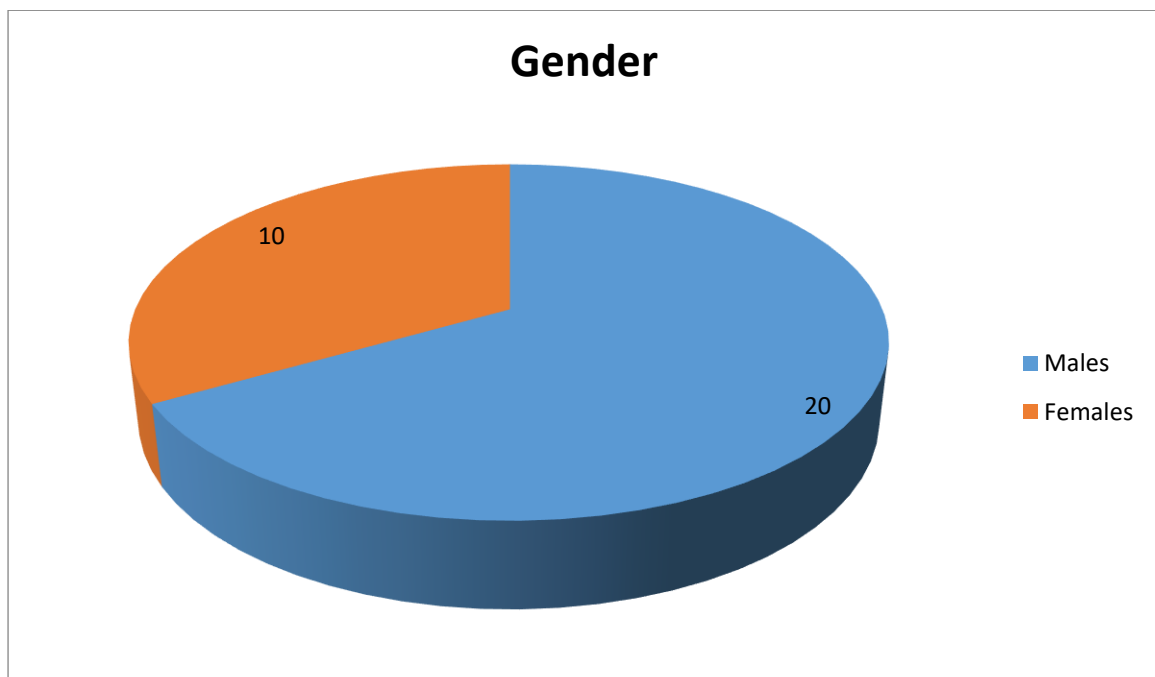


Chart 4. 1: Gender Attribution of the Respondents

QUALIFICATIONS

Out of the 30 schools visited, 50% of head teachers (15) held Bachelor's degrees, 26.7% (8) held Master's degrees, 3.3% (1) held a PhD, and 23.3% (7) held Diplomas

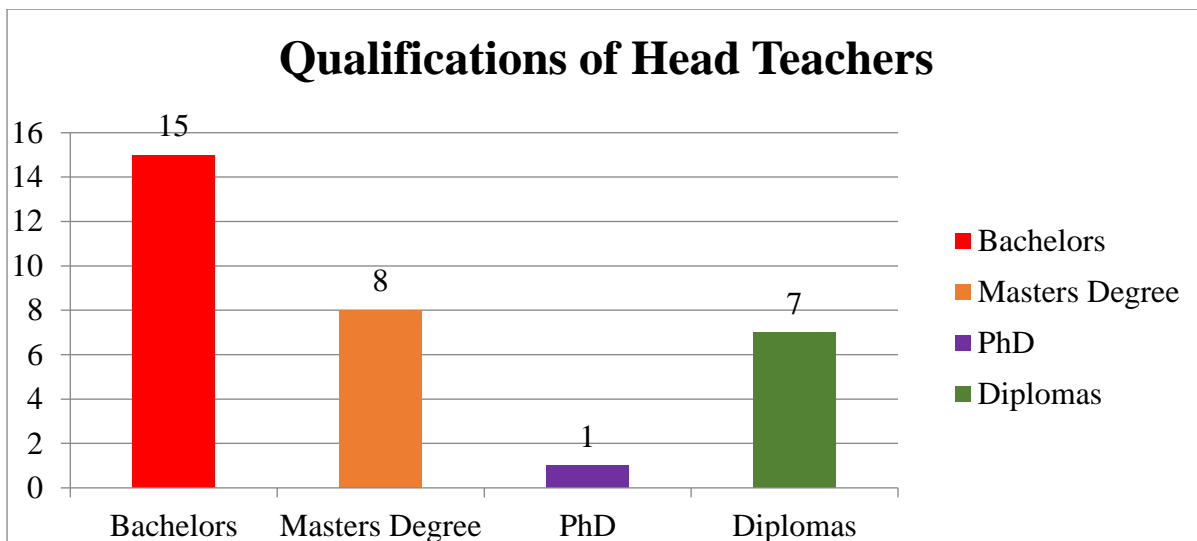


Chart 4. 2: showing qualifications of Head Teachers

WORK EXPERIENCE

The head teachers in the 30 visited schools had a wide range of experience, with 20 having over 16 years, 5 having over 10 years, 3 having between 3-5 years, 1 having 6-10 years, and 1 having just started with 0-2 years of experience.

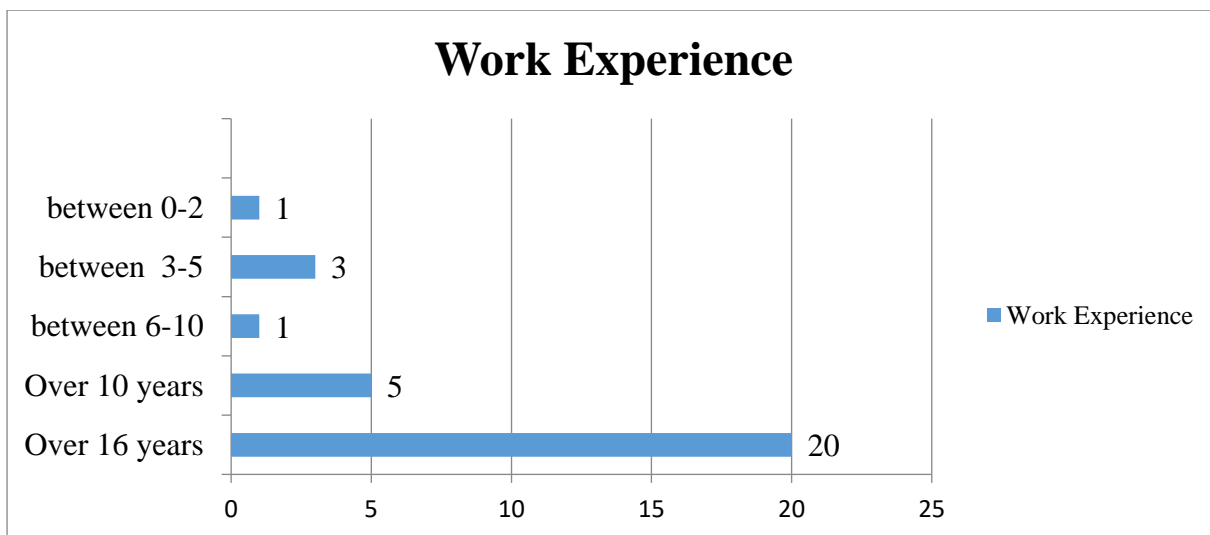


Chart 4. 3: showing work experience of Head Teachers

4.3 Practices head teachers use to promote instructional leadership in schools

Participants were asked about the practices that are used to promote instructional leadership in schools

From the 30 schools visited, they all agreed that the head teachers' roles that promote instructional leadership include seven essential functions: Planning, Leading, Monitoring and Evaluation, Teaching, Supervision, Building Relationships, and Creating a Positive School Climate.

Participant (HT-1, 6, 7, 8) mentioned that they

Prioritize continual professional development as an approach for improving teaching skills. They feel that investing in training will considerably increase teaching quality in their schools. Each head teacher actively promotes a variety of learning opportunities customized to their teachers' requirements. They arrange workshops, seminars, and peer-to-peer learning sessions to promote talent sharing and knowledge development. By creating a growth-oriented environment, they enable teachers to use innovative teaching methods.

Additionally, Participant (HT-2) said

I evaluate the effectiveness of training sessions on a regular basis to ensure that the targeted educational objectives are met. Teachers are encouraged to define personal development goals that are consistent with both individual and school objectives. The head teachers also encourage collaboration among teachers, resulting in a network of support and shared expertise. This technique not only enhances instructor confidence, but also improves pupil achievement. Overall, these head teachers see professional development as a critical component in developing a strong, skilled teaching workforce.

Furthermore, Participant (HT-23) said

I ensure that I put in place a mechanism of recognizing and rewarding those teachers who show great talent and passion in respective subjects. This strategy drives teachers to maintain excellent teaching standards since such teachers' output will be pleasing to both the pupils and the school's management. This system promotes a culture of excellence and continuous professional development. In addition, this kind of environment makes the teachers feel valued and appreciated. Rewards can include bonuses, public exposure, and job progression opportunities. Outstanding performance is rewarded by the school to develop outstanding commitment to the success of pupils.

It inspires teachers to be innovative and enthusiastic about their subject. Such an identification system encourages high-intensity learning within the school. Finally, it retains highly qualified teachers who are passionate about making a difference in the field.

From the focus groups, it revealed that all of the teachers believe that their team shares a common understanding of the school's instructional goal, highlighting a strong sense of unity and collective focus.

According to the focus group discussions it revealed that all of the teachers stated that

The school timetable is intentionally designed to foster teacher cooperation, planning, and professional development, highlighting a supportive environment for teacher collaboration and growth.

From the focus groups it was also revealed that

School has a regular professional development plan, either weekly or monthly, whereas 1 teacher stated that their school does not have a professional development plan.

4.4 Head teachers' actions to ensure quality education in schools

One Participant (HT-28) highlighted the importance of providing pupils and teachers with the resources they need to educate and learn effectively.

There is need for teacher to access resources such as textbooks, computers, and learning aids

Participant 4 (FGD-2) said

Resource scarcity might cause variations in student learning experiences.

Additionally, Participant (HT-29) said observed that budget limits frequently result in resource shortages, making it difficult to meet educational needs.

The money is not enough to meet all educational needs

Participant (HT-25) said

In my experience, supplemental resources like online platforms have helped fill gaps in traditional materials.

Head teachers were asked what strategies they use to deliver the school curriculum

Participant (HT-23) said

In today's educational context, integrating digital platforms is critical for effective learning. These platforms offer interactive technologies that promote participation and tailored learning experiences. Teachers can demonstrate learning by using multimedia resources, fostering pupil engagement, and implementing real-time feedback methods. Furthermore, ensuring teacher connectivity is critical to the success of digital learning programs. Strong communication lines between teachers encourage the exchange of best practices and new solutions. Professional development initiatives that focus on digital tools enable teachers to improve their instructional methods. Prioritizing connectivity allows schools to foster a supportive climate that values cooperation and continual professional development. Teachers who effectively model digital learning inspire pupils to take an active role in their education. This integrated strategy improves learning outcomes and prepares pupils for a technologically driven society. Finally, embracing digital platforms while maintaining strong teacher connectivity allows for a more dynamic and successful learning experience.

Participant (HT-20) emphasized the importance of team building to ensure everyone understands expectations. They highlighted that collaboration fosters a clearer understanding of goals.

By working together, staff can align their efforts more effectively. This approach helps create a unified vision for the school. Ultimately, strong team dynamics lead to improved outcomes for both teachers and pupils.

Participant (HT-10) stated

I have introduced a required homework policy for all pupils. This policy attempts to improve pupils' academic performance and encourage consistent study habits. It provides detailed rules for the amount and type of homework offered each week.

Additionally, teachers must properly express homework requirements to pupils and parents.

Participant (HT-8) stated

I recognize my teachers for their exceptional accomplishment in helping pupils to good Grade 12 results. The recognition was part of a special ceremony to honor teachers' hard work and devotion. Teachers who made significant contributions to pupil success were presented with honors and certificates. This effort not only recognized their accomplishments, but also sought to inspire other teachers. The event highlighted the important role that teachers play in shaping their pupils' futures.

Participant (HT-17) stated

They use monitoring and evaluation as crucial instruments for teacher development. They understood the significance of routinely examining teaching approaches to discover opportunities for improvement. Through frequent feedback and review, these leaders established a culture of growth among their teachers. This proactive strategy helped teachers improve their abilities and performance in the classroom. Finally, their dedication to monitoring and evaluation had a substantial impact on overall educational performance.

Teachers were asked how their head teachers motivated them on how to improve the teaching and learning

Teachers from the focus groups discussions cited that

Credited the head teacher with motivating them through continuous professional development, monitoring, and evaluation, while 9 attributed their motivation to the provision of teaching and learning resources, 3 to leading by example, and 1 reported receiving no motivation from the head teacher.

Participant 4 (FGD-2)

Agreed that the head teacher provides constructive feedback, including both positive reinforcement and negative comments, and that this feedback has a beneficial impact on their teaching and learning approaches. However, 1 Teacher reported that he

receives no feedback, leaving him unclear about his performance, and 4 teachers exclusively received negative comments, which was demotivating.

From the focus groups discussions, the discussants said

Head teacher effectively communicates the school's vision to teachers through staff meetings and newsletters.

On recognising performance, teachers cited different issues about their head teachers.

Teachers from the focus groups praised the head teacher's commitment to pupil progress, recognizing and rewarding outstanding performance, and actively participating in results analysis and progress report meetings saying,

The head teacher acknowledges and awards top-performing pupils, demonstrating a clear interest in their success.

Participants from the focus groups also approved that

Head Teachers ensures that instructional time is valued, observes instructional practices, and provides feedback, which is achieved through class observations and setting clear goals.

4.5 Influence of head teacher's instructional leadership practices on instructional delivery by teachers

Head teacher were asked how they ensure that teachers are motivated to deliver the curriculum, the following were the responses:

Participant (HT-14) highlighted

Several schools offer housing allowances to help their instructors financially. Whenever possible, they also provide housing choices for teachers. These activities foster a positive environment for instructors. Recognizing teachers' hard work is viewed as critical to their morale. The goal of implementing these techniques is to increase job satisfaction among instructors. They recognize that enthusiastic instructors produce higher student outcomes. Overall, their efforts demonstrate a commitment to appreciating teachers.

Participant (HT-16) highlighted said that he

Concentrates on the creation of teaching and learning materials. Meanwhile, two additional head teachers emphasized the necessity of lesson monitoring. Collaboration was also a top priority for one of these two leaders. These many tactics demonstrate a knowledge of the diverse needs of the teaching personnel. By prioritizing resources, they want to improve the educational experience for both teachers and students. The emphasis on lesson observation is intended to promote a culture of feedback and improvement. Collaboration promotes teamwork and exchange of best practices. Together, these techniques aim to boost teacher morale. Improved teacher morale can lead to better classroom performance. Finally, these efforts contribute to a more effective learning environment.

Head teachers were asked about the strategies they use to foster a culture of quality education. The approaches include:

Participant (HT-26) highlighted said that

Thorough examinations should be put into place to ensure the upholding of high educational standards. For instance, there are end of topic assessments, midterm tests, and homework assignments. These examinations are used as standards to judge pupils' comprehension and their achievement. Teachers can have expectations from students with challenging criteria. Rigorous examinations give relevant feedback to teachers and students. They highlight aspects that may need improvement so that the education can be tailored accordingly. Such tests also sift out students who perhaps may need extra help. High standards facilitate a culture of excellence in the classroom. Indeed, stretched learners are those most likely to engage deeply with the content. Ongoing assessment ensures that learning results remain head of the class.

Participant (HT-24) highlighted said

That required preparation is quite instrumental in making the students adequately prepare for their academic responsibilities. For one, this method sets up a formal system that allows students to master what is needed for their curriculum. The second reason is that the required preparatory sessions provide students with 'focused' time which they shall spend relating to the material, therefore there is better retention and

understanding. By incorporating these workshops into the school calendar, tutors can ensure consistent attendance and participation.

Participant (HT-21) mentioned that

Fostering discipline among students is critical for creating a positive learning environment. First, having clear norms and expectations helps students understand which behaviors are appropriate. This clarity encourages consistency and justice, which are essential for maintaining a respectful environment. Additionally, teaching students the value of self-discipline pushes them to accept responsibility for their actions. Positive reinforcement can drive students to follow defined norms, reinforcing appropriate behavior.

Participant (HT-25) mentioned that

Effective supervision is critical for assisting both teachers and students on their learning journeys. Strong supervision enables educators to improve their teaching practices and link them with educational objectives. By creating a collaborative environment, supervisors can encourage instructors to share methods and resources. This support also extends to kids, ensuring that they receive the aid they need to succeed academically. Finally, effective supervision leads to better educational outcomes for all engaged.

Participant (HT-22) mentioned that

Continuous professional development is vital for increasing teachers' competence and effectiveness in the classroom. It allows teachers to renew their knowledge and abilities while staying current on the latest instructional practices and educational technologies. Continuous training promotes a culture of learning and collaboration among instructors, which can lead to better student results. Professional development can also assist teachers adapt to different student needs and problems, making their instruction more relevant and meaningful. Finally, promoting ongoing professional development is an important investment in the future of education.

Participant (HT-29) mentioned that

Teaching and learning resources are helpful in the facilitation of effective education within the classroom. Resources range from textbooks and digital tools to multimedia content and manipulatives that stimulate diverse learning styles. With technology, teachers can further improve learning and collaboration among students through interactive applications and online platforms. Moreover, lesson plans and assessments are useful in framing learning experiences and monitoring students' progress. The final bundle of resources enables teachers and students to achieve educational goals, while it provides a happy learning environment.

Also participants from the focus groups

Credited the head teacher with motivating them through continuous professional development, monitoring, and evaluation, while 9 attributed their motivation to the provision of teaching and learning resources, 3 to leading by example, and 1 reported receiving no motivation from the head teacher.

Participant 3 (FGD-3)

Agreed that the head teacher provides constructive feedback, including both positive reinforcement and negative comments, and that this feedback has a beneficial impact on their teaching and learning approaches.

However, Participant 6 (FGD-4) said that

That he receives no feedback, leaving him unclear about his performance, and 4 teachers exclusively received negative comments, which was demotivating.

Participant 2 (FGD-1) agreed that,

The head teacher effectively communicates the school's vision to teachers through staff meetings and newsletters.

Participant 5 (FGD-1) approved that,

Head Teachers ensures that instructional time is valued, observes instructional practices, and provides feedback, which is achieved through class observations and

setting clear goals. However, two teachers stated that delegation is the approach used in their schools.

4.6 Perceptions of head teachers on instructional Leadership in secondary schools

The participants interviewed in the 30 schools visited revealed that head teachers have varying understanding of effective instructional leadership. The responses included:

Among the head teachers interviewed,

Are of the opinion that effective instructional leadership entails setting clear goals and creating a well-defined vision for the school. This clarity assists teachers and students in accomplishing educational objectives. Leaders must communicate these objectives regularly in order to establish a shared understanding among all stakeholders. Leaders may foster a learning environment by matching their resources and efforts with the school's vision. Finally, effective instructional leadership motivates the entire school community to succeed.

Participant (HT-27) said,

Shared leadership is a critical component, allowing for the division of duties among employees. This technique encourages teamwork. Sharing leadership roles allows each staff member to contribute their own abilities and viewpoints. This not only improves decision-making but also fosters a sense of community in the school. Finally, shared leadership fosters a more inclusive and successful educational environment.

Participant (HT-28) mentioned that

Effective instructional leadership requires head teachers to lead by example. They must model the behaviors and practices that they expect from their teaching staff. By modeling these principles, head teachers can inspire and push teachers to follow comparable practices. This method promotes a culture of excellence in the school. Finally, it increases the overall effectiveness of instructional leadership.

Participant (HT-21) mentioned that

Effective instructional leadership requires a strong team of head teachers. They must prioritize creating a healthy school atmosphere that encourages collaboration and progress. Head instructors can improve employee communication and trust by boosting teamwork. This caring environment allows teachers to thrive and innovate in their teaching. Finally, a healthy culture improves the school's overall efficacy and student performance.

Participant (HT-7)

Identified a clear vision as a critical component for academic achievement. They underlined that having a clear direction helps align the efforts of both staff and students. This common goal creates a unified environment conducive to learning. Additionally, it enables better decision-making and resource allocation inside the institution. Finally, these leaders believe that a clear vision is critical to achieving their educational goals.

Participant (HT-19) highlighted

That teamwork strengths toward achieving better academic performance. He noted that teamwork among staff creates a conducive environment whereby students' learning improves. Teamwork offers the inclusive feeling while promoting knowledge of best practice sharing. In this way, they may come up with something worthy through imitation. The hiring of talented teachers was also necessary since talented teachers are one of the key factors in students' improvement. These elements interact to form a sound basis on which academic success can be developed

Participant 6 (FGD-4) expressed a differing opinion, stating that

The Head Teacher is not actively contributing to a positive school environment.

Participant 1 (FGD-3) approved that

Head Teacher's ability to articulate and communicate the school's mission to both staff and pupils, providing a clear sense of purpose and direction.

4.6 Barriers associated with the effective exercise of instructional leadership by head teachers

Out of the 30 schools visited, the following are the challenges faced by head teacher:

Participant (HT-13) highlighted

Teacher indiscipline, citing absenteeism as a major issue. He emphasized how frequent absences disrupt the classroom environment and affect students' educational experiences. The head teacher underlined the importance of accountability mechanisms in order to properly handle this issue. He also emphasized that absenteeism might have an impact on both student and staff morale. Overall, they advocated for methods to improve teachers' attendance and dedication.

Participant (HT-11) highlighted that

Overcrowding in schools is highlighted as a major concern. She observed that the sheer number of kids makes it difficult for teachers to give individual attention. Overcrowding can have a negative impact on pupils' learning experiences and academic success. The head teacher underlined the need of keeping class sizes moderate in order to enable successful teaching and learning. Addressing this issue is critical to developing a more favorable learning environment.

Out of the 26 teachers from the focus group discussions, the following challenges of instructional leadership were identified:

Participant 1 (FGD-1) acknowledged that

Head teachers frequently have to balance managerial activities with instructional leadership obligations, making it difficult to focus on teaching and learning. They identified a weakness in balancing administrative chores with instructional leadership.

Participant 3 (FGD-1) approved that

Limited time and resources, Schools may face budget constraints, limited personnel, or inadequate materials, making it difficult for instructional leaders to implement effective initiatives.

Summary

The chapter described the findings as they were obtained in the subject. The findings were mostly based on data gathered from head teachers and instructors about Instructional Leadership Practices and Perceptions in Selected Secondary Schools. It was also noted that there is a need for more balance between their teaching and administrative responsibilities. Schools must consider providing more assistance to head teachers in assigning administrative tasks in order to raise academic leadership awareness. Furthermore, the records show that, while head teachers are generally considered positively in terms of motivation, feedback, communication, and commitment to student success, there are a few areas for improvement. Priority should be put on consistency in inspiring college students, providing impartial criticism, and communicating the school's vision all at once.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Overview

This chapter consists of the discussion of research findings that have been presented in the previous chapter of the study titled “Examining Instructional Leadership Practices and Perceptions in Selected Secondary Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia. The discussion is presented based on the responses from the participants who included school Head Teachers and Teachers. The discussion is further guided by the following research objectives.

- i. To ascertain practices head teachers, use to promote instructional leadership in schools?
- ii. To assess the influence of head teacher’s instructional leadership practices on instructional delivery by teachers.
- iii. To explore the perceptions of head teachers on instructional Leadership in secondary schools?
- iv. To investigate the barriers associated with the effective exercise of instructional leadership by head teachers.

5.2 Practices head teachers use to promote instructional leadership in schools

According to the comprehensive agreement of the 30 schools that were visited, head teachers are responsible for seven key functions: planning, supervision, training, monitoring and assessment, fostering connections, and creating an excellent school environment. Head teachers are expected to serve as all instructional leaders and administrators, the findings of this study are in line with the study on leadership requirements for strong faculty control by Hallinger, (2005). Who highlighted that fulfilling those many responsibilities, head teachers contribute to the achievement of their pupils and the general school environment. Research emphasizes how crucial it is for head teachers to strike a balance between such responsibilities in order to maintain teaching and learning as the school's top priorities. While monitoring and assessment aid in song growth, effective planning and administration have an immediate impact on the school's trajectory (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

Strong bonds and a supportive school environment encourage staff trust and collaboration, which has been connected to improved pupil achievement and teacher effectiveness the findings are in line with Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins D'Alessandro, (2013) who stipulated

that the division of head teachers into those who teach and those who do not because of administrative responsibilities illustrates the difficulty in striking a balance between managerial and instructional leadership responsibilities.

Furthermore, with the excuse of having too many administrative duties, half of the head teachers (15) acknowledged that they still teach a class, while the other half did not. This separation draws attention to a conflict between the head teachers' administrative responsibilities and their function as instructional leaders. Rendering to research, the head teacher's impact on pupil learning and teaching quality is increased when they engage in instructional leadership, which includes teaching directly (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). Head teachers may find it difficult to carry out their responsibilities as instructional leaders, nevertheless, if they are overburdened with administrative duties. This difficulty points to the necessity for structural adjustments or improved administrative task delegation in order to lessen the workload for head teachers and free them up to concentrate more on instruction and learning.

Bridging the Motivation Effectiveness Gap in Teacher Performance the study-details approaches by head teachers on how they link motivation-effectiveness gap in teacher performance and thus function as a tool kit for improving school level. Community involvement, Monitoring and assessment was the most common approach, used by a total of 23 head teachers. Through monitoring and evaluation, head teachers assess teacher performance and provide targeted feedback which may facilitate teaching enjoyment task based responsibility, the study findings are in line with the study by Grissom, Loeb, & Master, (2013). Every school that was visited highlighted this technique as a key tactic to lift teacher effectiveness. In order to improve the skills of their teachers, six head teachers placed a strong emphasis on continuous professional development (CPD). Continuing professional development (CPD) keeps teachers updated with innovative pedagogical practices, content knowledge, and classroom management techniques (Avalos, 2011). However, the small number of head teachers who genuinely value CPD suggests that organizations should benefit from greater emphasis on continuing education by developing a professional development culture. Most interestingly, there was only a single school that actually had them in the concrete name of a suitable reputation mismatching. These study finding are in with Murnane and Olsen (1990) who also revealed that teacher motivation improves, becomes more likely to stay with

teaching when they receive recognition and rewards. Such systems were rare in the schools that were studied, which highlights a weak link since the identification and reward of success has to be embraced if teachers are to feel driven to perform.

5.2.1 Providing Resources for Teacher Effectiveness

The most effective teachers employed a multitude of tactics to help teacher effectiveness. Providing materials and coaching was another highlight repeated by eight head teachers, which underlined the need for adequate materials to support training. Resources available to teachers are necessary for effective teaching because they allow the highest quality instruction (Darling Hammond, 2010). Other head teachers employed distinctive strategies ensuring teacher connection, and demonstrating learning via online platforms. This technique demonstrates the increasing popularity of function generation in training advanced models. These findings are in line with the study which was conducted by Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010), they specified that virtual platforms can facilitate professional growth, improve collaboration, and supply get admission to new instructional resources. In order to establish clear desires and inspire teacher collaboration, five head teachers focused on team building. In the end, greater coherent teaching techniques can result from team building's capability to enhance conversation and fortify bonds (Fullan, 2001). Furthermore, six head teachers instructed homework rules, demonstrating a focus on enhancing learning past the school room.

One of the major findings from the Instructional Goals study is that more than half, twenty four be exact, of teachers said that their school has a clear goal related to high-quality teaching. This demonstrates that the schools are committed to defining educational goals. Just two of teachers held the opposite view, indicating that nearly all staff approve of its objectives but some may either be less engaged, or need a better grasping of school-wide teaching direction. More importantly, all the teachers reported that their team has a common understanding of the school's teaching goal. Such consensus demonstrates companionship and a common mission among the teachers. The findings are in line and adding on the study which was done by Darling-Hammond et al (2017) who stipulated that having an aligned vision for education ensures that everyone on the team is working towards the same on goal, providing for a consistent and streamlined process to improve pupil success.

5.2.2 Supportive Structures for Teacher Collaboration

The result turned out to be very supportive, there is an organizational structure that nurtures a culture of collaboration and professional learning. All participants agreed that the schedule of the schools supports teacher cooperation, planning, and their professional development. This indicates that these schools are committed by providing time and an opportunity for the teachers to meet, discuss, and prepare lessons. These studies confirm that by design, schools often create schedules that facilitate collaboration. Such collaboration allows the teachers to engage in reflective practices, share good teaching methods, and enable the conduction of joint work to meet the needs of pupils. This current study results align closely with Johnson & Johnson study (2019). This unanimous agreement by the teachers in this study simply points to how well the school has instituted these practices. The schedule of the school, which encourages teamwork, also allows for a friendlier work environment to be fostered. In addition to fostering the professional development of teachers as individuals, it likely fosters a more cohesive school community whereby collaboration is viewed as an integral part of success. A collaborative culture enhances teaching quality and fosters improved outcomes on the part of pupils as well (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

5.2.3 Regular Professional Development Opportunities

One such major finding is that 96.7% of the teachers said their school has a regular plan for professional development, either every week or on a monthly basis. This goes well with the modern practices of education, which have called for continuous and organized learning among teachers. Through regular professional development, teachers in schools are kept updated on the latest methodology related to teaching and managing pupils in the classroom, as well as about specific subject areas. According to Knight (2011), this would help teachers achieve continuous improvement in order to adapt to the changing educational challenges. The very few that answered that there was no professional development plan may be evidence that, in some cases, a missed opportunity by the teacher due to scheduling or problems in communication occurred. Strong responses to professional development indicate recognition and support by the school of continuous learning by its teachers. These findings supports Guskey (2002), who noted that professional development opportunities are an absolute necessity if teachers are to continually improve their teaching and, consequently, increase pupil learning. Schools that invest in the professional development of their staff are more likely to ensure an atmosphere of excellence and innovation that pervades the school environment.

5.3 The influence of head teacher's instructional leadership practices on instructional delivery by teachers

5.3.1 Teacher Motivation

A massive percent of head teachers (15) characteristic their motivation to the apex teacher's recognition on tracking, assessment, and non-stop expert improvement (CPD). CPD helps teachers expand their expert capabilities and stay contemporary on present day education techniques (Desimone, 2009). A similarly (11) characterized their motivation to the supply or having a look at materials and education, at the same time as a lesser percent (3) are impacted by means of head teachers leading by example. These findings are steady with research demonstrating that access to assets and demonstrating a success teaching techniques are critical additives in raising teacher morale (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Nonetheless, the fact that one respondent (3%) claimed to be unmotivated emphasizes the need of greater steady management techniques in any respect schools.

Staff meetings and newsletters are great means for the head teacher to communicate the school's mission, according to the vast majority of respondents (93.3%). The results of these findings and Leithwood & Riehl, (2003) highlights that the responsibility of a school must be easily stated in order for head teachers to align with the School's goals However, one respondent (3.3%) said that there was no emphasis on involving others in the vision, while another (3.3%) acknowledged that a hierarchical chain of administrators was employed to laterally convey the information. This figure suggests that certain seminaries still need to improve their direct communication skills, even though head teachers are mature and good managers.

Fostering Pupil Success, a vast majority (96.7%) of the teachers who took part in the survey affirmed the head teacher's determination in encouraging pupils to perform better, praising his efforts in rewarding the best performers and participating in progress assessing. This study is in agreement with Marzano, Waters, & McNulty (2005) who noted that Recognition of pupil success and the practice of taking part in academic attendance is believed to bring about favorable results to pupils and help create an order of excellence. Opposite to this, one of the respondents (3.3%) ignored this provision for reason stating that the head teacher has somewhat failed to give pupils' performance the attention it deserves. This points to the fact that though a majority of the head teachers are arguably strong in demonstrating commitment, the

consistency with which all schools acknowledge and reward pupil success leaves much to be desired.

5.3.1 Appreciation of Instructional Time

A large number of Twenty eight respondents were in agreement that head teachers assure the value of instructional time, monitor its usage and give feedback to teachers. The finding of this study are in line with Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, (2008) who stipulated that elevating the teaching quality and overcoming the loss of instructional time needed by pupils in order to perform well. Nonetheless, two 'respondents (6.7%) mentioned that in their schools the head teacher does not observe his/her teachers at all but rather boasts that they have delegated that responsibility. While delegation is a useful management tool, it is likely to reduce the level of head teachers' engagement in instructional leadership and ultimately the impact on classroom practices.

Sample size of 26 schools contributes much information on how the head teachers motivate their teachers, develop the culture of quality education among them, and resolve other different challenges. The convergence of the finding of this study and the one which was done by Ryan & Deci (2000) prove that school leaders take many diverse approaches to enhancing teacher performance, pupil success, and school management in general. Among the key outcomes, it was determined that head teachers motivate their teaching personnel through a range of methods, which notably includes praise and acknowledgement, along with more practical forms of reward. These involve celebrating Teachers' Day and, where possible providing apartments or accommodation benefits. This would mean that non-economic recognition and social organization besides material provision would play an essential role in enhancing teachers' motivation. Their conclusion also coincides with the ideas of motivation where both personal fulfillment together with external reward would contribute to attaining the optimum performance of employees. The caring by the school management about the personal and work-related needs of teachers, such as ensuring they obtain decent housing, is a holistic approach in making the work environment more pleasant. Providing teaching and learning materials for teachers also reflects how important it is to adequately arm the teacher to ensure that this vital resource performs well in the classroom, as pointed out by some of the school leaders. This is also in line with research that states that good resources are important for effectiveness to be

ensured with regard to teacher effectiveness. Lesson observation and the ability to work with other teachers also denote attention to professional growth and assistance by peers that help teachers in continuous improvement.

Moreover, the implication that were identified is that commitment to a culture of quality education promoted through various means, as identified by the findings. They use strict assessment, obligatory preparation, encouraging discipline, and close supervision in ensuring high academic standards and building good learning environments. For example, four head teachers stressed the necessity for strict assessments, which describes an educationally data driven approach. These practices ensure that the schools remain accountable and strive to improve pupils' outcomes based on overt performance indicators. The other essential element is discipline for pupils. According to the views of two head teachers, a disciplined learning environment plays a considerable role in maintaining order that would lead to the success of the pupils academically. This study finding are consist with the Research by Bear (2010) which indicates that pupil discipline is closely related to academic achievement and the overall condition of the school Emphasizing the idea of two head teachers that continuous professional development plays a very significant role in enhancing teacher skills to achieve educational excellence.

5.4 Perceptions of head teachers on instructional Leadership in secondary schools

The findings from this study illustrate a diverse understanding of effective instructional leadership among head teachers across the 30 schools visited. These varied definitions highlight the complexity of instructional leadership and its importance in shaping school environments and achieving academic success. The responses reveal key themes around goal-setting, collaborative approaches, modelling behaviour, and fostering positive school cultures, each of which plays a critical role in effective leadership practices.

The clearest conception of effective academic leadership among 8 head teachers was the necessity of clarity of need and a robust imaginative and insightful for what needed to be achieved within the school. It helps in decision-making, motivates teachers, and engages pupils (Leithwood, 2006). The current study results supports Lunenburg & Ornstein (2011) who noted that Specific goals establish a foundation for tracking and assessing progress and success,

serving as the glue that helps hold everyone together. In contrast, when six head teachers did say shared leadership was part of their role this seems to indicate that the value in working with other professionals is now being realized. Spreading responsibility about shared leadership might be a way in which teachers feel more engaged but also feel a deeper level of commitment to ensuring improvement efforts happen (Harris & Spillane, 2008). Such collaboration creates ownership with faculty, a fact that is clearly reflected in higher morale and performance in the classroom. The eleven head teachers who put emphasis on demonstrating how important it is for leaders to perfect what they want to see. The findings are also in line with Robinson (2006) who stipulated that the key area of effective leadership, is when teachers see their leaders trying new approaches and improving practice, they are more likely to do the same. When leaders focus on demonstrating the expected behavior, they not only motivate their peers to follow suit but also instill trust and respect in the team.

Moreover, the three head teachers who talked about creating a strong team and promoting a positive school environment emphasize the importance of good relationships for effective leadership. This study and Fullan (2001) highlighted that a positive school culture can improve teacher teamwork, pupil involvement, and overall school success. When head teachers focus on team building and create a supportive and respectful atmosphere, they help develop a successful and positive school community.

The various facets of effective leadership in schools are highlighted by the values and beliefs that guide the work of school administrators, especially head teachers. For example, three head teachers gave strikingly similar explanations of what they considered to be crucial components of their roles: "Empathy; open communication," whereas five head teachers stressed open communication and four others the necessity of "empathy. I'll let you know if I believe something is broken or not functioning. Empathy I believe a component of trust the ability to interact with others. It must be open in both directions. It doesn't accomplish anything to appear overly optimistic when things aren't going well. These findings are in line with Halstead et al. (2010) who stated that transformative leadership, such dialogue has a symbolic but integral function for ensuring that everybody operates within an environment characterized by mutual trust and respect.

5.4.1 Academic Success Factors

The importance of having a clear vision is strongly reflected in the responses regarding the essential elements in achieving academic aspirations, with eleven head teachers identifying this as important for enhancing academic success. This is supported by literature embracing the value of a shared vision in guiding school improvement efforts (Kotter, 1996). In addition, the focus on strong teaching and collaboration (six head teachers) is indicative of the understanding that effective teaching practices and collaboration are prerequisites for attaining high levels of academic performance. Particularly interesting is how one head teacher's response highlights that in order to achieve academic success schools must also focus on "appointing good teachers", "widening your reading" and "learning from successful schools" reflective of their commitment to ongoing improvement and professional learning, fundamental to developing both a culture of literacy and professional capital. This study findings align with Schleicher, (2018). Who highlighted that such practices facilitate building a culture of continual learning and agility required for maintaining relevance within an increasingly complex educational context

The study also shows how head teachers handle challenges in managing schools. Many head teachers (14) focus on solving problems early and keeping communication open, which shows they like clear and teamwork-based leadership. This fits with modern leadership ideas that stress talking and including everyone in decisions to solve issues (Leithwood et al., 2020). Also, their focus on being patient, fair, and following ethical rules shows they are serious about keeping high standards when dealing with tough situations. However, only one head teacher talked about working with other leaders, which suggests that while teamwork is important, it might not be common in some schools. On the other hand, three head teachers emphasize that personal evaluation, as a way to reflect on oneself, is important for effective leadership. This shows that self-reflection helps in being a better leader.

5.4.2 Validations for Instructional Leadership

As various definitions of the successful educational leadership depict, the role of the head Teacher requires him to be more holistic in all aspects such as, goal setting, team work, demonstrating and emphasis on the positivist culture of the school. The findings indicate that, although head preceptors actively strive to implement a team-based approach to leadership, they ought to focus more on the attention to grow distinct dreams and pretensions. Also, the

attention aspect of leadership also draws attention to the need for having empathy, being open and being judicious in the criticism. A stimulus for enhancing teacher effectiveness as well as addressing pupil's challenges is the type of leadership style that creates a climate of openness and encouragement for the head teachers. Also, to foster interdependence sustains the improvement efforts and adapt to the dynamic educational environment, there is a need to develop and nurture the shared values of continuous professional learning (Barth, 2006).

5.4.3. Positive School Climate and Head Teachers Leadership

As of the 26 teachers, twenty four claimed that the head teacher makes the school a welcoming place. This study align with Lee & Shute (2010) who noted that extremely strong belief in leadership and its contribution to establishing a sense of community and belonging at the school. In general, the characteristics of schools with positive climates are happier teachers, fewer rates of teacher turnover, and improved pupil performance in the process. It is, therefore, very instrumental in creating an environment that will ensure both teachers and pupils are motivated enough to put in their best efforts. Research has shown that once school leaders are more inclusive and welcoming, it makes teachers happier at their jobs, which then translates into better teaching on the part of the teachers. Besides, a conducive school climate is generally associated with improved academic outcomes in the form of safety, self-esteem, and engagement for pupils in the place. In this regard, it seems that most teachers recognize and appreciate the role of the head teacher. However, two of the teachers who disagreed indicated dissatisfaction in the service delivery by the head teacher in fostering a conducive environment. This could be a small group saying that whereas the school feels good generally, some persons or groups may not feel fully included.

One of the key responsibilities of a Head teacher is to clearly communicate the school's mission to both staff and pupils. The report indicates that 93.3% of teachers feel that the Head teacher effectively explains the school's mission, providing a clear direction. This demonstrates that the head is successful in helping most staff members understand the school's vision. This approach aligns with transformational leadership, which aims to inspire and guide employees toward the organization's common goals in this case, the school's mission (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

Further, twenty five teachers indicated that they received constructive criticism with growth areas but at the same time were given positive comments. This comment is important in order to help guide the improvement of the teaching methodologies and pupils' performance (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Among those who answered this question, one individual indicated that they have not received any feedback while four individuals who represented 13.3% indicated that they have only received negative feedback which made them uninterested in doing such tasks. The results of this study are in agreement with Deci & Ryan, (2000) who highlighted the importance of receiving positive motivational feedback alongside negative feedback, as it has been shown that the latter can reduce job motivation and job satisfaction for teachers' performance to improve without damaging their self-concept, constructive criticism should be more of positive nature rather than negative.

Furthermore, a sound mission provides a shared sense of direction and enhances teamwork among various stakeholders by focusing their efforts toward common educational goals. The leaders in the school have to ensure that communication is apparent to help the staff unite and work in unison on a long term plan. This ensures that each and every teacher falls in line with the set vision by the head teachers at the school. This not only heightens morale among teachers, but the benefits also flow to the pupil experience as an aid to coherence in the messages and expectations in the school community. Additionally, it seems that the school functions best when most are taking their cue from the head teacher about these issues. Meanwhile, 6.7% of those teachers felt there were problems with how the head teacher explains the goals and plans of the school. This shows that some of the teachers are not sure about the direction of the school. The good part is the positive response, but more has to be done or work on the strategies in terms of communication since 4% would not recommend the school. Even in a well-led school, there can be an element of tension that could impact staff morale and performances. These findings raise the imperatives of consideration by head teachers of whether their style of communication is inclusive of the perspectives of others in order that everyone feels involved in the mission of the school (Kotter, 1996).

5.5 The barriers associated with the effective exercise of instructional leadership by head teachers in selected secondary schools in Lusaka

The findings from the 30 schools visited reveal several key challenges faced by head teachers, as well as some proposed solutions to address these issues. The challenges largely relate to managing staff behavior, resistance to change, and resource constraints, which highlight the difficulties of school leadership. Despite these difficulties, the proposed solutions offer practical steps that could mitigate these challenges and improve the overall leadership environment in schools.

5.5.1 Teacher Behavior and Work Habits

Many schools reported problems with teacher discipline, especially frequent absences. This can badly affect how a school runs, because regular teacher attendance is very important for keeping lessons going and helping teachers to teach (Bruno, 2002). Four school leaders also mentioned that some teachers have bad attitudes about their jobs, making it harder to manage the school. The findings of this study are in line with Dinham & Scott, (2000) who postulated that teachers aren't interested or motivated, it can hurt their work and the overall school environment. Another big issue, mentioned by five school leaders, is teachers resisting changes. Schools need to keep up with new education rules, technology, and teaching ways. But, staff resistance can slow down the use of new methods and ideas that are meant to help pupils learn better (Fullan, 2001). Also, gender seems to affect how teachers act, as two head teachers noticed that male teachers didn't follow directions well, especially when the head teacher was a woman.

5.5.1 Inadequate resources

Inadequate resources about 3.3% of schools faced high teacher pupil ratios in classrooms and inadequate resources packages large class representations are a concern in many educational systems and can adversely impact both pupil learning and teacher performance outcomes (Blatchford, Bassett, & Brown 2011). This study is in line with Mulkeen (2005) who stated that Lack of teaching resources prevents teachers from giving effective lessons which adversely affects pupil motivation (Mulkeen, 2005) While overall mentioned by fewer school leaders, these resource issues still represent major hindrances to achieving educational objectives.

Balance between administrative tasks and instructional leadership is another issue that brought forth the voices of 20 teachers was the challenge of balancing administrative duties with instructional leadership. This is an important issue because not only are school leaders instructional leaders, they also often have been tasked with overseeing the administration functions of personnel, budget and policy implementation. This study results align closely with Horng, Klasik, and Loeb (2010) they noted that dual responsibility may hinder their ability to focus on instructional improvement, which is necessary for advancing pupil achievement. Moreover, it is suggested that the instructional leaders breathe life of priority into their responsibilities around teaching and learning. By delegating some administrative tasks to other staff members, head teachers can increase time devoted to instructional leadership and have more direct interactions with teachers and pupils. In addition, administrative functions including scheduling, communication and attendance management can utilize technology to improve productivity with respect to time (Grissom, Loeb & Mitani 2015). Another strategy to ensure that these responsibilities receive their deserved attention is to allocate specific times of the day for instructional focus.

Time and resources are also a major barrier for instructional leaders, expressed by four respondents. Numerous schools have only limited budgets, low employees and also accessibilities to resources for learning. Such restrictions might hinder the adoption of new concepts or improving teaching practices. The findings of the study are in line with Ladd & Fiske (2011) that stipulated under-resourced schools struggle to meet pupil needs and provide effective instruction. To combat this, instructional leaders may seek additional funding with grants or partnerships with local businesses or non-profits. Collective efforts collectively, districts working together with neighboring areas can share professional development opportunities for time, staff expertise and teaching materials. Moreover, due to financial constraints achieving more with less necessitates the focus on projects with high impact that can be accomplished within the means. Utilizing the low cost or free educational resources like open online resources, or open education materials can also alleviate some of these resource shortages.

Five teachers also pointed to resistance to change, a longstanding problem for instructional leaders. Often it is active teachers or staff who are accustomed to existing processes that resist the rollout of new instructional strategies, educational innovations. The results of this study are

in line with Fullan, (2007) who indicated that the reasons for resistance include fear of the unknown, ignorance or concern about workload. This challenge could limit growth and also prevent schools from implementing innovative solutions that may work for pupils. Other than these, it is necessary to simply communicate the reason for change with transparency to prevent resistance. One way leaders can make teachers and staff feel heard and appreciated is to ensure they are part of the decision-making process for school policies, even if they do not have a say in every aspect. By cultivating a collaborative atmosphere, leaders may increase buy in and decrease opposition. In addition, providing opportunities for staff development can equip employees with the skills and knowledge needed to respond to new pedagogies. Building awareness and rewarding successes (even small ones) along the way can help keep momentum going as well as show that changes are resulting in the desired benefits (Kotter, 1996). Such behaviour creates a constructive environment which encourages employees to embrace new ideas and approaches.

5.5.2 Various Pupil Needs

Meeting demands of various pupils is another challenge as mentioned by one responder. Schools are also tasked with educating pupils from a rich mixture of ethnicities, abilities, and learning styles. The results of this study are in line with Tomlinson, (2014) who alluded that no matter how a particular set of circumstances may look, instructional leaders must ensure that each pupil is able to receive a high-quality education meeting their needs. The answer to this lies in instructional leaders encouraging differentiated instruction that meets pupils where they are according to the broad spectrum of their learning styles and skills. Using data driven decision making allows leaders to identify where pupils need additional support and to target resources effectively. Additional services such as counseling, tutoring, or specialized programs could also assist in addressing the needs of pupils who may be struggling. Furthermore, developing a welcoming and culturally responsive school climate can enhance each pupil's educational experience by making them feel respected and valued (Gay, 2018). Using these strategies, a school culture that is adding to pupil achievement can be created regardless of a pupil's background or skill set by instructional leaders.

5.6 Proposed Solutions

The solutions recommended by the schools are practical ways through which the identified problems can be solved. For example, one of the respondents advised that teachers should keep professional disposition at work; this reiterated the necessity of developing the culture of responsibility whereby teachers hold themselves to the higher standards of practice. This corresponds with studies indicating that a high level of professional disposition in schools may foster improved student achievements and increased staff morale. This demand for the training of managers in leadership and management skills shows the requirement for the constant professional growth of the leaders at school. For instance, good training in leadership skills would help the head teachers to use people and other resources productively. These findings are in line with the study by Bush, Bell, & Middlewood (2010) which asserted that likewise, the prohibition of admitting more than a specific number of pupils so that the schools are not overpopulated is a rational step towards improving the learning environment in those schools where class sizes have become excessively large. Finally, leaders should never show reluctance when accepting criticism and feedback. Constructive feedback is, after all, an important trait that makes leaders learn and develop their management skills in running a school. Openness to feedback allows leaders to make necessary changes; and the ability to improve along the way helps the whole school community.

5.6.1 Implications for School Leadership

These findings show that school leadership is complex and challenging in its nature. The head teachers have to deal with both human resources and the means, living under difficult circumstances. In these regards, being a better leader would involve handling the behavioral issues of the staff, ensuring equal opportunities between men and women regarding leadership, and engaging in strategies pertaining to the limitation of resources in new ways. It also includes absenteeism, improving adverse attitudes towards work, enhancing teachers' motivation and participation. The current study results are in line and adding on what Dinham & Scott (2000) stipulated that whenever teachers are appreciated and recognized they become more committed and satisfied with their job. In-service training on teaching competencies and the development of a friendly school environment would address this. Moreover, the management of schools must strive to eradicate discriminatory practices that demean women in management

positions. If all the staff obey instructions given by head teacher regardless of the gender of head teacher that will be a long way to ensure that schools maintain a harmonious and respectful environment. Schools would reduce these biases by providing gender sensitivity training in order to embrace and be more tolerant. Another issue faced, although on a smaller scale, is the insufficient resources that some of the schools within the study had access to. Resources are still an issue for many educational systems today. Schools must find ways to use their resources economically and seek more funding or collaborations when possible. Governments and leaders should provide enough money and supplies for schools so that such deeper problems can be approached properly.

5.6.2 Summary

This chapter has discussed the findings of this study. The discussion was done under themes that emerged from the findings of the study, which are informed by the objectives and theoretical. The themes presented what the study established from the findings. These emerging themes from the practices done in schools.

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter concludes the study Examining Instructional Leadership Practices and Perceptions in Selected Secondary Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia. Furthermore, it highlights the key findings, draws conclusions, and offers recommendations.

6.1 Conclusion

It is worth noting that head teachers are critical in securing good teacher performance and improved schools. However, there is a need to better balance their teaching and management responsibilities. Schools can support head teachers in facilitating the delegation of some of their management responsibilities; this would enable them to pay more attention to teaching and leading. Moreover, the motivation and competence of teachers would be enhanced if there were more training opportunities and mechanisms to recognize and reward good work. Furthermore, head teachers perform quite well in motivating staff, providing feedback, communicating effectively, and facilitating the development of pupils. However, there are areas where improvements are needed, such as how head teachers consistently support teachers, provide them with fair feedback, and communicate the goals of the school. Besides, head teachers should not fail to continue playing more active roles in the instruction process, acknowledging the achievements made by pupils to maintain standards.

Finally head teachers play a major role in developing an enabling school environment and improving the performance of teachers. They take different approaches to facilitate the teachers and students, though recommendations are that more needs to be done concerning professional training and appreciation of teachers' efforts to realize greater success. With such improvements, head teachers would then be better placed to fulfill their management roles within schools and as leaders in education. The head teachers are also important in developing the culture of schools, developing teachers, and ensuring achievement of pupils within schools. Schools can be assured that by improving these areas of development, the head teachers will have the opportunity for continued improvement in leadership and hence ensure appropriate outcomes for the teachers and pupils.

6.2 Recommendations

From the results obtained, the researcher makes the following recommendations based on the observations

- a) Schools should establish clear policies for teacher attendance and performance, while also providing incentives and support to motivate teachers.
- b) The government should equipped head teachers with the skills necessary to navigate the complex challenges of school management, including dealing with resistance to change and managing staff behavior.
- c) Head teachers should encourage open communication and be receptive to feedback from both staff and pupils.

6.3 Proposed Areas for Future Research

Given the research conducted on study Examining Instructional Leadership Practices and Perceptions in Selected Secondary Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia, here are the recommendations of topics for future research:

- a) Further research would be needed to explore the underlying factors contributing to teacher dissatisfaction in schools, specifically in relation to communication breakdowns, perceptions of injustice, and administrative practices
- b) Exploring the Communication Styles in Conveying Academic Goals: Impact on Teaching Practices and Pupil Learning Outcome.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview guide Head Teacher

Personal information

- 1) How many years have you been a head teacher at this school?
 0-2years 3-5years 6-10 years
- 2) Gender
 Male Female
- 3) What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?
 BA/BS MA/MS Ph.D./Ed.D. Professional Diploma
 Other: Please specify: _____
- 4) How many years of work experience do you have?
 0-2years 3-5years 6-10 year's 11-15 years' Above 16 years

Practices head teachers, use to promote instructional leadership in schools

- 5) What are the roles that enable head teachers to show instructional leadership?
- 6) As an instructional leader do you have a class which you teach?
- 7) How do you influence HODs and Teachers towards curriculum delivery?
- 8) How do you ensure that there is quality education at your school?
- 9) What strategies do you use to deliver the school curriculum?

Head teacher's instructional leadership practices on instructional delivery by teachers.

- 10) How do you ensure as a leader that teachers are motivated to deliver the curriculum?
- 11) What strategies do you use to foster a culture of quality education in your school?
- 12) How do you use instructional leadership to overcome challenge in exercising instructional leadership?
- 13) As an instructional leader how do you monitor if the school curriculum is being delivered well?

Perceptions of head teachers on instructional Leadership in secondary schools.

- 1) How do you define effective instructional leadership?
- 2) What values and beliefs guide your instructional leadership?
- 3) As an instructional Leader what helps you in achieving the academic goals of your school?

The barriers associated with the effective exercise of instructional leadership by head teachers in selected secondary schools in Lusaka.

- 4) What challenges do you face in exercising instructional leadership?
- 5) What would you suggest should be done to make instructional leadership effective in schools?

Appendix II: Focus group discussion Questions

Practices head teachers, use to promote instructional leadership in schools?

1. Does your school have a specific goal for quality instruction
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2. Does the School leadership team have a common understanding of the School instructional goal?
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3. Is the school time table designed in such a way that it encourages teacher cooperation, Planning, and Professional Development?
4. Is there a weekly or monthly professional development plan for the school?
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.....

The influence of head teacher's instructional leadership practices on instructional delivery by teachers.

5. How does your head teacher motivate you to improve on the teaching and learning?
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6. How does feedback from your head teacher help you to improve on the teaching and learning?
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7. How does your Head Teacher communicate the school's vision to the Teachers?

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8. In what ways does your Head Teacher discuss students' progress, reward and recognize superior performance, and show interest in the school?

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9. How does your Head Teacher ensure that instructional time is sacred, observe instructional practice, and give instructional feedback?

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Perceptions of head teachers on instructional Leadership in secondary schools

10. How does the perceptions of instructional leadership among head teachers impact the teaching and learning in the classroom?

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11. Does your head teacher define the mission of the school to the members of Staffs and the Pupils?

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12. What are the perceptions of your head teacher's instructional leadership regarding developing the school learning climate?

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13. What are the perceptions of your head teacher on instructional leadership regarding managing the instructional program of the school?
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The barriers associated with the effective exercise of instructional leadership by head teachers in selected secondary schools in Lusaka.

- 1) What challenges are head teachers facing in Exercising instructional leadership
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- 2) Based on your answer above what resources would you suggest should be provided to head teacher in order to improve instructional leadership?
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Thank you, for your participation.

Appendix III: Consent Form for Head teachers

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY STUDIES

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO BE A RESEARCH RESPONDENT

I am a student at the University of Zambia doing a Master of Education in Educational Administration and Management. I am here to request for your consent to be one of my respondents to my research on “Examining Instructional Leadership Practices and Perceptions in Selected Secondary Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia.” This will help me come up with information regarding the Head teachers’ perceptions and practices of Instructional Leadership. Be assured that the information you will share with me will be confidential and will only be Used for academic purposes.

Your consent to this request will greatly be appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

..... (Sign)

Howard Njovu - Researcher/Student

Consent by respondent

Having read or heard the information concerning this research, I hereby voluntarily consent to be one of the respondents. In this regard, I reserve the right to end the interview at any time and choose not to answer particular questions if necessary.

Name: Sign:

Date:

Appendix IV: Consent Form for Teachers

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY STUDIES

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO BE A RESEARCH RESPONDENT

I am a student at the University of Zambia doing a Master of Education in Educational Administration and Management. I am here to request for your consent to be one of my respondents to my research on “Examining Instructional Leadership Practices and Perceptions in Selected Secondary Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia.”. This will help me come up with information regarding the Head teachers’ perceptions and practices of Instructional Leadership. Be assured that the information you will share with me will be confidential and will only be used for academic purposes.

Your consent to this request will greatly be appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

..... (Sign)

Howard Njovu - Researcher/Student

Consent by respondent

Having read or heard the information concerning this research, I hereby voluntarily consent to be one of the respondents. In this regard, I reserve the right to end the interview at any time and choose not to answer particular questions if necessary.

Name: Sign:

Date:

Appendix V: Approval of Study



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

Great East Road Campus | P.O. Box 32379 | Lusaka10101 | Tel: +260-211-290 258/291 777 Fax: (+260)-211-290 258/253 952 | E-mail: director.drgs@unza.zm | Website: www.unza.zm

APPROVAL OF STUDY

IORG No. 0005376
HSSREC IRB No. 00006464
REF NO. HSSREC-2024-JUL-042

11th September, 2024

Mr. Howard Njovu
The University of Zambia
P.O. Box 32379
LUSAKA

Dear Mr. Njovu

**RE: “EXAMINING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND PERCEPTIONS
IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LUSAKA DISTRICT, ZAMBIA”**

Reference is made to your submission of the protocol captioned above. The HSSREC resolved to approve this study and your participation as Principal Investigator for a period of one year.

REVIEW TYPE	ORDINARY REVIEW	APPROVAL NO. HSSREC:2024-JUL-042
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Approval and Expiry Date	Approval Date: 11 th September, 2024	Expiry Date: 10 th September, 2025
Protocol Version and Date	Version - Nil.	10 th September, 2025
Information Sheet, Consent Forms and Dates	<input type="checkbox"/> English.	To be provided
Consent form ID and Date	Version - Nil	To be provided
Recruitment Materials	Nil	Nil
Other Study Documents	Questionnaire.	
Number of Participants Approved for Study		

Specific conditions will apply to this approval. As Principal Investigator it is your responsibility to ensure that the contents of this letter are adhered to. If these are not adhered to, the approval may be suspended. Should the study be suspended, study sponsors and other regulatory authorities will be informed.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

- No participant may be involved in any study procedure prior to the study approval or after the expiration date.
- All unanticipated or Serious Adverse Events (SAEs) must be reported to HSSREC within 5 days.
- All protocol modifications must be approved by HSSREC prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk (but must still be reported for approval). Modifications will include any change of investigator/s or site address.
- All protocol deviations must be reported to HSSREC within 5 working days.
- All recruitment materials must be approved by HSSREC prior to being used.
- Principal investigators are responsible for initiating Continuing Review proceedings. HSSREC will only approve a study for a period of 12 months.

- It is the responsibility of the PI to renew his/her ethics approval through a renewal application to HSSREC.
- Where the PI desires to extend the study after expiry of the study period, documents for study extension must be received by HSSREC at least 30 days before the expiry date. This is for the purpose of facilitating the review process. Documents received within 30 days after expiry will be labelled “late submissions” and will incur a penalty fee of K500.00. No study shall be renewed whose documents are submitted for renewal 30 days after expiry of the certificate.
- Every 6 (six) months a progress report form supplied by The University of Zambia Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee as an IRB must be filled in and submitted to us. There is a penalty of K500.00 for failure to submit the report.
- When closing a project, the PI is responsible for notifying, in writing or using the Research Ethics and Management Online (REMO), both HSSREC and the National Health Research Authority (NHRA) when ethics certification is no longer required for a project.
- In order to close an approved study, a Closing Report must be submitted in writing or through the REMO system. A Closing Report should be filed when data collection has ended and the study team will no longer be using human participants or animals or secondary data or have any direct or indirect contact with the research participants or animals for the study.
- Filing a closing report (rather than just letting your approval lapse) is important as it assists HSSREC in efficiently tracking and reporting on projects. Note that some funding agencies and sponsors require a notice of closure from the IRB which had approved the study and can only be generated after the Closing Report has been filed.

- A reprint of this letter shall be done at a fee.
- All protocol modifications must be approved by HSSREC by way of an application for an amendment prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk (but must still be reported for approval). Modifications will include any change of investigator/s or site address or methodology and methods. Many modifications entail minimal risk adjustments to a protocol and/or consent form and can be made on an Expedited basis (via the IRB Chair). Some examples are: format changes, correcting spelling errors, adding key personnel, minor changes to questionnaires, recruiting and changes, and so forth. Other, more substantive changes, especially those that may alter the risk-benefit ratio, may require Full Board review. In all cases, except where noted above regarding subject safety, any changes to any protocol document or procedure must first be approved by HSSREC before they can be implemented.

Should you have any questions regarding anything indicated in this letter, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at the above indicated address.

On behalf of HSSREC, we would like to wish you all the success as you carry out your study.

Yours faithfully,



DR. ELIJAH M. BWALYA
ACTING CHAIRPERSON
THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE - IRB

CC: Director, Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies
Assistant Director (Research), Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies
Assistant Registrar (Research), Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies