

THE PERCEIVED ROLES OF PRINCIPALS RELATIVE TO
THEIR FUNCTIONS AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

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ABSTRACT

This is a qualitative study designed to investigate how principals and selected staff members perceive the principal as an instructional leader. Specifically, it attempted to ascertain whether there was any divergence between the perceptions of the teachers and the principals. The focal group comprising the sample of thirty-five constituted five principals, five vice-principals and twenty-five classroom teachers. The demographic composition of the sample has been summarized in Table 3 according to variables relating to gender, teaching experience, qualifications and professional status. The study was guided by the following four research questions:

1. To what extent do principals in selected primary schools engage in tasks that constitute instructional leadership?
2. What is the nature of the tasks relating to instructional leadership in which the principals engage?
3. What are some of the activities mitigating the effectiveness of the principal in executing his/her role as an instructional leader?
4. In what ways does the school benefit from the role of the principal as an instructional leader?

The main data collecting instruments involved questionnaires, interviews and an observation schedule. A table of alignment illustrated the relationship between the four major research questions and the items in the interview and questionnaires.

The results indicated divergence between the view of the principals and those of the teachers relative to the role of the principals as instructional leaders. The findings

carry important educational implications for the administration of schools and the delivery of instruction.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Ministry of Education	MoE
National Association of Elementary School Principals	AESP
Organizations for Economic Corporation and Development.....	OECD
National Quality Assurance Authority.....	NQAA
National Education Inspectorate	NEI
National College for Educational Leadership.....	NCEL
Reform of Secondary Education	ROSE
Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory	McREL
Adequate Yearly Progress.....	AYP
Virginia Standards of Accreditation	VSOA

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Over thirty years of research on schooling in Japan, Singapore, North America and the United States has furnished extensive information on effective schools and effective school leadership. Early school effectiveness studies (Edmonds 1979; Murphy et al., 1985) concluded that strong administrative leadership is a characteristic of “instructionally-effective” schools. Other studies (Gronn, 1996; Hallinger, 2008; Hallinger & Heck 1996; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Mulford, 1996) have also indicated that principals can and do make a difference both to teachers and to students, through their skills as instructional leaders. Such leadership has not been consistently provided in schools (Murphy et al., 1985). This conclusion, according to Hallinger (1992), has given credence to the calls for principals to engage more actively in leading the schools’ instructional program and in focusing staff attention on student outcomes. Yukl (2002) opined, “Effective school leadership today must combine the traditional school leadership duties with a deep involvement of teaching and learning” (p. 13). He further posited that “effective instructional leaders are intensely involved in curricular and instructional issues that directly affect achievement” (p. 15). Many times, principals are ignorant about what is going on in the classrooms and are unable to appreciate some of the instructional problems. This may be attributed more to unavailability of time than to indifference.

Additionally, the principalship has come up for close scrutiny in the context of initiatives designed to increase school effectiveness. It has often been recommended that

principals undertake numerous roles as manager, curriculum leader, administrator and instructional leader. Oftentimes, it is extremely difficult to balance these roles. As a result, more time is spent devoted to management and administration than to that of instructional leader. According to Yukl (1994), “Instructional leadership is those actions that principals take, or delegate to others to promote growth in students’ learning” (p. 17). However, descriptions of the role of the educational leader have not addressed what some, such as the Jamaican Ministry of Education, would consider the more important issues of what ought to be his/her role. Up to the end of the 1980s, the role of the principal was perceived as that of administrator/manager and public relations representative, but the 1990s tended to emphasize the principal’s role as instructional leaders (Hallinger, 1992; Heck, 1993).

While the consensus is that instructional leadership is very important in the achievement of effective schools in Jamaica, it is hardly practiced (Thomas, 2008). This is also evident in schools in the United States of America. Among the many tasks performed by principals in the USA, only one-tenth of time is devoted towards providing instructional leadership (Bass, 1995). The discussion of exactly what the educational leader should be doing in order to make a difference in the quality of the school continues to dominate discourses both locally and internationally. It is clear from literature on indicators of school effectiveness (Fullan, 2001; Mulford, 1996) that no one factor accounts for the effectiveness. There appears to be a number of critical factors, which when combined, would make a difference. Yukl (2003) stated, “Effective school leadership today must combine the traditional school leadership duties with a deep involvement in teaching and learning.” He further posited that “effective instructional

leaders are intensely involved in curricular and instructional issues that directly affect achievement” (p. 35). Amongst these factors are: sense of mission, high expectations, academic focus, feedback on academic performance, positive motivational strategies, conscious attention to a positive, safe ordered community climate, administrative leadership, teachers taking responsibility, parental involvement and system support (Mulford,1996). With the challenges and demands of globalization and the change in the educational climate, principals, locally, regionally and internationally must be equipped with the leadership skills and organizational knowledge required to effectively lead their schools.

Given the pervading ethos relating to the perceptions of the role of the school principals as instructional leaders, the role must be redesigned from that of a paper pusher to one who is informed about the instructional programs that the Ministry of Education and the region have proposed to actively guide teachers in their implementation. In addition, the principal must be able to judge the quality of teaching in order to select and maintain good teaching staff. Bennis (2003) stated that, “the principal must also be cognizant of the capabilities of his or her members of staff in order to suggest particular ways of improving specific aspects of their teaching, creating a culture in which deep knowledge of instruction and learning serves as the bedrock of an independent professional community” (p. 252).

Strength in leadership and human relations skills in the principal are critical to the development of educational excellence. There are certain leadership behaviors and specific activities that seem to make a difference. As Rosenblum et al. (1994, p. 17)

stated, good leadership is considered to be one that facilitates collaboration, communication, feedback, influence and professionalism in the following ways by:

1. providing leadership through establishment of a vision and values system;
2. modeling and risk taking;
3. having consistent policies to delegate and empower others, thus sharing leadership;
4. focusing on people, nurturing staff members, and helping them to grow; and
5. emphasizing the educational aspects of the school rather than the purely technical aspects of schooling.

It is evident from these studies on the role of the principal, school climate and leadership, briefly outlined above, that school effectiveness is made up of many factors. This study examined one of the identified factors of school effectiveness- instructional leadership.

Numerous studies have confirmed that the key element in a quality school is the principal's leadership role in assuring an excellent instructional program (Greenfield, 2004; Hallinger, 2007; McCall, 1997). Traditionally, instructional leadership has been defined as those activities that foster the improvement of a person, group or program (Moos, 1999) and have been quantitative in nature, emphasizing cause-and-effect relationships (Mirvis, 1990). In order to elicit richer empirical data about the phenomenon of instructional leadership, research shifted from a quantitative to a qualitative approach (Fullan, 2001), examining such concepts as beliefs, relationships and experiences of the people involved in education (Hallinger, 1992) because "research on instructional leadership must address the thinking that underlies the exercise of

leadership, not simply describe the discrete behaviors of effective leaders” (Hallinger, 1992, p. 89). Research on instructional leadership has tended to focus in three areas: the attributes of the instructional leader; tasks of the instructional leader; and, models of instructional leadership.

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001) in the United States of America frames instructional leadership in terms of “leading learning communities.” In NAESP’s view instructional leaders have six roles: making student and adult learning priority; setting high expectations for performance; gearing content instruction to standards; creating a culture of continuous learning for adults; using multiple sources of data to assess learning; and activating community’s support for school success. Blasé and Blasé (2000) in describing the behaviors of principals who had a positive influence on student learning pointed to the emergence of two broad themes: talking with teachers and promoting professional development. These were expressed in specific behaviors such as making suggestions, giving feedback, modeling effective instruction, soliciting opinions, supporting collaboration, providing professional development opportunities and giving praise for effective teaching.

School Leadership in Jamaica in the 21st Century

According to the National Task Force Report on Education (2014), the most pressing issue in the education system is the chronic underachievement of the system in terms of the large number of students performing well below their grade level. Although there have been substantial investments in education, several countries in the region are still grappling with educational outcomes that are way below expectations. This concern has not escaped the attention of Caribbean governments, multilateral organizations as

well as the Caribbean Examinations Council who argued that while expenditure as a percentage of GDP is higher or on par with many Organizations for Economic Corporation and Development (OECD) countries, performance is not commensurate to that investment (Ministry of Education, 2000).

The vision of the World Education for All, to which Jamaica is committed, is supported by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention of the Rights of the Child in that “All children, young people and adults have the right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term that includes learning to know, to do, to live together.” (Ministry of Education, Jamaica, 2010). It is an education geared at tapping into each individual’s talents and potential and developing learners’ personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies.

At the same time, research exploring the relationship between leadership and student learning in the context of the current accountability movement has shown extensive implications for the role of the principal (Elmore, 2002; Harris, 2003; Leithwood, 2001). Historical changes to the role of the principal, in recent decades, have expanded the principal's role and increased its complexity, demanding more time of the principal than ever before (Goodwin, Barley, & Childress, 2003; Lashway, 2000). The Jamaican principal cannot be exempted from this movement.

Consequently, some principals are besieged with increased stress on the job, challenging and rigid reporting requirements, and lack of time to do the work (Grace, 2000; Tirozzi, 2001). Although encouraged by leadership theory, some principals struggle with abandoning managerial roles for instructional leadership roles, but are

confronted with little professional development support (Hargreaves, 2009; Zepeda, 2004). Others perceive themselves as not capable of handling this “daunting set of expectations” (Noonan & Renihan, 2006, p. 9). As a result, many succumb to the middle manager role of the principal, stuck between pleasing those above and pleasing those below (Hallinger, 2010) which causes frustration and discontentment.

For appointment as a principal in Jamaica, a teacher is required to be a registered, trained teacher with at least three years of approved service as a trained teacher unless the requirements are varied (The Education Act Jamaica, 1980). In addition, the principal of a primary school is usually required to have at least a first degree. The appointment is not necessarily based on the person’s ability to lead. Some principals are appointed to the position on the basis of “who they know” and on denominational/church affiliation. This situation has created some amount of resentment, and in some cases has affected the working relationships between principals and teachers within schools.

It may be argued that competence in classroom teaching is an essential attribute of a principal; however, that alone is not sufficient since there are other equally important skills, abilities and knowledge needed for educational leadership. It is debated by several writers that effective educational leaders need vision and leadership knowledge and skills including: knowledge of change and innovation; the ability to initiate, invent and adapt; a sense of direction; and the skills to motivate and provide an appropriate leadership style to meet the challenges of the changing society.

In light of this, The National Task Force on Education Reform, commissioned in 2004 to prepare an action plan consistent with a vision to create a world class education system for Jamaica, recommended the establishment of a National Quality Assurance

Authority (NQAA), to address the issue of performance and accountability in the education system. In line with this recommendation the Ministry of Education formulated the policy and legislative framework for the establishment of an independent body -the National Education Inspectorate (NEI) - to address the issues identified and effect changes complementary to the transformation program. In review of the Education system, the Task Force posited the view that despite some positive gains made by the education system “the performance gap” that exists between where we are now and where the country needs to be is disquieting. One of the critical areas identified in the Task Force report was the need for principals to increase the effectiveness of their schools through improved management, the efficient use of resources and better relationship with the communities they serve. In addition, the report confirmed that the country’s school leaders were not being adequately prepared to meet the demand of the principalship in contemporary society (Task Force report, 2004). Despite this, very little research has been undertaken in the local jurisdiction to address this pertinent matter.

The Education Regulation Act of 1980 outlined the duties and responsibilities of the Jamaican principal which require him/her to engage in a variety of tasks inclusive of supervising the instructional arena, evaluating and preparing reports on students’ and teachers’ performance, assuming teaching responsibilities when the need arises along with “other duties as may be prescribed by the Board or by the Minister of Education”. It is ironic to note that the Code of Regulations (1980) does not specify the requisite training of these school leaders yet they are expected to perform these duties successfully and efficiently.

According to The National Inspector's Handbook (2015) effective leadership is "epitomized in schools when the leadership is: dynamic and inspirational; has a clear vision for the future; and guides and directs staff and students" (p. 4). In addition, "the school is successful with all groups of students and holds staff accountable for their performance." The Inspector's assessment of the Leadership and Management variable encompasses leader qualities such as: vision, direction, guidance, culture and ethos, instructional leadership, relationship with staff and systems of accountability. After conducting its first series of evaluations, the National Inspectorate of Education published a damning report which saw over eighty percent of schools failing miserably in the area of leadership. As a result, the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) was established in 2011. This was in recognition of the fact that greater emphasis on the development of school leaders must be addressed in order to realize improved outcomes in the Jamaican school system to fulfill the Vision 2030 mandate.

This leadership training college, according to the Ministry of Education, seeks to improve the quality of system and school leaders and managers in education since there are no formal system-wide standards that define the nature, functions and expectations of principals and other appointed school leaders. Secondly, the appointment process for principals is not guided by a specific and formal qualifications framework that ensures that school leaders possess the skills necessary to lead and manage schools. Thirdly, NCEL will seek to improve the quality of leaders and managers in education and attach greater level of accountability to the role of principal. The NCEL will, among other things, support children's achievement and well-being through excellent school

leadership and build national policy and priorities into training, bring coherence to existing training and develop future school leaders.

The need for instructional leadership is without question a necessity for a number of reasons: not all school systems are staffed with well-trained teachers; many high school teachers hold degrees in specialized areas but have no professional training for teaching. Additionally, some teachers need assistance to eradicate bad habits formed by teaching without supervision or mentoring when they initially entered the system. This poses an additional problem for a system that is already grappling with the effects of underperformance due to the lack instructional leaders.

While the Ministry must be lauded for this renaissance in the education system, priority and a high level of urgency in providing support ought to be given to those principals whose schools were labeled failing in the area of leadership, since the literature underscored the vital role that effective instructional leadership plays in school's success. The principal's role as an instructional leader is to supervise, evaluate, and to help in the professional development of teachers-the core tasks of instructional leadership. Learning to become an instructional leader is a multifaceted task. If principals believe that progress in student learning is the chief goal of schooling, then it is a task that should be undertaken and expedited.

School Effectiveness

In addition to school leadership, school effectiveness has been the subject of much debate in the education arena. Bush and Bell (1995) from analyzing the results of a large number of schools articulated the view that a school is effective to the extent that the performance of its students on some measure of educational achievement exceeds that

which would be predicted on the basis of students' prior attainment and other characteristics from analyzing the results of a large number of schools. It is, therefore, safe to assume, based on the definition above, that school effectiveness comes from its capacity to add value to the life of its learners. According to Newman et al. (2000) there are four core components of this capacity:

- Technical resources- high quality curriculum, instructional material, assessment instruments, technology and workplace;
- Knowledge, skills and dispositions of individual staff members;
- Program coherence- the extent to which the school's programs for students and staff learning are coordinated, focused on clear learning goals and sustained over a period of time.
- A professional learning community in which staff work collaboratively to set goals for students' learning; assess how well students are doing, develop action plans to increase student achievement, all the while being engaged in inquiry and problem solving. (p. 5)

It is evident based on Newman's research that school effectiveness should not only focus on academia, but should serve to instill in students the desire to be lifelong learners.

Fullan (2002) points out that schools are constantly being bombarded by a multiplicity of unconnected innovation and that the most effective schools are not those which take on the most number of innovations, but those which selectively assume, integrate and coordinate innovations into focused programs. According to <http://www.highreliabilityschools.co.uk/bodies-of-knowledge/school-effectiveness.aspx> an effective school is one that promotes the progress of its students in a broad range of intellectual, social and emotional outcomes, where students progress further than might be expected from knowledge of their backgrounds.

Similarly, Zepeda (2004, p.18) states in order to achieve this effectiveness, schools are expected to have:

- strong leadership from the head,

- a pervasive and broadly understood focus on teaching and learning,
- a safe and orderly school learning environment or 'climate' that is conducive to teaching,
- high expectations for achievement from all students,
- parental involvement in homework, helping in lessons etc.,
- the use of student achievement test data for evaluating program and school success,
- pupil involvement (both in the classroom and within the school in societies, sports teams leadership positions, representative positions),
- consistency across lessons in the same subjects, across different subjects in the same years and across different years in the pupil learning experiences they offer.

Findings by researchers such as Dunne and Delisio (2001), Harris (2003), and Lambert (2003) outlined the principal's role as being instrumental in the success of effective schools. The stakes are high for schools and the people involved in them. These are turbulent times for schools as stakeholders demand accountability from those entrusted with our institutions of learning. As a result, the instructional leader must empower staff, include them in decision making, provide a safe haven for students and engage all stakeholders in the daily operation of the school.

Statement of the Problem

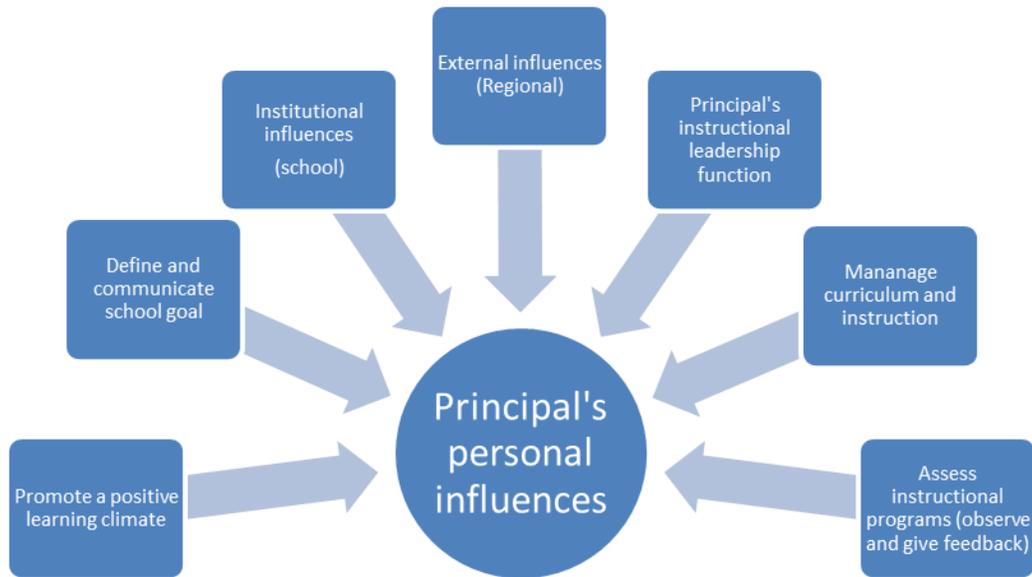
The general problem of the study was to ascertain how principals and selected staff members perceive the role of the principal as an instructional leader. More specifically, was there any divergence between the perceptions of the teachers and that of the principals.

The Conceptual Framework

The study utilized a qualitative approach. The framework for this study was cast within particular school effectiveness research conducted by Hallinger and Heck (2010) that principals can, and do make a difference both to students and to teachers. Through their skills as instructional leaders, a principal with teaching responsibility strengthens the belief that “the sole purpose of the school is to serve the educational needs of students” (Jago, 1982, p. 88). Likewise, Glickman et al. (2000) believe that effectiveness of the school depends on the availability of the principal to lead the staff in planning, implementing and evaluating improvements in the schools’ curricular and co-curricular activities. However, this should not be done unless school administrators review first generation school effectiveness and studies and identify frequently stated characteristics of principals from effective school (Whittaker, 1997).

To understand how principals can affect the instructional environment of schools, Marzano (2003, pp.192-193) pointed out that one must first examine the contexts in which principals must function. Principals operate in a multi-level world, working with influences both within and outside of the school - with the community members and their interests as well as with teachers, students and other stakeholders. Personal characteristics and beliefs also affect principals’ decision-making processes and their style of instructional leadership. The flow chart below provides a graphical summary of the educational variables emerging from the principal’s influence as a leader.

Figure 1. Flow Chart Summarizing Elements of the Principal's Influence as a Leader.



This framework shows that a principal's instructional leadership behavior affects two fundamental aspects of the school's social organization- learning climate and instructional organization. These are the contexts that shape teachers' behavior and students' learning experiences. At the same time the principal's own leadership actions are shaped by factors external to the school-personal, national, regional and community factors. The conceptual framework places the research questions within the five main functions of the instructional leadership role as identified by Hallinger and Murphey (1985, p. 95). These functions are:

- Defining and articulating school goals
- Managing curriculum and instruction
- Promoting a positive learning climate
- Observing and giving feedback to teachers
- Assessing the instructional program

Purpose

The study was designed to investigate the extent to which five primary school principals and selected staff members view the role of principals as instructional leaders.

Research Questions

The research problem is usually stated as a question or hypothesis (Creswell, 2005). I, therefore, chose the former given the qualitative nature of the research methodologies. Creswell (2005) suggested that by posing the problem in the form of a question, the researcher suggests the kind of answers being sought. Given the exploratory nature of the study, structured hypotheses were abandoned in favor of three major research questions. These research questions provided the framework for designing the data collecting instruments, analyzing the data, and reporting and discussing the findings. Accordingly, this research was guided by the following four (4) major research questions:

1. To what extent do principals in selected primary schools engage in tasks that constitute instructional leadership?
2. What is the nature of the tasks relating to instructional leadership in which the principals engage?
3. What are some of the activities mitigating the effectiveness of the principal in executing his/her role as an instructional leader?
4. In what ways does the school benefit from the role of the principal as an instructional leader?

Significance of the Study

Marzano (2005), in cooperation with other researchers, completed a meta-analysis of the most important factors affecting the quality of the teacher and the instructional strategies he or she uses, in addition to the excellence of the school as an organization. The researchers discovered that the principal has the greatest impact on the teacher. As a result, those who occupy these positions would be able to realize the power they possess to impact students' learning and the school climate. Therefore, data collected from this study might enable school principals to examine more closely the impact of their leadership behaviors on the organizational health of their institutions.

The study might be significant to the Ministry Education as it is anticipated that the findings will predispose them to be more cognizant of the diverse tasks that the principal must undertake. It is further hoped that the increased awareness may encourage the Ministry of Education to offer more guidance, support and necessary training needed for principals to function as effective instructional leaders.

Limitations of the Study

Most studies are subject to limitations and delimitations. According to Jones (1987) the limitations of a study are the factors that may influence the research if they are not controlled or limited from the beginning of the study. On the other hand, he pointed out that the delimitations define the parameters of the investigations. This study was limited in several ways and it is not designed to afford generalization. The sample was limited to five primary schools. As a matter of logistical practicality, the five schools selected are limited to the central region of Manchester primarily to the Mandeville region; generalization beyond the five institutions under this study is not the intent of the

researcher. Qualitative data do not necessarily seek to generalize, but to provide rich descriptions of, and insights into, a particular phenomenon in order to gain a better understanding of it (Heath & Street, 2008). The usefulness of the information collected cannot be disputed, as the findings of the study will have specific educational significance for the schools from which the sample was selected. The findings are designed to provide insights for policy makers and practitioners in the field rather than to identify a generalizable phenomenon.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was confined to five primary school principals, five vice-principals and five junior teachers from each school in Manchester. These schools were selected due to time constraints involved in interviewing and subsequent data analysis.

Definitions of Terms Germane to the Study

There are some terms used throughout the research that warrant definition. These definitions are meant to enhance clarity for readers as they encounter the terms in relation to this research.

1. Instructional Leadership-describes a broad set of principal roles and responsibilities designed to address the workplace needs of successful teachers and to foster improved achievement among students (Hallinger, 2010).
2. The principalship - A position held by the chief school leader who is charged with making sense of the issues within schools and directly influencing the ways in which these issues are addressed for the good of the students (Fullan, 2002).
3. Educational Leadership - A term applied to school principals who strive to create positive change in the educational policies and processes. Those in educational

leadership roles tend to go above and beyond management and administrative tasks. They are trained to advance educational systems and create and enact policies (Zepeda, 2004).

4. Leadership – The process of social influence, which maximizes the effort of others, towards the achievement of a goal (Lambert, 2003).
5. Vice-Principal – often referred to as Assistant Principals, work beside school principals to manage the administrative and educational aspect of schools. (Ministry of Education (Jamaica) Code of Regulation, 1980).
6. Subject Head – The term applies to appointed post holders who have responsibility for academic department of schools. Heads of Departments are appointed by the school's principal. (Ministry of Education (Jamaica) Code of Regulation, 1980).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The literature review presented in this section has been organized in accordance with the main variables in informing the study as well as the four major research questions. Given the focus of this study as reflected in the title, the main variables are school leadership, the principalship and instructional leadership. School leadership can be described as a cauldron of competing interests since the principal's responsibilities have increased significantly over the past decades. They are expected to "run a smooth school; manage health, safety and the building; be responsive to parents and the community; answer to their regions and above all deliver results" (Fullan, 2005 p. 10). This literature review provided clear groundwork for the study by scrutinizing, amalgamating and communicating the extant literature relating to school leadership and instructional leadership. The first section examined school leadership and the data surrounding the principalship with the view of ascertaining the need for a new thrust in the roles that these school leaders play. The second segment primarily introduced the concept of instructional leadership with focus on the history, purpose and different models associated with this leadership style. Additionally, a comparison between instructional leadership and other leadership models was included. It also sought to unearth the criticisms leveled at this phenomenon and examined research which sought to discredit the attributes of instructional leadership. The final section addressed the gap that exists in the literature.

School Leadership

Leadership is a topic with universal appeal (Northouse, 2004). Despite the abundance of related research literature on the topic, leadership has presented a major challenge to researchers and practitioners interested in understanding the concept. During the last ten years there has been tremendous expansion of the literature, yet despite this vast research base there is no single definitive theory of leadership as there has been a proliferation of leadership theories, styles or approaches presented in the literature. A central element in many definitions of leadership is that there is a process of influence. Yukl (2002, p. 3) explained “Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person (or group) over the other people (or groups) to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organization.” Yukl’s use of ‘person’ or ‘group’ serves to emphasize that leadership may be exercised by teams as well as individuals. This view is supported by Heifetz (1994) and Zepeda (2004) who both advocated a change to the top-down approach to leadership. Leadership may be understood as ‘influence’ but this notion is neutral in that it does not explain or recommend what goals or actions should be sought through this process. However, certain alternative constructs of leadership focus on the need for leadership to be grounded in firm personal and professional values. Weissenberg argued that these core values should be:

- Schools are concerned with learning and all members of the school community are learners.
- Every member of the school community is valued as an individual.
- The school exists to serve its pupils and the local community.
- Learning is about the development of the whole person and happens in and out of classrooms.
- People prosper with trust, encouragement and praise (Weissenberg, 1999, p. 155).

The values adopted by many schools can be illustrated by Day, Harris and Hadfield's (2003) study of twelve schools in England and Wales, which focused on heads who were deemed effective by the Office for Standards in Education's (Ofsted) criteria and 'peer reputation'. The researchers interviewed teachers, parents, governors and students as well as principals. They concluded that "good leaders are informed by and communicate clear sets of personal and educational values which represent their moral purposes for school" (p. 53).

A school is influenced by the principal's personal vision and values whether they are spoken of directly or indirectly (Hallinger, 2008). This vision is increasingly regarded as an important component of leadership. Quinn (2002) posited that "outstanding leaders have a vision of their schools - a mental picture of a preferred future-which is shared with all in the school community" (p. 99). He identified four emerging generalizations about vision:

1. Outstanding leaders have a vision of their organizations;
2. Vision must be communicated in a way, which secures commitment among members of the organizations;
3. Communication of vision requires communication of meaning;
4. Attention should be given to institutionalizing vision if leadership is to be successful.

These generalizations are supported by some empirical data. Supovitz (2002) summarized the findings of several research projects and commentaries on leadership in primary schools. He suggested that heads are motivated to work hard "because their leadership is the pursuit of their work... since leadership is the pursuit of their individual

visions” (p. 47). Eastwood and Lewis (1992) posited that “primary heads should provide a vision of what their schools should become” (p. 43). These projects demonstrate an immense support for the notion of visionary leadership.

Begley’s (1994) four level analysis helps to clarify the concept of vision. The ‘vision’ derived goals’ aspect serves to illustrate the approach as indicated by the Table 1 below.

Table 1. Four Level Analysis

Levels	Analysis
Basic	Possesses a set of goals derived from Ministry and Board expectations.
Intermediate	Develops school goals consistent with the principal’s articulated vision.
Advanced	Works with the teaching staff to develop school goals, which reflect their collaborative effort.
Expert	Collaborates with representative members of the school community to develop goals, which reflect a collaboratively developed vision statement.

This demonstrates that “vision” operates at different levels. The shift from “basic” to “expert” provides a useful way of categorizing the extent to which leaders are able to develop a distinctive vision, widely regarded as one hallmark of effective leadership.

While a clear vision is essential to establish the nature and direction of change, it is equally important to ensure that innovations are implemented efficiently and that the school's residual functions are carried out effectively. Additionally, both leadership and management are necessary for successful schools. According to Bolman and Deal (1997, pp xiii-xiv),

Leading and managing are distinct, but both are important. Organizations, which are over managed but under led eventually, lose any sense of spirit of purpose. Poor managed organizations with strong charismatic leaders may soar temporarily only to crash shortly thereafter. The challenge of modern organizations requires the objective perspective of the manager as well as the flashes of vision and commitment wise leadership provides.

There appear to be as many perspectives on school leadership as those who research and write about it. The production of so much literature on the topic stems from the scope and pace of change that has taken place in education over the last decade. School restructuring is being undertaken in an increasing number of education systems throughout the world (Thomas, 2008). Uncertainty, tension and conflict often arise from turbulent policy environments created by restructuring. This generates problems and challenges for those involved. This is particularly true for school principals, who find themselves at the apex of complex sets of relationships between participants with divergent as well as convergent interests. Besides affecting the management and administration of schools, "restructuring" has commonly included reforms to the curriculum, teaching and learning. While a variety of motives underpin the restructuring process in different parts of the world, most seem to share in the common drives for efficiency, effectiveness and improvement in student learning and greater accountability. The process and outcome of restructuring features in the re-configuration of the roles and

relationships that exist among principals, teachers, parents and administrators and in the fundamental change of school cultures (Murphey & Beck 1895).

This restructuring has not escaped the Jamaican educational landscape. As a result the Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) was born to change governance structures, address the matter of equity, open the channel to community influence, hold school leaders more accountable and clarify standards for content delivery and introduce related changes to the curriculum. Leadership continues to be recognized as a complex enterprise, and as the studies assert, effective leaders are more than managers. They have vision, develop a shared vision, and value the contributions of their co-workers in the organization.

The Principalship

The role of the principal has become a prevalent topic of research and discourse. While, the Superintendent was the focus of most literature on educational administration during the 1960s (Blase & Blase, 1999), this began to change in the late 1960s. Ninety-four percent of studies on the topic of educational leadership from 1967 to 1980 focused on public school administrators (Bridges, 1982). Out of these studies, the school principal was researched more than the superintendent or any other school administrator.

Traditionally, the role involved tasks such as setting clear goals, allocating resources to instruction, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans and evaluating teachers.

Today, it includes much deeper involvement in the “core technology” of teaching and learning, carries more sophisticated views of professional development and emphasizes the use of data to make decisions (Quinn, 2002). The role of the principal, then, is a key factor of an effective school (Goodwin, Cunningham, & Childress, 2003;

Hallinger & Heck, 1996). The U.S. Department of Education (2000) in its report concretized the principal's importance by listing ineffective principals as one of the barriers to improving teaching. Research further shows that where school leadership is effective, school-based management displays a good mix of conceptual, human and technical skills. This means that the leaders in the school bring qualities of vision, intensity and creativity that complement their good management practice (Sergiovanni, 1989).

To fully understand how principals affect the instructional environment of schools it is imperative that one examines the context in which principals must function both within and outside of the school-with the community members and their interests as well as with teachers, students and other stakeholders. One must also comprehend that personal characteristics and beliefs also affect the principal's decision-making processes and his or her style of leadership.

A report released in 2003 by the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory in the United States (McREL) highlighted the importance of teachers and principals. The report was a compilation of thirty (30) years of research on characteristics of effective schools. Waters et al. (2004) conducted three separate meta-analyses. The first two concentrated on student characteristics, teacher and school practices in effective schools. The third analysis contained results indicating that leadership was an important component of an effective school (Waters et al., 2004). As noted above, principals are called on to collaborate with all stakeholders, share goals, develop strategies and be leaders for learning in order to promote growth and development within their institutions.

While Fullan (2001) articulated the need for a change in the role of principals, in Jamaican public schools the principal is still viewed as the most complex and contradictory figure in the pantheon of educational leadership. The principal is both the administrative director of state educational policy and building manager, both an advocate for school change and the protector of bureaucratic stability (Newman et al., 2013). Authorized to be employer, supervisor, professional figurehead, and inspirational leader, the principal's core training and identity is as a classroom teacher. A single person, in a single professional role, acts on a daily basis as the connecting link between a large bureaucratic system and the individual daily experiences of a large number of children and adults. Most contradictory of all, the principal has always been responsible for student learning, even as the position has become increasingly disconnected from the classroom (Dufour & Berkey, 1995).

The history of the principal offers even more contradictions. Contemporary principals work in the midst of unique modern challenges of ever-changing fiscal supports, school law and policy, community values, and youth culture. At the same time, the job of the contemporary principal shares many of the characteristics of their predecessors two centuries ago. While social and economic contexts have changed, the main role of the principal has remained essentially the same over time: to implement state educational policy to the school and to maneuver, buffer, and maintain the stability of the school culture at the local level (Lasway, 2003).

As education began to change in the 1980s, there was a new thrust toward standards and accountability. Providing the foundation for the evolution of the accountability movement, were key reports in the 1980s and 1990s that detailed the

dismal condition of education in the United States, thus the Commission of Excellence. According to information obtained at <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/G2KReforming/g2ch1.html>, “the education foundation of the society was being ended by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our society; our very future as a nation and a people.” These reforms have placed emphasis on holding educators accountable for students achieving high academic standards (Heck & Hallinger, 2005). In 1990, President George H. W. Bush issued the Report “National Goals for Education to guide the improvement of education in all state and local districts.” This paved the way for a nationwide commitment to standards-based educational reform. Principals came to have less to do with student learning and more to do with upholding administrative structures and responding to public pressures.

Subsequently, education reforms in the 1990s began to place stricter accountability measures for student achievement at the school level (Elmore, 2000; Lashway, 2003; Tschannen -Morgan, 2004). By the year 2000, all states in the United States of America had established new and more rigorous academic standards in four core subjects namely English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. The standards and accountability movement was made even more robust with the signing of the “No Child Left Behind” Act that was passed in 2002. This piece of legislation required students to achieve “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) in their test scores. Individual schools that failed AYP for two consecutive years would be subject to grave consequences including eventual closure. The NCLB Act, Shouppe and Pate (2010) opined, requires principals to have the requisite skills and knowledge to improve teacher instruction and student achievement. As the principalship evolved away from the

classroom to the administrative office, the principal became less connected with student learning, and yet more responsible for it. Isolated in the new principal's office, the role of school head changed from instructing students to supervising teachers of students. Further complicating the principal's role in the mid-20th century was that, as public education became more responsive to and reflective of the public, principals were swept up in changes initiated by state and federal governments, legal requirements, and the increasing demands of local communities.

The standards and accountability movement has increased the importance of the principal's role in school effectiveness as principals now assumed a greater degree of responsibility for students' achievement. Students' achievement is now the cornerstone of the success of principals, and teachers are a key factor in the area of student performance (Cotton, 2003; Cooley & Shen, 2005; Goodwin et al., 2003, Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Woods, 2002). Reforms associated with the standards and accountability movements bring tougher requirements for schools, which demand a strong principal who can guide transformations in instruction and empowerment. More than ever before, principals were now recognized as indispensable to the success of schools. Fullan (2005) stated that principals account for a quarter of a school's total impact on student learning. It is clear, then, that we all need principals who support effective teaching and learning. Alliz (2000) articulated this view by stating that "the old job of a principal as an administrative building manager is no longer sufficient to dramatically improve student achievement. The job has evolved into a highly complex and demanding position that requires strong instructional and leadership skills" (p. 17). Karakose (2008) in supporting this paradigm shift on the educational landscape attested to the importance of this

responsibility by enunciating that a principal's knowledge of effective practices in curriculum, instruction and assessment is necessary to provide guidance for teachers on the day-to-day tasks of teaching and learning.

Researchers at Stanford Educational Leadership Institute (2005) reviewed the literature on school leadership and reported that the three aspects of a principals' job that impact student learning include:

- Developing a deep understanding on how to support teaching;
- Managing the curriculum in ways that promote student learning;
- Developing the ability to transform schools into more effective organizations that foster powerful teaching and learning.

In addition, recent studies (Chance & Chance 2002; Dumas 2009; Moos, 1999), indicated that while students' year- to- year learning is determined by the effectiveness of their teachers, it is the principal who is best positioned to ensure successive years of quality that ultimately result in students' long term achievement. This is so as the principal can promote the success of students by advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to students learning and staff professional growth.

As a result, there has been a universal call for instructional leadership to be the way forward for effective school principals. Several associations both internationally and locally have redefined their standards for principals to emphasize the principals' role as instructional leaders. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) (2001), in defining the standards for principals, mandated that principals are to be leaders for learning. For example, in identifying standards of accreditation for

schools, the Virginia Standards of Accreditation (VSOA) defined the role of principal as an instructional leader who protects academic instructional time, monitors the quality of instruction, and works with teachers in developing strategies for intervention and remediation when students are not learning (VSOA, 2000). According to the Ministry of Education's Professional Development Unit (Jamaica), "the position of the school principal exists to provide leadership and expertise for the purpose of educating students in an ever-changing world." The principal also serves as the educational leader with the responsibility to manage the policies, regulations, and procedures of the educational institution for which he/she has responsibility, in order to ensure that all students are supervised in a safe learning environment that meets the Ministry's expectations. As such, the specific skills of the principal are wide ranging, incorporating, among other things, planning, instructional leadership, interpersonal skills and public relations, as well as resource officer and time manager.

I do agree that the principal is the chief instructional officer who must interface with the broadest cross-section of any community, gaining the insight and knowledge necessary to successfully guide the instructional process in any school. The principal is also one who acquires the competence to navigate the non-teaching elements of a school community; mastering these in such a way that teaching and learning are fully supported. These include business, environmental, and psycho-social elements. With this evolution in mind, the National Educational Inspectorate (2004) and The Education Transformation Program (2010) pointed to an alignment with this global trend. Consequently, in keeping with its overseas counterparts there was the creation of standards; a system focused on performance and results; accountability measures aimed at efficiency and cost-

effectiveness; as well as increased management responsibilities for principals. As Kimberly and Bouchikhi (1995) articulated, such reforms intensify principals' work and force them to channel their energies into new leadership roles which are critical to the success and effectiveness of our education system.

Duties of a Principal

As the nation seeks significant reforms in education through standards and accountability, it increasingly looks to the principals to lead the way. There is a general belief that good school principals are the cornerstones of good schools; as a result, principals are called upon to play numerous roles.

Manager

Being an effective building manager was once sufficient to be considered as an effective principal. Until recently, principals' jobs were quite clearly, although narrowly, defined. Essentially, principals served as building managers and student disciplinarians. Currently, principals are expected to do that and more. Traditional responsibilities of principals are still in force (Hamberman, 2003). However, higher expectations for student success have brought with them increased programming. In successfully implementing new programs, principals hire and supervise more people, enforce new policies, create new procedures, and provide support for the programs and all the associated auxiliary activities. Although programming has been expanding, responsibilities in other areas have not been reduced. In many cases, the resources principals need to provide the leadership and support expected has not been forthcoming. Other non-instructional responsibilities, such as greater professional accountability and increased expectations regarding home-school communication (Hargreaves, 2003), have contributed to the

complexity of the principalship. Concurrently, as considerable decision-making has decentralized to local schools, few clear guidelines are provided concerning which responsibilities will be the principals' and which will remain at the level of the Ministry of Education. All of these dynamics make the management component of the role ever more difficult.

Culture Builder

Principals are viewed as culture builders (Hallinger, 2005). Thus, they must promote conditions that foster collaboration, trust and care which are hallmarks of a healthy school culture. According to Zepeda (2004),

School culture is the set of norms, values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the “persona” of the school. These unwritten expectations build up over time as teachers, administrators, parents and students work together, solve problems deal with challenges, and at times, cope with failure. (p.10)

As school leaders, principal's influence and mold school culture in positive ways. Principals who are able to work with teachers, students and community members to create a commitment to common values and a bond between one another and the school, create successful school cultures.

Instructional Leaders

Over the past two decades, instructional leadership has been one of the most popular topics in educational leadership literature (Fullan, 2001). The term is used to describe a broad set of principal roles and responsibilities designed to address the workplace needs of successful teachers and to foster improved achievement among students. Over time, the importance of effective instructional leadership in the development of academically challenging programs has become well documented in the

literature (Hallinger, 2003; Heck & Hallinger, 2005; Leithwood, 1990; Schmoker, 2005). Effective principals provide leadership in instruction, coordinate instructional programs, and emphasize high academic standards and expectations. Principals as instructional leaders are expected to support teachers, focus on the main tasks of the school, and coordinate instructional programs.

Since the primary activity in schools is instruction, instructional leaders must be immersed in the curriculum, instruction and assessment in order to supervise a continuous improvement process that measures progress in raising student performance.

Transformation Agent

As the school leader, the principal plays a major role in implementing change (Scotti, 2001). Serving all students while helping them meet high standards requires most schools to change the way they think and work. Not doing so would prevent them from envisioning the future, enticing others to participate in making that vision a reality, and creating a climate for learning. Effective leaders recognize that this restructuring is the catalyst of progress. Successful principals also know that creating this culture of change requires commitment, hard work and significant time. Klump and Barton (2007, pp. 193-208) posited seven characteristics of a competent leader:

- Challenges the status quo;
- Builds trust through clear communication and expectations;
- Creates a commonly owned plan for success;
- Focuses on team over self;
- Has a sense of urgency for sustainable results;
- Commits to continuous improvement for self;

- Builds external networks and partnerships.

During periods of transition, principals need to be coaches and cheerleaders to foster the concept of schools as learning organizations (Nelson & Sassi, 2005). School leaders create the antecedent conditions that provide an atmosphere in which people have the opportunity to gain the knowledge necessary to influence classroom practice. When people learn in context, knowledge becomes specific and usable (Hatti, 1992). By identifying those who have knowledge and who can share best practices in context, principals provide opportunities for shared leadership and specific usable knowledge for the entire staff as well. Principals must act not only with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of students but also with an understanding of the change process. Because of changes, disquiet and contentious issues arise. People's reactions to change most often include fear, anxiety, loss and even panic-factors that lead to resistance. As principals attempt to reconcile diverse responsibilities within the context of increasingly critical constituencies, tensions arise. In addition, they must build learning communities within their schools and engage the broader school communities in creating and achieving a compelling vision for their schools. The balance between instructional leadership and management responsibilities presents ongoing challenges for school leaders. Effective principals are cognizant of these problems and will realize that goals will not be achieved until they are addressed.

Instructional leadership

This section reviewed literature about the principal's instructional leadership. It examined its history, different models purported by researchers, a paradigm shift in

instructional leadership along with a comparison of instructional leadership and other models of leadership.

The History of Instructional Leadership

People have long been interested in the work of managers, not to mention whether or not their work makes a difference (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). In the education field, this translates into an interest in whether or not those in leadership positions, and specifically principals (Hanson, 2001; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; 2010; Leithwood, 2001; Levacic et al., 1999), have an impact on student learning. Hence, the study of educational leadership has evolved over the course of the last century. The interest in instructional leadership has had historical roots extending back to the 1930s and 1940s. Around these times unrest was growing that educational management was not keeping up with the needs of the educational community (Bennis, 2003). These concerns grew until the 1950s, when a focus on the use of scientific principles and empirical information became the modus operandi of research (Heck & Hallinger, 2005) about educational management. The authors further stated that educational management was considered faulty, unimaginative, and out of step with community desires (p. 230). Early research on instructional leadership was drawn from studies such as Cohen and Miller (1980) and Murphy and Beck (1985). These studies included descriptions of principals who had managed to turn their schools around. The principals tended to be highly directive in their leadership styles, driving the school towards achievement of results-oriented academic mission. Description of these instructional leaders suggested that they had somehow managed to overcome the obstacles to put their institutions on a path to success.

The potency of interest in instructional leadership was demonstrated in the 1980's by the actions of the Federal government in the United States of America. Subsequent to the publication of the effective schools findings during the early 1980s, the American government commenced the establishment of a School Leadership Academy in every state. This extraordinary step, opined Marks and Printy, (2003), set the stage for state governments to assume the lead on educational matters. The Federal government's decision to support the development of school leadership assumed its validity from a growing belief that, for the first time, there was a credible knowledge base cementing the development of principal leadership (Bamburg & Andrews 1990; Barth, 2001; Bridges, 1982; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Purkey & Smith, 1983). Instructional leadership provides a theoretical framework for viewing the historic evolution of school leadership. This knowledge base drew largely from emerging research on the principal's instructional leadership in effective schools which provided a conceptual framework for the academics' leadership development curricula (Hallinger, 2009). The author further stated that "these academics explicitly fostered an image of strong, directive instructional leadership as the normative thrust for school leaders" (p. 3).

Initially, the construct caused consternation among practitioners and academics alike. In fact, the literature suggested that the field (professors of educational leadership and school administrators) initially rejected the idea of instructional leadership and thought of it more as the latest entry in a long list of designer-types of leadership—transformational leadership (Burns, 1978), credible leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 1993), quality leadership (Deming, 1997), creative leadership (Barrett, 1995), and situational leadership (Datnow, 2005). Emerging from this pendulum shift several models of

instructional leadership were developed that sought to allay these concerns and establish instructional leadership as a needed part of the whole.

Models of Instructional Leadership

Several notable models of instructional leadership evolved during the 1980s (Hallinger & Murphy 1985; Hallinger, 2005; Patterson & Patterson, 2004; Weber 1996) and have evolved during the past two decades. See Table 2 below.

Table 2. Models of Instructional Leadership

Hallinger and Murphy (1985)	Hallinger (2005)	Patterson& Patterson (2004)	Weber (1996)
Defining the school mission	Developing mission and goal	Providing a sense of vision to the school	Defining the school's mission
Managing the instructional program	Promoting quality instruction and monitoring student progress	Engaging in participatory management	Managing curriculum
Promoting a positive school climate	Creating an academic learning climate	Supporting instruction	Promoting a positive learning climate
	Developing a supportive work environment	Monitoring Instruction	Observing and improving instructions
		Facilitating the achievement of learning goals	Assessing the instructional program

As illustrated by Table 2, there are consistent elements most researchers agree on that are fundamental to improving the teaching and learning environment. Using

extensive research from the literature on effective schools Murphy (1990) redefined and elaborated on Hallinger and Murphy's model to include the creation of a learning climate. On the other hand, Patterson and Patterson (2004) recognized the importance of students learning as the ultimate outcome of instructional leadership while Weber (1996) concluded that even if an instructional leader were not the principal, such a leader was imperative. "The leaderless - team approach to a school's instructional program has a powerful appeal, but a large group of professionals still need a single point of contact and an active advocate for teaching and learning" (p. 254). This single point of contact is typically the school's principal.

While all four models are pertinent to an understanding of instructional leadership, this research focused on the model proposed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) since this model is the most visible one found in the literature. Hallinger and Murphy developed their model of instructional management based on two major sources: an extensive review of the literature on school effectiveness, and the examination of actual behaviors of elementary school principals. Hallinger and Murphy (1987) outlined the conceptual framework underlying Hallinger's 1984 PIMRS instrument. The framework consisted of three key dimensions of instructional leadership, the first of which was defining the school mission. Defining the school mission can be delineated into two leadership functions: framing and communicating the school's goals. These two functions relate to the principal's role in working with the staff to establish a mission that is focused on academic achievement. Although the principal does not unilaterally create the mission, his or her role is to ensure that the mission exists and is communicated effectively (Hallinger, 2008).

Sergiovanni (2004) cautioned that schools must be at the same time loosely and tightly coupled; that is they must have a clear sense of purpose and structure, yet allow for a great deal of freedom for staff and students. A successful principal must have a clear vision and goal for where his or her school needs to go, be able to convey that vision to all constituencies, and have the abilities necessary to assist the organization in achieving their goals (Harris, 2003; Lashway, 2003; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Marzano, 2005; Scotti, 2001; Smith & Andrews, 1989; Reeves, 2004; Waters & McNulty, 2005; Woods, 2002). Having vision that extends to the external environment is especially important during times that are characterized by rapid change. Many influences on schools come from outside the educational system, such as technology, demographics, and government policy (Hallinger & Heck, 2002). The authors noted that one mediating factor in particular consistently appeared in the various studies on instructional leadership, including their own, as being significant: establishing school goals. This finding was supported by Quinn's (2002) research which, through a comparative study of transformational and instructional leadership, identified five leadership dimensions that had a significant impact on students. They included: establishing goals and expectations, strategic resourcing, planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum, promoting and participating in teacher learning and development, and ensuring an orderly and supportive environment. Quinn defined establishing goals as "the setting, communicating and monitoring of learning goals, standards, and expectations, and the involvement of staff and others in the process so that there is clarity and consensus about goals" (p. 14). Instructional leaders define clear goals for their institution and personally coordinate efforts to realize students' success. As such, it is conclusive that instructional

leadership was built around terms such as goals, mission and vision (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990). These leaders must be hands - on and work directly with teachers in order to improve the teaching and learning process.

The second dimension “Managing the Instructional Program” focuses on the coordination and control of instruction (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). This dimension focuses on the coordination and control of instruction and the curriculum. It incorporates three leadership functions: Supervising and Evaluation Instruction, Coordinating the Curriculum and Monitoring Student progress. According to Hayden (2001), within this model of instructional leadership, managing the instructional program requires the principal to be deeply engaged in stimulating, supervising and monitoring teaching and learning in the school. This aspect of instructional leadership stipulates that the principal must possess the necessary instructional expertise in teaching and learning (Hayden 2001; Moos et al., 2008), as well as the other studies discussed (Barth, 2001; Harcher & Hyle, 1996; Harris, 2000; Hattie, 1992), provide significant evidence that instructional leadership impacts the technical core of schools. The influence that an instructional leader has on the teaching and learning is extensive. In-depth studies of teachers’ perceptions about characteristics of school principals who influence teachers’ classroom instruction have concluded that the behaviors associated with instructional leadership positively influence classroom instruction (Blase & Blase, 2000; Heck & Hallinger, 1992; Sheppard, 1996). Specifically, Blase and Blase’s (1999) findings indicated that when Instructional leaders were viewed as culture builders, they sought to create an “academic press” that fostered high expectations and standards for students as well as for

teachers. They modeled their high expectations and were loath to compromise high standards of learning for students (Hallinger et al., 1996; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

The third dimension - promoting a positive school learning climate - includes several functions: protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, developing high expectations and standards and providing incentives for learning (Hallinger, 2009). This element is broader in scope and purpose than the two other areas. It concretized the idea that effective institutions create “academic press” through the development of high standards and expectations for students” (p. 11).

Instructional leadership behaviors associated with promoting professional growth and staff development yield positive effects for classroom practice (Blase & Blase, 1999; Scotti, 2001). In particular, leaders should engage in behaviors that inform staff about current trends and issues, encourage attendance at workshops, seminars, and conferences, build a culture of collaboration and learning, promote coaching and use inquiry to drive staff development. Additionally, instructional leaders set professional growth goals with teachers, and provide resources that foster teacher innovation in using a variety of methods, materials, instructional strategies, reflective practice, and technology in the classroom to enhance the teaching and learning environment. In a bid to promote school-wide professional development, instructional leaders have to take on the role of teachers to those who they supervise. They need to facilitate lifelong learning by helping teachers to identify meaningful and relevant learning opportunities thus making them more effective in the classroom. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of increased student achievement (Bryman, 2007; Sheppard, 1996).

Leadership theories, such as trait, behavior, contingency, and charismatic, in addition to Hallinger and Heck's (1996) extensive review of the empirical research about the principal's role in school effectiveness, revealed that of the 22 original studies testing the direct effects of the principal on student achievement, six of them indicate a positive relationship; seven indicated a mixed effect and nine demonstrated no direct effect. Their review of 19 studies modeling a mediated variable between the principal and student achievement indicated 15 studies that showed a positive effect by the principal, two demonstrated mixed effect and two signified no effect. These findings support the need for a model of instructional leadership that works through a mediating variable, such as academic press, to affect student achievement.

Comparison of Instructional Leadership and Other Leadership Models

Transformational Leadership

The term "transformational leadership" was coined by Downtown (1973) and spurred by Burns' (1978) concept of transforming leadership. Jansen (2000) opined that transformational leadership is about building a unified common interest between leaders and followers. Transformational approaches are often contrasted with transactional leadership. Leithwood (1994, p. 17) conceptualized transformational leadership among four dimensions:

- Building school vision
- Establishing school goals
- Providing intellectual stimulation offering individualized support
- Modeling best practices and important organizational values

The transformational model is comprehensive in that it provides a normative approach to school leadership, which focuses primarily on the process by which leaders seek to influence school outcomes rather than on the nature or direction of those outcomes. It has been criticized as being a vehicle for control over teachers (Chirichello, 1999) and for having the potential to become ‘despotic’ because of its strong, heroic and charismatic features (Schmoker, 2005).

The contemporary policy climate within which schools have to operate also raises questions about the validity of the transformational model. The Jamaican system increasingly requires school leaders to adhere to strict guidelines which affect aims, curriculum and pedagogy, as well as values. Hence, while, transformational leadership has the potential to develop higher levels of motivation and commitment amongst stakeholders, it could be also regarded as manipulative.

Managerial Leadership

The notion of “managerial leadership” may appear to be a contradiction; nevertheless, it merits separate consideration because it serves to demonstrate that a narrow view of management is often adopted. “Managerial leadership assumes that the focus of leaders ought to be on functions, tasks and behaviors and that if these functions are carried out competently the work of others in the organization will be facilitated” (Thomas, 2008, p. 13). The reduction in the scope of management has arisen, in part, because governments in many countries, including the United Kingdom, have adopted this limited perspective in advancing their reform program (Levacic et al., 1999)

Contingent Leadership

All the models of leadership are partial. They provide valid and helpful insights into one particular aspect of leadership. The contingent model provides an alternative approach, recognizing the diverse nature of school contexts and the advantages of adapting leadership styles to the particular situation rather than adopting a ‘one size fits all’ stance.

This approach assumes that what is important is how leaders respond to the unique organizational circumstance or problems...there are wide variations in the contexts for leadership and that, to be effective, these contexts require different leadership responses...individuals providing leadership, typically those in formal positions of authority, are capable of mastering a large repertoire of leadership practices. Their influence will depend, in large measure, on such mastery. (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 15)

The three models above provided a starting point for a normative assessment of leadership in the 21st century.

- Transformational leadership has the potential to develop higher levels of motivation and commitment amongst stakeholders but could also be regarded as manipulative.
- Managerial leadership has been discredited as limited and technicist but it is an essential component of successful leadership, ensuring the implementation of the school’s vision and strategy.
- The contingent model outlines an approach that recognizes the significance of situational leadership, with principals and other senior leaders adapting their approach to the unique circumstances of the school.

An integrated model needs to start with a contingent approach because a specific vision for the school, a hallmark of the transformational model, cannot be independent of this context. Transformational leadership, then, provides the basis for articulating and working towards the vision. Instructional leadership is compatible with a transformational approach because it indicates, in broad terms, what the main priority of any learning organization ought to be. Managerial leadership remains important because it is necessary to ensure effective implementation of policies arising from the outcomes of the transformational process.

Controversy Surrounding Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership constitutes the principal behaviors to set high expectations and clear goals for student and teacher performance, monitor and provide feedback regarding the technical core (teaching and learning) of schools, provide and promote professional growth for all staff members, and help create and maintain a school climate of high academic press (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan & Lee, 1982; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). According to Lezotte, (1994), “instructional leadership is the most frequently mentioned educational concept in North America” (p. 17). Despite this, however, there is disagreement concerning the terms’ conceptualization and practices. A major reason for this discrepancy, posited Hallinger (2008), is “the absence of a clear definition of the concept” (p. 10). This lack of a concise definition is one of the weaknesses in the research on instructional leadership which leads to miscommunication and role conflict. The many definitions of instructional leadership required each principal and teacher to formulate, clarify, and communicate their own definitions.

The rise of the accountability movement at the turn of the 21st century gave rise to an increasing focus on learning outcomes of students. Fullan (2005) argues that this reform linked to standards and accountability was putting principals on pedestals, expecting them to pull off miracles that are virtually impossible. They further stated that “standards and accountability” are exceedingly weak strategies for driving reform. Instead, the authors call for a different view of instructional leadership, one that includes broader personnel practices and resource allocation practices as central to instructional improvement. Since this legislation, responsibilities for principals have burgeoned to the extent that some fear the job can no longer be done by one person, or perhaps only by a fictional super principal type (Dwyer, 1986). Lambert (2002) agreed and reported that “it has been a mistake to look to the principal alone for instructional leadership, when instructional leadership is everyone’s work” (p. 40).

This view was reinforced by Newman et al. (2000) who proposed that in order for learning to become the focus and primary value for every member, leadership is the job of the entire education community, and must be distributed—one of the latest in the list of designer-leadership types. Examples of this indecisive thinking are portrayed in research conducted by Harchar and Hyle (1996, p. 21), who reported that some administrators believe there is no such thing as instructional leadership, while other administrators embrace the concept and argue that the role of instructional leadership must be in place. Teachers in this same study provide evidence for the construct of instructional leadership in its absence. One elementary teacher said that her principal was not an instructional leader because he did not have experience at the elementary level. She claimed he was a good manager of people, but could not understand the

conversations that were occurring at the school level. Avila (1990) stated, “Unless teachers understand exactly what to expect from principals as ‘instructional leaders,’ each teacher will operate and evaluate under their own personal definition of instructional leader” (p. 52). Misunderstanding, resentment, disappointment, and actual disagreements may result when the individual definitions have not be clarified and communicated to all groups. Principal evaluations by superiors will hang upon the superior’s views of instructional leadership, and could twist evaluation of the principal’s actual performance. As a result, quality communication of the principal’s clear definition of instructional leadership and the tasks it demands remain essential (Avila, 1990).

The literature reveals that teachers directly influence students’ achievement. Thus, their perceptions, whether negative or positive, toward their principals could possibly influence their respect for and or motivation from their principal. This variable needs further research to fill the gap in the current literature in relation to teachers’ perception of their principal as instructional leaders.

Harchar and Hyle (1996) reported that key elements of instructional leadership included establishing vision, developing trust, fostering collaboration, and demanding respect for all the school community. However, Elmore (2000) argued that the “one size fits all” model was ineffective since

There is no litmus test for the presence of instructional leadership, nor is there a definitive list of its characteristics of behaviors. In places where instructional leadership truly exists, it becomes an integral, almost invisible, part of how a school community works, lives, and learns together. (p. 63)

While most would agree that instructional leadership is critical in the realisation of effective schools, it is seldom practised. For example, among the many tasks performed

by principals, only one-tenth of the time is devoted to providing instructional leadership (Stronge, 1988). Even today, school leaders continue to seek a balance in their role as manager-administrator and instructional leader. Interestingly, among the reasons cited for less emphasis given to instructional leadership is the lack of in-depth training for their role as an instructional leader, lack of time to execute instructional activities, increased paper work and the community's expectation that the principal's role is that of a manager (Elmore 2002; Fullan, 1991). Thus the image of instructional leadership has become embedded in professional pomposity but all too often is lacking in administrative practice.

A Paradigm Shift

At the turn of the 21st century, effective instructional leadership is viewed as a process whereby principals are expected to promote professional growth amongst their teaching staff (Hallinger, 2000). A good instructional leader will also encourage critical study of pedagogy and curriculum as well as encourage teachers to be self-reflective. Instructional leaders are visible in the school to teachers, students and parents. As well, these instructional leaders may visit classrooms, wander around the school (with a keen eye for what is going on), and yet not disrupt students' learning when they visit classrooms (Zepeda, 2004). Good instructional leaders praise effective teaching and encourage change when needed, rather than criticizing practices without providing support. Effective instructional leaders will find ways to extend autonomy to their teachers in a way that allows teachers to gain control over their professional responsibilities. This research which cemented the instructional leadership construct is defined in terms of principals' behaviors that lead a school to educate all students to high

student achievement. Researchers (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2001; Greenfield, 1991; Hallinger, 2008) defined instructional leadership through the traits, behaviors and processes a person needs to lead a school effectively.

More recently, in the current wave of accountability and standards, instructional leadership is front and center in the preparation and professional development of principals (Leithwood, 2001; National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2001; Sisman, 2004). State and national standards have been enacted and implemented in order to improve the quality of instruction geared towards propelling students' achievement through increased knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of school leaders.

In the current research, instructional leadership incorporates behaviors which define and communicate shared goals, monitor and provide feedback on the teaching and learning process, and promote school-wide professional development. Defining and communicating shared goals encompasses activities that focus attention to the technical core of schools (Shoupe & Pate, 2010). These goals increase the effort exerted by school members, increase persistence, and increase the development of strategies (Marshall & Kasten, 1994). Instructional leaders consistently make decisions with these goals in mind. The shared goals of a school foster group unity and help provide for a climate characterized by academic press, trust and commitment. Inherent in the concept of an instructional leader is the notion that learning should be given top priority, while everything else revolves around the enhancement of learning which undeniably is characteristic of any educational endeavor. Hence, to have credibility as an instructional leader, the principal should also be a practicing teacher. For example, in the United

Kingdom, most principals spend an average of twenty percent (20%) of their time each week on teaching (Kliene-Kracht, 1993). Instructional leaders need to know what is going on in the classroom; an opportunity 'to walk the factory floor'. Many a time, principals are not in touch with what is going on at the classroom level and are unable to appreciate some of the problems teachers and students encounter. The tendency is to address instructional issues from the perspective similar to that used when they were teachers. However, principals need to work closely with students, as well as, to develop teaching techniques and methods as a means of understanding teacher perspectives and of establishing a base on which to make curricular decisions. Also, a teaching principal strengthens the belief that "the sole purpose of the school is to serve the educational needs of students" (Hattie, 1998, p. 88).

Whitaker (1997, p.115) identified four skills essential for instructional leadership.

- First, they need to be a *resource provider*. It is not enough for principals to know the strengths and weaknesses of their faculty but also for them to recognize that teachers desire to be acknowledged and appreciated for a job well done.
- Secondly, they need to be an *instructional resource*. Teachers count on their principals as resources of information on current trends and effective instructional practices. Instructional leaders are tuned-in to issues relating to curriculum, effective pedagogical strategies and assessment.
- Thirdly, they need to be good *communicators*. Effective instructional leaders need to communicate essential beliefs regarding learning such as the conviction that all children can learn and no child should be left behind.
- Finally, they need to create a *visible presence*. Leading the instructional program of a school means a commitment to living and breathing a vision of success in teaching and learning. This includes focusing on learning objectives, modeling behaviors of learning, and designing programs and activities on instruction.

Hallinger (2005), in advocating a new shift in instructional leadership, identified two elements of instructional leadership that are crucial to the success of the principal in this century. Firstly, the author stated that teaching and learning must be the priority of all leaders. While leaders cannot neglect other duties, teaching and learning should be the area where most of the leaders' scheduled time ought to be allocated. Secondly, instructional leaders must be well informed of Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR) and effective instruction in order to assist in the selection and implementation of instructional materials and to monitor implementation. To achieve this feat in education, Mulford (2006) believes that the principal must lead towards educational achievement, must be a person who makes instructional quality the top priority of the school and must be able to bring that vision to realization. A strong instructional leader will consider how to provide the fine balance needed between support in terms of skill development via clear expectations and challenge. In order to grow professionally, some teachers need support and others need to have their ideas and strategies challenged in a more subtle way. It is the good instructional leaders who, thus, understand the give and take of spirited discussion (Duke, 1987). Blase and Blase (2000) found that in effective principal-teacher interaction about instruction, the result is inquiry, reflection, exploration, and experimentation. Teachers, therefore, build repertoires of flexible alternatives rather than rigid teaching procedures and methods when supported by an effective instructional leadership. In general, the literature points to the benefits of strong instructional leadership which is provided against a safe, trusting, and open organizational climate.

Gaps in the Literature

Since its initial introduction more than 30 years ago, instructional leadership is still a research topic of significance and relevance. In fact, recent movements within the Jamaican education system and in the Diaspora have led to a renewed interest in instructional leadership as the model of leadership to follow in Jamaican schools. Instructional leadership portrays the principal as the main source of instructional expertise. However, although instructional leadership is a popular leadership style, the concept is not well-defined (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). If instructional leadership is not well-defined then it may be hard to predict which variable may have a positive effect on a principal's role as an instructional leader. This creates a gap in the literature and gives credence to further research in this area.

School leadership is second only to classroom instruction by teachers as an influence on students' achievement (Taylor & Tashakkori, 1994). Teachers directly influence students' achievement. Their perceptions, whether negative or positive of their principals, could possibly influence their respect for and or desire to take instructional advice from their principals. As a result, this area requires further research to fill the gap in the current literature in relation to teachers' perception of principals as instructional leaders.

Lastly, in reviewing the literature, I was only able to locate two published studies on the topic of instructional leadership in the Jamaican context. The apparent paucity of research in this area means that the contribution of the instructional leadership role of the principals to school effectiveness remains uncertain in Jamaican schools. Given that the literature reveals the pivotal role that principals play in student achievement; the

principal's perception of him/herself and those of his/her teachers relating to instructional leadership are crucial in gaining a clearer understanding of the topic. Hence, this study attempted to shed some needed light in this area. Additionally, it is hoped that my presence will provide support or critique of the existing literature on school leadership.

Summary

This chapter reviewed relevant literature on educational leadership and identified key responsibilities and expectations for the principalship. Literature on instructional leadership was also examined to determine what it means to be an instructional leader; what instructional leaders do differently from other principals; how they spend their time; how they shape the cultures of schools and how they work with, and develop, other leaders in the school they lead.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY and PROCEDURE

The spotlight of educational leadership is on instructional leadership. As pressure for improving student performance in the current standards-based accountability environment mounts and examination results are increasingly scrutinized, school principals are being urged to focus their efforts on the core business of schooling- that is teaching and learning. This study, through an analysis of questionnaires and in-depth interviews, investigated the perceptions of selected primary school principals in Manchester, Jamaica in relation to their role as instructional leaders. This chapter was guided by the four major research questions mentioned earlier, namely:

1. To what extent do principals in selected primary schools engage in tasks that constitute instructional leadership?
2. What is the nature of the tasks, relating to instructional leadership, in which the principals engage?
3. What are some of the activities mitigating the effectiveness of the principal in executing his/her role as an instructional leader?
4. In what ways does the school benefit from the role of the principal as an instructional leader?

These four questions provided an appropriate framework for the design of the interview schedule, the collecting and analysis of the data, and the reporting and discussion of the findings.

Rationale for Qualitative Design

A research design is the logic that links data to be collected to the guiding questions of a study and ultimately to its conclusion (Yin, 1994). “ The design of all research requires conceptual organization, ideas to express needed understanding, conceptual bridges from what is known, cognitive structures to guide data gathering, outlines for presenting interpretations to others” (Stake, 1995, p. 15) . Research is a search for patterns, for consistencies. “Good research is not about good methods as much as it is about good thinking” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 19). “The choice of research practices depends upon the questions that are asked, and the questions depend on their context” (Patton, 1997, p. 2), what is available to the researcher, and what the researcher is able to do in that particular setting.

Both quantitative and qualitative research depends on the researcher’s interpretations of the data collected. Each has distinct characteristics that limit their applicability to specific data collected studies (Stake, 1995). Yin (1994) found that the differences between the two methodologies lie in what they emphasize. The purpose of inquiry for quantitative research is to explain and control data, whereas qualitative research seeks to understand the complex interrelationships that exists (Yin, 1994). Quantitative researchers take on an objective, impersonal role while qualitative researchers assume a more connected, personal role to their research projects (Charles, 1995). Quantitative inquiry is more concerned with discovering knowledge than qualitative inquiry which examines how knowledge is construed (Stake, 1995).

On the other hand, qualitative research is based upon developing “an understanding of individuals and events in their natural state, taking into account the

relevant context” (Borg, Gall, & Gall, 1993, p. 194). The goal of qualitative research is to better understand human behavior and experience. Qualitative research procedures are characterized by intense contact with the subject and also lend themselves to the establishment of a trusting relationship. By establishing “trustworthiness” (Creswell, 2005), the researcher increases the rigor of the study and further increases understanding of the phenomena being studied. Data analysis is often ongoing. Models, themes and concepts emerge from collected data and are used to prompt further data collection and analysis (Issacs & Micheal, 1981). This study is qualitative in nature because of its ability to garner in-depth information about specific issues among a small group. Through this medium, I unearthed “rich” data on the participants’ perception of instructional leadership. Additionally, through this avenue I was able to comprehend the process by which the principals’ daily operations affect their practice on the phenomenon being studied. A qualitative study assists in an understanding of how the events, actions and meanings are shaped by the unique circumstances in which they occur. A qualitative study also affords the opportunity for me to analyze the patterns across the participants being studied; in addition, it allowed me to describe common threads that exist across the schools in rich, thick narrative.

The data for the study were gathered from principals in the natural setting of their principalship; what Lincoln and Guba (1985) call a naturalistic inquiry, others call a phenomenological approach (Borg & Gall, 1989). Borg and Gall (1989) elaborated on the value of such an approach. The approach allows the researcher to develop an understanding of individuals and events in their natural state, taking into account the relevant context (p. 194). It is based on an appreciation for the uniqueness of each

individual and the settings in which they live and work. This ‘phenomenological reality’ (p. 194) is particularly relevant when researchers want to examine and understand a program or event from “the perspective of the participants” (p. 195).

A four step data collection process was utilized for this study. Each step was designed to gather information regarding how the work requirements of the principalship affect the instructional leadership role of principals.

Step 1 - Identify Principals - Five principals were interviewed and shared their personal experiences on the principalship. Despite the fact that generalizations are limited with this type of research, the personal backgrounds of each principal were quite different.

Step 2 - Questionnaires - I used self-administered questionnaires to obtain the principals’ and teachers’ views on the topic being investigated. A mixture of dichotomous and semi-open-ended questions was also used.

Step 3 - Focused Interview with each principal - I engaged in a standardized open-ended interview session in order to get direct responses from the persons involved. All interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants and varied from one hour to one hour and ten minutes. Each interview allowed me to elicit information from the respondents regarding their instructional leadership. I did not rigidly adhere to an interview guide or force respondent compliance. Priority was given to the dynamic and spontaneous nature of each interview and to the development of a trusting relationship between the respondent and me.

Step 4 - Observation - This was used so that I was able to see first-hand the tasks that principals engage in on a daily basis. The observation took place over a three month

period. I wrote field notes in conjunction with the interviews. Also, I gleaned more information from interacting with the participants outside of the office setting. In addition to the interviews, I gathered data throughout the study, such as comments from other administrators. Other data were gathered throughout the study of the literature reviews. The data gathered were analyzed using the multiple factor analysis and a thematic approach.

Methodology

I used a multiple case study approach to examine how the work requirements of the principalship affect the instructional leadership role of the principals. A case study is one form of qualitative research that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and when multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 2003). Case studies provide a detailed examination of a single person, group, institution, social movement, or event. Methods used in case studies are “naturalistic, qualitative, descriptive, responsive and interpretative” (Stake, 1995, p. 10). The aim of the typical case study is to show how during a restricted period of time people interact and relate to their physical and social environments (Stake, 1995).

No two individuals experience socialization exactly the same way. Human beings are complex and their lives are ever changing; the more methods we use to study them, the better our chances are to gain an understanding of how they construct their lives and the stories they tell about them (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each case reflected the subject’s own social history and an individual perspective on the world. Therein lies the dilemma regarding generalizability. Some of the limitations of case study research are:

- Because of their narrow focus on a few units, case studies are limited in their representativeness. They do not allow valid generalizations to the population from their units until the appropriate follow-up research are accomplished.
- Case studies are particularly vulnerable to subjective biases. The case itself may be selected because of its dramatic, rather than typical attributes, or because it neatly fits the researcher's preconceptions. (Isaac & Michael, 1991, p. 48)

“The real business of case study is particularization, not generalization. We take a particular case and come to know it well, not primarily as how it is different from others, but what it is, what it does” (Stake, 1995, p. 8).

While studies such as this particular investigation provide valuable insights into the thinking of the subjects, they are limited in the ability to make generalizations based on their findings. Findings are very context specific, reflecting the unique orientations of the subjects.

Role of the Researcher

According to Stake (1995), “the case researcher plays different roles and has options as how they will be played” (p. 91). These roles include the researcher as teacher, advocate, evaluator, biographer and interpreter. While all are important for gaining understanding, Stake defined the role of interpretation and the gathering of various interpretations, as central to the purpose of the researcher. The emphasis on interpretation is based on the various ways humans construct their understanding of the world based on an array of life experiences and cultural predispositions (pp. 91-100).

Although life may sometimes imitate art, it rarely has the narrative structure of good stories (Yin, 2003). Case studies, even those solidly grounded in real events, have a logic and rationality that would be absent in real life.

Regardless of the specific analytic strategy chosen Yin (2003) identified four steps that provide the foundation for high quality case analysis. The first step for the researcher in case analysis is to make sense of an uncertain situation, to set the problem (Stake, 1995). Identification of a problem is a window to the values and commitments of the central character (Patton, 1987), and at the same time, to the values and beliefs of the researcher.

The second step for the researcher in case analysis is to identify the implicit assumptions of the central character (Yin, 2003). Assumptions may be defined as rules of thumb, commonsense beliefs, or conventional wisdom (Stake, 1995). The next step is to identify the options. According to Patton (1997), the researcher should “cast a wide net and include creative options unconstrained by bureaucratic rules and political, practical and fiscal limitation” (p. 28). During the final step, the researcher should select a preferred option that identifies what the actions the central character should take or what alternative actions the central characters have taken (Yin, 2003). The options taken and the options recommended reflect personal values and assumption. Heath and Street (2008) summarized the possibilities for the researcher: “Cases provide opportunities for inquiry...bounded by experience, framed by theory, generating possibilities, and transforming practice” (p. 721).

The role of the researcher as the primary data collection personnel in qualitative research necessitates the identification of personal values, assumptions and biases at the onset of the study. The investigator’s contribution to the research setting can be useful and positive rather than detrimental. I have been an educator for over 13 years and have held various positions in the education system both locally and regionally. These include

classroom teacher, Head of Department and my current roles of Literacy Coordinator and Grade Supervisor. I have also understudied one primary school principal during my internship. I have a master's degree in education with emphasis in supervision. I believe that my understanding of the context enhanced my awareness, knowledge and sensitivity to many issues in the education system. Additionally, I have a vested interest in education, especially in the area of student achievement and this was communicated to the participants prior to the interview. Every effort was made to ensure objectivity; however, these biases may have shaped the way I view and understand the data.

Data Collection Instruments

A variety of methods may be utilized for data collection in a case study. Yin (2003) identified six different sources of information. These sources include “documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts” (p. 84). A multiple case study approach was selected for gathering data (Stake, 1995) in order to examine the multiple perspectives that principals have of their experiences. The data sources were inclusive of principal questionnaires and interviews, as well as teachers' questionnaires.

Interviews are considered one of the most important sources of information for case studies (Yin, 2003). Three types of interviews are often included in case study methodology: open-ended, focused and structured. Open-ended interviews provide the opportunity for greater interaction with the respondent and allow the respondents to enunciate their own insights into the issue being investigated (Isaacs & Michael, 1981). Focused interviews, which were used in this study, also serve an important function in case study research. They provide an opportunity for the researcher to corroborate certain

facts that have already emerged from the documentation. The role of the researcher is to ask specific questions which, when carefully worded, invite respondents to provide their own new unique perspective on the topic (Yin, 2003). An affinity connection between the interviewer and the interviewee that results from a level of trust allows “the person speaking to feel less threatened and makes them more vulnerable to tell you more” (Stake, 1995, p.105). There is inherent faith that the results of the interview are trustworthy and accurate and, further that the relationship emerging between the interviewer and the respondent in the interview process has not unduly biased the data (Yin, 2004).

The purpose of the interview was to acquire a general understanding of the range of perspectives on the role of the principal and how the work requirements affect each principal’s instructional leadership role. Five principals were interviewed and all interviews were conducted face-to-face and took place in the principals’ office. They were taped and later transcribed and analyzed for commonalities in language, themes and perceptions. An interview protocol was established to ensure consistency in the process and to “make sure that essentially the same information was obtained from a number of people by covering the same material” (Patton, 1987, p. 11). Neither rigid adherence to an interview guide (Appendix A) nor forced respondent compliance was utilized. An important part of the interview process was to allow the principals an opportunity to talk freely about their experiences. Priority was given to the dynamic and spontaneous nature of each interview and to the development of a trusting relationship between the respondent and researcher (Yin, 2003). Following the interviews, each subject received a

transcript of the interview with a request to modify the transcript in order to ensure that their perceptions were recorded as accurately as possible.

In addition to the interview, other tools were utilized to collect data. A questionnaire (Appendix B) was adapted from the Instructional rating Scale Questionnaire by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) and aspects of instructional leadership skills identified by Weber (1997) under each of the five major functions of instructional leadership. The contents were adapted to fit the Jamaican context. A pilot test was also handed out to selected primary school principals. Responses from the pilot test enabled me to refine data collection plans with respect to both the content of the data and the procedures to be followed.

The questionnaire comprised two parts. The first sought data about the respondents' personal particulars: age, sex/gender, and position in the school, number of years of teaching, highest level of qualifications achieved, name and location of the school.

The second part contained a set of actions that described instructional leadership tasks. The tasks were grouped into five categories as defined by Weber (1997):

1. Defining and communicating the school mission;
2. Managing the curriculum and instruction;
3. Promoting a positive climate;
4. Observing and providing feedback; and
5. Assessing the instructional program.

In these questionnaires, respondents were asked to indicate on a scale of one to five the extent to which the principal undertook each of the tasks at the time of responding. The

five-point rating scale resembled that used by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). The questionnaires were completed by two sets of respondents- the principals and some teachers.

Population and Sample

I employed the purposeful sampling technique for this study. The greatest concern with purposeful sampling is that the results cannot be generalized to the entire population. However, Yin (2004), however, supported the use of purposeful sampling, asserting that the participants' experiences may be distinctive or unique. The focal groups comprising the sample of the study included five principals from selected primary schools in Manchester, five vice- principals and five junior teachers from each school. The vice-principals were selected since they reported directly to the principal. The junior teachers were chosen since they report to the vice-principals. The schools selected for this study were based on geographic manageability for me since the study required me to make frequent visits to meet with the principals. Therefore, it was critical that the principals are easily accessible to me.

The interview protocol items were generated from the four research questions which guided this study. The interview protocol consisted solely of open-ended questions, because I wanted to give participants the opportunity to give their thoughts in their own expressions. This was also done so that I would have the opportunity to observe facial expressions as the participants responded to questions, as well as to detect any underlying or unspoken meanings contained in the responses given. The questionnaires were administered to the teachers to ascertain whether those who report to the principal agree with his/her perception of the leadership style demonstrated in the school.

In order to allow for meaningful analysis of the data generated from the subject responses, particular interview items were designed to yield data in support of the four major research questions. Table 3 below illustrates the interview items and the purposes for which they were designed.

Table 3. Purpose of Interview Questions

Interview Items	Purpose
1	To collect demographic data.
2,3,6,9,10,13,15,16,23	To assess the degree to which principals are involved in tasks relating to instructional leadership.
4,5,11,12,14,18,19,20,22	To ascertain the nature of the tasks in which principals engage that are directly related to instructional leadership.
7,8,25,26	To establish an understanding of factors that hinder principals from engaging in tasks that constitute instructional leadership.
17,24,21	Will generate information about the benefits that schools will derive from the principal's role as an instructional leader.

Table 3 illustrates the items on the interview protocol and their alignment with the four major research questions. In addition, to provide for a more meaningful analysis of the data, the alignment allowed for a more meaningful comparative discussion of the findings.

Table 4. Alignment of the Items on the Interview Protocol

Research Questions	Principal's Interview Protocol Items
R.Q. #1 – To what extent do principals in selected primary schools engage in tasks that constitutes instructional leadership?	2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 13, 16, 23
R.Q. #2- What is the nature of the tasks relating to instructional leadership in which the principals engage?	4, 5, 11, 12, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22
R.Q. #3. What are some of the activities mitigating against the principal in executing his role as an instructional leader?	7, 8, 25, 26
R.Q. #4. In what ways does the school benefit from the role of the principal as an instructional leader?	15, 17, 24

Procedures in Administering the Methodology

Descriptive Survey Questionnaires

First, the descriptive survey questionnaires were administered to the principals and the selected teachers in each institution. I allowed each respondent one week to complete the questionnaires. I collected the questionnaires from all schools.

Semi-structured Interviews

To crosscheck the interim findings from the survey questionnaires, I conducted follow-up interviews with respondents in all schools to ascertain the reasons why the instructional leadership behavior of the principal was identified by the respondent in the questionnaire. This helped me to establish how and why instructional leadership tasks were performed

by the principal, and to identify which of the other staff members shared this responsibility.

Non-participants Observation

Permission was sought from the principals for me to stay in each school for two additional days to observe the principal at work. This was to re-affirm the validity of the responses received from the survey questionnaires and the follow-up interviews.

Summary notes were written of the daily activities of what happened during the day when the informal observations were conducted.

As non-participant observer I was afforded the opportunity to record behavior as it occurred within the school system. It also allowed me to record the behavior of the principals and teachers who were unwilling or unable to describe it verbally.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involves reconciling reality with inferences that are subsequently confirmed in the process of inquiry (Creswell, 2005). In conducting research, it is imperative for researchers to be responsive and impartial to the data during analysis. As Isaacs and Michael (1981) pointed out, researchers must see what is there and not what they expect to be there. Researchers also need to remain cognizant of their biases and not allow speculations to influence the findings. The researcher should also be explicit in how the data are analyzed. The data presented and analyzed in this chapter were organized in accordance with the four research questions which guided the study. More specifically, the data emerging from the items on the interview schedule and questionnaire were graphically presented and attributed to the particular research questions with which they have been aligned in Table 4 above.

The analysis of the data was undertaken bearing in mind the research questions designed for this study. The analysis was completed based on my definition of what was considered satisfactory performance or unsatisfactory performance of tasks that constitute instructional leadership. The procedures that were used for analysis were primarily descriptive. For the questionnaire, the data obtained from the responses to specific tasks were analyzed using the descriptive statistical procedures. For the semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation, field notes were analyzed using content analysis techniques. According to Yin (2003), content analysis is the “longest established method of text analysis among the set of empirical methods of social investigation” (p. 13). Lincoln and Guba (1980) viewed content analysis as one of the “major coding forces the researcher use to make judgments about meanings”. They further stated that “coding is the heart of (whole) text analysis” (p. 9).

The analysis for this study was largely derived from the two questionnaires, the interviews and the observation notes. Each of the interviews was transcribed, and a tally of key words or phrases was obtained. This analysis assisted me in focusing subsequent data on these descriptors,. Charles (1995) suggested a four – step approach for analyzing case study information. I utilized these steps to: identify topics; cluster topics into categories; form categories into patterns; and, develop conclusions based upon the patterns. The comparison and analysis of survey, interview and journal data was ongoing. Through ongoing interaction with the data, additional categories were developed and defined. Developing codes were analyzed to determine how the data relate to each other. I checked for alternative explanations and negative evidence (Creswell,

2005) and compared the results with the existing literature. Creative use of ‘member checking’, - submitting drafts for review by data sources- was also employed.

Methods of Verification

The first test for judging the quality of a research design is construct validity. Yin (2003) suggested three tactics for case-study research, which address this test. They included use of multiple sources of evidence, establishing a chain of evidence and having key informants review drafts of the case study report. I utilized all three approaches. Multiple sources of information were gathered from surveys, focused interviews, review of data and other artifacts. Each data source was charted and tracked. A coding schema established a chain of evidence. Upon completion of preliminary findings I asked respondents to review the findings and comment on their appropriateness.

The second criterion for judging the quality of research design is internal validity. This criterion involves establishing a causal relationship showing that certain conditions lead to other conditions. Yin (2003) suggested that pattern matching and explanation building are two strategies, which assure internal validity of case study design. I looked for causality in the work requirements of the principalship affecting the instructional leadership of the five principals. Quotations were taken directly from the data in order to corroborate, illustrate, and support the explanations of the findings. In addition, information was generated from minutes of meetings, the principals’ logs, along with documents from the Ministry of Education.

The third test of the quality of a research design involves “knowing whether a study’s findings are generalizable beyond the immediate case study” (Yin, 2003, p. 35). This study investigated the influence of work requirements of five principals on their

instructional leadership role. There are specific limitations in the study's ability to be generalized to other principals.

The fourth test of the quality of a research design is reliability. Reliability is defined as “demonstrating that the operations of a study- such as data collection procedures-can be repeated, with the same results’ (Stake, 1995, p. 8). The goal of reliability is to minimize the errors and biases in a study. Yin (2003) suggested the development of a case several strategies study protocol and a case study database.

Several strategies were suggested for analysis of data during a case study. They included writing and keeping memos to oneself or keeping a reflective field log (Charles, 1995); preparation of analytic files organized by generic category such as title, introduction, conclusion, quotation (Yin, 2003); and use of coding systems to organize information (Charles, 1995). For this study, sources of information were charted and coded. I analyzed the transcribed interviews and a tally of key words or phrases was obtained. The analysis assisted me in focusing subsequent data analysis on these descriptors.

In addition, respondent validation was done to ensure that I captured accurate data. During the interview I used segues to ensure that all pertinent areas were covered and the respondents' responses are accurately documented. In addition, I worked assiduously with my Chair in refining the coding process thus ensuring that all threats to the validity of my study were minimized.

Pilot Testing of Data Collecting Instruments

According to Borg and Gall (1989) preliminary trial measures and techniques are essential to the refinement and improvement of the research instruments and by extension

the research design. In their views, pilot testing provides the feedback that will greatly enhance the validity and reliability of the research measures. In this study, the interview and questionnaire items were pilot tested on a comparable group of five principals and ten teachers outside of the focal group of individual comprising the sample. Feedback from the pilot testing of the items on the interview schedule and questionnaires was applied in revising the instruments.

Ethical Issues

Ethics concerns the morality of human conduct and refers to the moral deliberation, choice and accountability on the part of the researcher throughout the research process (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Whenever research involves human subjects there is potential for harm and thus ethical considerations must be addressed. In order to follow the specific procedures for observing Temple University ethical conduct for research involving humans, the following steps were followed. I abided by the parameters set by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) on human subjects. In addition, I gained informed consent from all persons involved in the study by fully disclosing the nature and purpose of my study and formally soliciting their volunteerism. I also protected the privacy and confidentiality of the participants by using pseudonyms to protect their identity. Information gained from one from participant was not shared with the other. Finally, data gathered were safely secured and access shall only be available to me.

Summary

It is generally assumed that principals must be knowledgeable of the instructional programs in order to affect change in students' behavior and instructional strategies. As a

result, they exhibit exemplary leadership in order to change the educational status quo to achieve high standards of learning for all students. Multiple studies have found that school leaders tend to use a common set of practices to affect student learning, including setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the teaching and learning program (Dumas, 2009; Leithwood & Riehl, 2005; Waters et al., 2003). Harris (2002) wrote that the specificity of the educational organization requires leadership activity that is unique from other organizations where leadership occurs. Instructional leadership is one such means of affecting this change in the education system as principals will be the driving force in setting clear goals and managing the curriculum thereby making the business of teaching and learning top priority.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

As indicated earlier, this is a qualitative study designed to investigate how principals and selected staff members perceive the role of the principal as an instructional leader. More specifically, was there any divergence between the perceptions of the teachers and that of the principals. The focal group comprising the sample from five rural primary schools involved five principals, five vice-principals and twenty-five classroom teachers. As stated previously, the following research questions informed this study:

- (a) To what extent do principals in selected primary schools engage in tasks that constitute instructional leadership?
- (b) What is the nature of the tasks relating to instructional leadership in which the principals engage?
- (c) What are some of the activities mitigating the effectiveness of the principal in executing his/her role as an instructional leader?
- (d) In what ways does the school benefit from the role of the principal as an instructional leader?

Table 5 below presents a demographic summary of the composition of the sample according to variables relating to teaching experience, qualifications, age and gender.

Table 5. Demographic Summary

	Average Years of Experience	Masters	Bachelors	Females	Males	Average Age
Principals	35	3	2	3	2	52
Vice-Principals	40	3	2	4	1	45
Teachers	15	1	24	20	5	30

Findings from the Questionnaires, Interviews
and Non-participant Observations

The overall findings are presented below. Quotations derived from the semi-structured interviews are used to justify the findings. The Likert scale was used to ascertain the respondents' views on the topic under investigation. The terms "never" and "seldom" represented unsatisfactory while "sometimes, frequently" and "always" represented satisfactory. In addition, the mean for each question using a "1" to "5" scale was also computed to provide additional information on how the respondents answered the questions.

In defining and communicating academic goals, the principals were generally rated as having an unsatisfactory performance. Six tasks were identified under this function. Table 6 shows the overall results of the total responses for each task from the teachers' questionnaires. The results of Tasks 1, 2, 3, 4 indicate that there was a slight negative difference in ratings. However, there was a marked negative response to Tasks 5 and 6.

Table 6. Defining and Communicating School Goals

Task		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Mean
1. Developing academic goals that seek improvement over current levels of academic performance	Principals	0	0	0	2	3	4.60
	Vice-Principal	0	2	1	1	1	3.20
	Teachers	5	10	3	4	3	2.60
2. Developing school's academic goals in terms of staff responsibilities and meeting targets.	Principals	0	0	0	1	4	4.80
	Vice-Principals	0	2	1	2	0	3.00
	Teachers	8	5	7	5	0	2.36
3. Use needs assessment to secure staff and community input on school's academic goal development.	Principals	0	1	0	3	1	3.80
	Vice-Principals	0	3	1	1	0	2.60
	Teachers	5	10	8	2	0	2.28
4. Use data on student's performance when developing school goals	Principals	1	1	1	2	0	2.80
	Vice-Principals	1	1	2	1	0	2.60
	Teachers	7	9	5	4	0	2.24
5. Develop academic goals that are easily translated into classroom goals	Principals	0	0	0	2	3	4.60
	Vice-Principals	0	3	2	0	0	2.40
	Teachers	4	9	12	0	0	2.32

Table 6. (continued)

Task		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Mean
6. communicate the school's academic goals to teachers, students and parents at school	Principals	0	2	0	1	2	3.60
	Vice-Principal	0	2	1	1	1	3.20
	Teachers	10	13	2	0	0	1.68
7. Ensure that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school.	Principals	1	1	2	1	0	2.60
	Vice-Principals	1	3	0	1	0	2.20
	Teachers	15	5	3	2	0	1.68

In the development of academic goals for the schools, this study found that three of the five principals developed academic goals in isolation. Academic goals were mainly aimed at improving academic performances of students in grades 1, 3 and 6 and were not aimed at all the grades in the schools. It was evident from data gathered in the interviews that coaching students to pass the national examinations (Grade 1 mastery test, Grade 3 Diagnostic and Grade Six Achievement Test) was more emphasized than the provision for the entire student body to gain a well-balanced, quality education. The views of two principals highlighted the concentration on these grades.

As you know schools are judged on how well students perform in the national examinations. Our academic goal is to get our students in grades 1, 3, and 6 to pass the national examinations. In order to do this we have pull-out groups that cater to the students who are underperforming at these grade levels. The students at the grade 6 level are even more critical as they have to make the transition to high school. The number of passes

to traditional high schools will determine how the Ministry of Education and the community at large view the school (Principal A, School A)
In the past we've been working on a goal that strives for improvement from the previous results. Unfortunately, some of the programs haven't met these targets. For the new academic year, we will be revisiting these areas to see how best we can improve the results of the students in grade 6. (Principal B, School B).

Data emerging from the interview schedule revealed that only senior teachers were asked their opinions, but that of the teaching staff and non-teaching staff, students' and parents' inputs into what the academic goals of the school should be, were not sought. This is what one principal had to say:

The idea of improving our grade 6 results and to improve the overall tone of discipline in the school was not an idea from my own office. It was the Senior Management Team that sat and looked and what we can improve and do. (Principal 3, School C)

Approximately eighty-five percent of the teachers interviewed expressed uncertainty in identifying the school's academic goals when asked to do so. The following are representative samples of these responses:

...I'm not too sure, but sometimes from the things she does, it shows that there is academic goals. Somewhere along those lines. (Classroom teacher, School A)

Well, at the moment I have no idea what these academic goals are. (Classroom teacher, School B)

Well, since the beginning of the year, I think there are no set goals. That happened last year with the last principal. I guess we are still using those. (Classroom teacher, School C)

These data suggest that a vigorous needs analysis was typically not completed in the development of academic goals. Additionally, in the five schools that I visited there was only one school that had its academic goals visibly displayed in the school to emphasize their importance. This is what one teacher had to say:

Academic goals should be visible on display boards. I have not seen this happening at my school. (Subject Teacher, School 2)

Altogether, an overall assessment summary of this function would seem to indicate that defining and communicating the school's academic goals was performed by the principals to some extent. However, it appeared to be the majority view that this role was not satisfactorily executed.

In managing the curriculum and instruction, the principals were also rated as having an unsatisfactory performance. Six tasks were identified under this function. Table 7 shows the overall results of the total responses for each task from the questionnaire (see appendix). The results indicate that six out of the six tasks were rated as unsatisfactory.

From the principal's interview schedule, I found that this particular task was always delegated to the senior subject heads. The delegation of this task to senior staff members has now become a tradition that has been handed down over the years with the principal acting as the overseer. This is what one principal had to say when asked to explain why this task was delegated to the senior subject head:

My work load is so much. As I had explained previously I don't have a secretary. I have to do all the other paper work, in addition, to teaching classes. Most of the curriculum monitoring is done by Mrs. Brown. I only come in if she is having difficulty. You have met her so you know she is more than capable of managing this responsibility. (Principal 1, School A)

Table 7. Managing the Curriculum and Instruction

Task		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Mean
1. Ensure that the classroom objectives of the teachers are consistent with the stated goals of the school.	Principals	0	0	0	0	5	5.00
	Vice-Principals	0	1	0	2	2	4.00
	Teachers	7	9	2	5	2	2.44
2. Meet with teachers to identify curriculum or learning goals.	Principals	0	0	0	3	2	4.40
	Vice-Principals	1	1	2	1	0	2.60
	Teachers	5	10	5	4	1	2.44
3. Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction.	Principals	2	2	1	0	0	1.80
	Vice-Principals	3	1	1	0	0	1.60
	Teachers	8	12	5	0	0	1.88
4. Evaluate teachers on academic objectives directly related to the approved national curriculum.	Principals	0	0	1	2	2	4.20
	Vice-Principals	0	3	1	1	0	2.60
	Teachers	5	13	4	3	0	2.20
5. Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels.	Principals	0	0	0	2	3	4.60
	Vice-Principals	0	0	0	3	2	4.40
	Teachers	0	5	0	11	9	3.96
6. Participate actively in the review or selection of curriculum materials	Principals	0	1	1	2	1	3.60
	Vice-Principal	0	2	0	2	1	3.40
	Teachers	15	7	2	1	0	1.56

The results of the interviews indicated that the principals were in the habit of delegating the responsibility for managing the curriculum and instruction to the senior heads. As a

consequence, the rating of the principals in the questionnaire was, as expected, “unsatisfactory” in the views of majority of teachers. The views of some of the educators are stated below:

I see her as the leader in this area, however this responsibility is shared with the subject heads. Take for example teacher K, hmmm, she is responsible for the mathematics curriculum and she does an excellent job of it. When she has a problem that’s when Mrs. B comes in and assist. (Vice-Principal, School E)

This is done by the senior teacher in charge of each subject...We are told if we have a problem then competent persons are in place to address them. (Classroom teacher, school E)

Presently, that responsibility is mine...I am the one actually developing programs and ensuring that these are executed. I monitor examinations, remedial instructions for underperforming students and liaise with parents. I keep her abreast of all that is happening and if I have any issues that’s where she comes in. (Vice-Principal, School C)

In promoting a positive learning climate, the principals, on the whole, were rated as having an unsatisfactory performance by the teachers. A total of 11 tasks were identified under this function. Table 8 illustrates the overall results of the total responses for each task from the questionnaire.

Table 8. Promoting a Positive Learning Climate

Task		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Mean
1. Use term test results to assess progress towards school academic goals	Principals	0	0	0	2	3	4.60
	Vice-Principal	0	2	1	2	0	3.00
	Teachers	5	13	3	2	2	2.32
2. Inform teachers and students of the school's grades 1, 3, 6 performance on the national examinations	Principals	0	0	0	1	4	4.80
	Vice-Principals	0	0	0	2	3	4.60
	Teachers	0	5	5	5	10	3.80
3. Ensure that instructional time is not interrupted.	Principals	0	1	1	1	2	3.80
	Vice-Principals	1	4	0	0	0	1.80
	Teachers	12	13	0	0	0	1.52
4. Encourage the development of appropriate instruction program for students whose test results indicate a need.	Principals	0	0	0	0	5	5.00
	Vice-Principals	0	1	0	3	1	3.80
	Teachers	3	10	2	7	3	2.88
5. Visit classroom to see that instructional time is used for learning and learning new skills.	Principals	0	0	0	3	2	4.40
	Vice-Principals	0	2	1	1	1	3.20
	Teachers	3	9	8	4	1	2.64
6. Reinforce or reward excellent performance by teachers with opportunities for professional development.	Principals	0	0	0	4	1	4.20
	Vice-Principal	0	3	1	1	0	2.60
	Teachers	12	8	5	0	0	1.72

Table 8. (continued)

Task		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Mean
7. Support teacher request for in-service activities which are directly related to the school's academic goals.	Principals	0	0	0	3	2	4.40
	Vice-Principals	0	2	1	2	0	3.00
	Teachers	1	8	11	5	0	2.80
8. Encourage teachers to share their ideas on instruction.	Principals	0	0	0	1	4	4.80
	Vice-Principals	0	2	1	2	0	3.00
	Teachers	3	9	8	4	1	2.64
9. Set high academic standards for students at all grades.	Principals	0	0	0	0	5	5.00
	Vice-Principals	0	1	1	3	0	3.40
	Teachers	7	10	3	4	1	2.28
10. Recognize students who do superior academic work or exhibit excellent behavior with formal or informal recognition	Principals	0	0	0	2	3	4.60
	Vice-Principals	0	2	1	2	0	3.00
	Teachers	8	12	3	2	0	1.96
11. Contact parents to communicate improved student performance in school	Principals	0	3	1	1	0	2.60
	Vice-Principals	0	4	1	0	0	2.20
	Teachers	14	7	3	1	0	1.64

From my observations during my visits to the schools, it was evident that little emphasis was placed on recognizing students who did superior academic work or exhibited excellent behavior either through formal or informal recognition, on a weekly or termly basis. Weekly or termly recognition would be one way of motivating students to show more interest and more positive behavior towards learning.

Although four out of the five of the principals stated that they ensured that instructional time was not interrupted, this claim was the vice-principals and the teachers.

One Vice-principal stated response is below:

So many times. There is devotion on Mondays that should be half an hour but sometimes goes to two hours... There is Cultural day, Jamaica day, Read Across Jamaica Day and the list goes on. I will not mention the different sporting events that cause students to lose valuable instructional time. (Vice-principal School 3)

With regard to task two, the respondents indicated that the principals informed teachers and students of grades six, grade four and grade one of the examination results. Thus, they are not isolated from the assessment aspect of the running of the school. This is commendable as principals need to monitor student performance as a measure of the school achieving its academic goals. With regard to in-service activities in the schools, the principals were seen to be performing these functions satisfactorily. However, with the exception of task two, all other tasks were deemed to be unsatisfactory by the respondents.

In summary, the overall results indicate that the principals engaged in a few instructional tasks but the majority of respondents considered the principal's involvement to be inadequate in terms of promoting a positive learning climate in the primary school. In observing and giving feedback to teachers, the principals were rated as having an unsatisfactory performance. This was attributed to the tradition of delegating tasks and the lack of providing adequate guidance and direction to those delegated this function. Four tasks were identified under this function. Table 9 shows the overall results of the total responses for each task from the questionnaire.

Table 9. Total Responses for Each Task under Observing and Giving Feedback to Teachers

Task		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Mean
1. Conduct formal and/or informal classroom observation on a regular basis.	Principals	0	0	0	4	1	4.20
	Vice-Principals	0	2	0	3	0	3.20
	Teachers	11	10	2	2	0	1.80
2. Points out specific strengths and weakness in teacher instructional practices in post observation conferences.	Principals	0	0	0	2	3	4.60
	Vice-Principals	0	1	2	2	0	3.20
	Teachers	11	9	3	2	0	1.84
3. Note students time on-time task in feedback to teachers after classroom observation.	Principals	0	0	1	3	1	4.00
	Vice-Principals	0	4	0	1	0	2.40
	Teachers	14	6	5	0	0	1.64
4. Provide guidance on appropriate teaching methods for specific subject areas.	Principals	0	1	0	0	4	4.40
	Vice-Principals	0	1	3	1	0	3.00
	Teachers	5	10	6	3	1	2.40

The differences in the ratings in Table 9 indicate that the principals were perceived as performing unsatisfactorily in performing all the tasks relating to instruction by the majority of the respondents. When the principals were asked to explain why they performed these tasks so infrequently, most indicated that these tasks were delegated to Vice-principals and other senior teachers. Others suggested that there was not enough time for the principals to conduct classroom observations as they had other administrative tasks to perform. For this reason, they only concentrated on conducting classroom

observations on those teachers who were considered special cases. Some principals even indicated that their teaching responsibilities took up much of their time. The following are some of their responses:

I do sometimes but it's not done quite frequently on my part because I also teach grade six which is the examination group. I have to prioritize.
(Principal, School C)

My timetable and other commitments do not give me enough time to do things that I think about doing in the school. Lesson observations, as I know I've taken on 'sometimes' kind of approach. When I feel say within the week I find myself a bit light on other commitments then I do that.
(Principal, School A)

I have only concentrated on those who are going on compulsory inspection and who are new to the school, especially people I have not worked with before. (Principal, School B)

Some of the teachers supported the principals in terms of other priorities as exemplified below:

He (the principal) doesn't have the time to observe all the teachers. And I see that there are outside factors that influence time for such, for example, discipline. Often he is interviewing students, or he is attending board meeting, or going to the ministry to deal with other issues. So I see that there is too much outside factors taking up his time. (Vice-Principal, School E)

Probably she (the principal) has other things to do. Sometimes she has to be walking the grounds. Also she doesn't have any clerical assistants so she has to be doing everything herself. (Teacher, School C)

Nevertheless, some teachers were unsure of the responsibilities of the principals. For example:

Lesson observations are not done. Most of those inspection reports are false. Since the principal has so many free periods I always question what she does with those free periods. (Teacher, School A)

She spends too much time talking with the G.C. (Guidance Counselor) so she has no time to do evaluation. (Teacher, School B)

Teachers who received no feedback from principals commented:

No. We never had a post-lesson conference after his observation. (Subject teacher, School E)

No. Mrs. S. (the Principal) just observed me and gave me my copy of the document. Her only comment was good job. (Subject teacher, School B)

These results indicate that the principals generally did not observe and give timely feedback to teachers to the teachers' satisfaction. When principals were asked why, one principal remarked:

It is a general policy in this school that the senior teachers should carry out lesson observation. (Principal, School B)

In summary, the principals were not perceived as being actively engaged in this function for three main reasons. First, an increase in demand placed by the Ministry of Education on their effective completion of administrative routine tasks to meet bureaucratic standards and time frames hindered them from performing this task. Second, their teaching commitments besides administrative commitments left them very limited time for such activities as classroom observations, so that they restricted their observations to teachers who were on compulsory or promotional inspections. Finally, it was not seen as their sole responsibility to observe teachers but was also the responsibility of the senior teachers in each subject area. Therefore, most of this activity was left to the senior teachers to perform in their departments.

Nevertheless, data provided have demonstrated that these explanations were insufficient and inconsistent with the roles principals were expected to perform. From my observation, it was evident that this was one of the major weaknesses of the principals who participated in this study, since a majority of the total respondents reported unsatisfactory performance by the principals.

Finally, in assessing the instructional programs, principals were again rated as unsatisfactory in performing this function. There were two tasks identified under this function. Table 10 shows the overall results of the total responses from each task from the questionnaires.

Table 10. Assessing the Instructional Program

Task		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Mean
1. Encourage the use of program evaluation for future curriculum planning.	Principals	0	0	0	3	2	4.40
	Vice-Principals	1	2	1	1	0	2.40
	Teachers	6	9	5	3	2	2.44
2. In consultation with teachers assess and revise each grade's instructional program	Principals	0	0	1	2	2	4.20
	Vice-Principals	1	3	0	1	0	2.20
	Teachers	7	12	1	5	0	2.16

The ratings indicated that the principals have unsatisfactorily performed these tasks. During the interviews, principals highlighted that these tasks were delegated to the senior teachers in charge of subject areas to perform; therefore, they felt that it was not their responsibility to engage in these tasks. This is how one principal explained his actions (a remark which typifies the remarks expressed by the other principals as well):

I see my job as in two parts, not only am I responsible for academic excellence, but also responsible for the overall running of the school, maybe running a business. It would be good if there were two principals or deputies, where one concentrates on academic and the other concentrates on administration/management. Evaluation and checking up on the academic programs in the school in line with the breakdown of the responsibility is really a matter of the senior teachers or the vice-principals. They are immediately responsible to that area in their

departments who then feeds me the information. I do not have the time to be going in each department and sit down and check how they are doing. That is not my duty. It is the duty of the senior teacher or the vice-principal. (Principal, School D)

Despite the remark by the principal above, many teacher respondents expressed the viewpoint that it was the principal's duty to assist or give guidance to other senior teachers in performing these tasks. They considered that the principals should play a major role in performing these functions. The following typifies the remarks of most teacher respondents:

I believe that this is an area where it would be nice for the Principal to come in, actually sit down and review the programs with teachers. This is a problem that I have found in all schools that I have taught. It is sad but there are many units that are not taught in a given school year. (Vice-principal, School D)

In sum, the practice of principals delegating tasks to senior teachers to perform due to heavy administrative/management commitments has overridden the necessity to engage in this essential instructional activity. Principals in this study, as the data indicated, have been isolated or have isolated themselves from assessing the instructional programs to evaluate their appropriateness and relevancy to students.

Findings of the Study from the Interviews with Principals

The research findings for this section are based on an analysis of the semi-structured interviews and the observation schedules. Four themes emerged from the data namely: leadership styles, culture and relations, the importance of having a vision and change.

Listening to the participants' definition of leadership and knowing, to some extent, their orientations toward curriculum helped to comprehend how they view their

role as leaders in schools. Through their voices, I present some representative samples of their views on the term leadership:

Leadership is the ability to see beyond today...It encompasses being able to work with what you have in order to make a positive change within the lives of those you lead...Leadership involves having a vision and sharing this vision with others... It involves being able to work towards tomorrow and having the skills to bring along with you the participants that need to be involved... if something stops because the leader is gone, then you didn't have really true leadership. You had someone driving the ship and when they left they took the keys... If you've really got leadership going on in your school or leadership in the administrator, it has to be because there's a perceived need and it needs to keep going on and on and on after the individual is gone. (Principal, school A)

I subscribe to the theory of servant leadership purported by Robert Greenleaf. We are on this earth to serve others. I believe my duty as principal is to offer service to all. The ministry, my teachers, my students, my parents and ultimately the wider society. By serving, I realize that I cannot do it all on my own. I need my VP, my senior staff and my teachers to help me in this process. It is only through working with middle management that I will be able to achieve my vision... and that brings me to an important part of leadership...it is getting all the stake holders to embrace this vision as if it were their own. If this feat is accomplished then leadership will be a whole lot easier be prepared to put in time. The second thing I'd throw in there...is you have to have the ability, or at least the willingness to work with people-to listen to them. You may have the greatest vision in the world but if you can't articulate it, if you can't work with people then it is useless...vision to me is critical (Principal, school C)

I don't consider myself as a leader. I've been given the position of principal. I see myself as a coordinator/facilitator. We all have a common mission and the joy of this job is the people I get to work with are professionals and are dedicated and want to do well as well as teachers and create an excellent school. That's just my simple faith in people. The key in leadership is to listen, support and empower. (Principal school B)

Leadership is such an indefinable sort of thing. There's a real balance in being a good leader. You have to take the time and the energy to listen to people that you're working with and hear what they are saying, understand some of what goes along with being human and working in the field. So you have to be able to balance those management/building/non-people kinds of things and issues with the people issues in your building. And if you find that kind of balance, then I think you're probably set and should go anywhere. (Principal, A)

I think leadership itself is a combination of abilities and knowledge and the personality that others will follow. You have to have a combination of abilities

and knowledge and the personality that others will feel comfortable with and feel that you are the kind of person that they will work for...for me an effective leader is one who can adapt to the needs of the situation... You're going to have a preferred style of leadership, but the style of leadership you need to use in some situations may not be the same...and so you make changes. (Principal B)

One participant summed up that “end of the day” feeling that many of the participants expressed in one form or another when they talked about leadership.

...You have to feel ok with who you are, because at the end of the day, the staff is all gone, you sit here by yourself. You have dealt with all the ills of the world. Everybody has dumped on you. So what are you going to do to survive that night? For me, you know, you go for a run, you get outside, and you look at the sky...it's called reflective practice. (Principal C)

Someone will always be dissatisfied with the leader's performance. Relaxation exercises, physical fitness, recalling a higher purpose, teaming up with a supportive peer, separating self from role, and ignoring the temptation to get even are some of the remedies (Fullan, 1998, p. 9). Sergiovanni (2004) and Fullan (1997) both expressed that one strong characteristic of effective leaders is that they “extend as well as express what they value” (Fullan, 2005, p. 20). When reflecting on his series of studies on leadership Sergiovanni noted “in each case there was something each person felt passionately about; it was that person's source of authority” (Sergiovanni, 1991, p. 47). I believe these comments were exemplified as the core of leadership by some of the participants. Principal A leads via his passion for human respect and responsibility; for Principal E, it is working in the realm of curriculum; and Principal C expresses his passion as helping others to realize who they are and how they can make a positive difference each day.

Collaborating with Others in Instructional Leadership

All the participants reported working closely with others and relying heavily on the expertise, leadership and support of these people in their respective schools. Most often, these people were the teachers and their staff. Participants commented that one

aspect of successful instructional leadership is relying on the expertise of a strong teaching staff. As one principal so aptly stated, “One of the secrets of success for any principal is to surround themselves with the best people they can. There’s no way I am an expert in all the areas that schools present to you” (Principal D). Another concurred with this in the following statement:

The key ingredient is the teaching staff, the quality of teachers, the professionals and the knowledge that they have. You need people, you need the kind of people who are willing to share, to take risks, to work together, who are flexible, and who really care about children. (Principal B)

Working with Vice-Principals

Several participants told how the vice-principal in each of their schools works with them as an administrative partner in the role of leading instruction. Some expressed this collaboration as a need because one person cannot possibly keep abreast of all instructional matters. The participants noted that teamwork was done by dividing responsibilities while others spoke of combining this approach with working from each other’s strength:

The Vice-principal and I decide when we meet at the beginning of the year what are our strengths and weakness and we divide the roles accordingly. She has responsibility for the curriculum and instruction for certain grades and I have mine. I know I’ve relied really heavily on her staying in tune with certain areas and me in others. So we have really divided that role...as soon as the teachers know which one of us is in charge, then teachers will go to that person. (Principal C)

However, the same participant felt it important to face the realities of working in administrative team arrangements. She went on to explain that:

I know some are more teams than others. Some of us form really good teams and partnerships and some of us don’t. I am sure it’s connected to leadership style-connected to sheer fate too. There were some vice-principals I have worked with where we wouldn’t share anything! We’d had a hard time speaking to one

another, so it depends! It really works well when you can work as a team.
(Principal A)

Instructional Leadership

The discussion in the literature calls for instructional leadership to play a critical role in the life of a principal. What seems unclear is whether or not principals are acting out this understood aspect of their role. Discussions with the principals about the importance of instructional leadership in their day proved to be interesting. All agreed that instruction is a critical aspect of their position. As one summed it up:

Instruction is hugely important to me in this school- extremely important... Curriculum integrity is absolutely critical to me as a because I think that's the kind of thing that keeps us all on the straight and narrow... instructional leadership is vital in schools because it encompasses all things we do. (Principal A)

However, participants also noted that even though they saw instructional leadership as important, it's not what guides their days. One participant seemed to feel torn between the relatively high priority he places on instructional leadership and the way it actually plays out in any given day.

I believe that instructional leadership needs to be high on my agenda. Not necessarily at the top, but it needs to be high...I have to make a conscious effort to keep it there...I don't necessarily see myself as doing this really well and I'm being critical of myself as a principal...I have to make a conscious effort to focus on curriculum development and make it closer to the forefront. The more I do that; the greater the implementation will occur. The day to day routine of managing a school can get in the way of instructional leadership.(Principal B)

My goal is always to get into the curriculum and...I can't get there. There are always too many things coming at you. It's not unusual to turn on your machine and have over fifteen emails that need a action the same day The curriculum is always my goal...I can barely manage to get my developmental supervision, my annual supervision summaries...you are dealing with discipline matters, teaching classes and manning the plant...it is difficult. (Principal C)

Overall, I sensed from the principals an element of confusion around how to maintain a focus and priority to an area of their jobs that they collectively felt was very

important. As one said, “The job here is that principals need to be instructional leaders. This is a big part of who we are. I am a leader of curriculum...it comes down to priorities” (Principal A).

This “big part” of the job may lie in leadership training programs. Part of the answer may lie within the administrative structures that schools operate since Education Officers, according to one principal, focus on management and facilities issues.

The Need for Support

It’s hard to be on top of curriculum and instruction anymore. It is entirely impossible to stay abreast of curriculum changes. I teach also, therefore, I have to be knowledgeable of what is happening in my subject area. It’s virtually impossible to take responsibility for all the other lessons. (Principal B)

The participants in the study indicated that there needs to be more support for principals, especially those who have little or no experience with administration. They also commented that they would like to see more time taken at principals’ meetings to deal with, and spend time talking about curriculum and instruction issues.

Culture and Relationships

Most participants contributed thoughts about their own journeys as leaders in their current schools. A concept of culturing began to emerge as I listened to their stories. This concept involves leading and creating change within an organization by first recognizing the importance of, and strength in, the culture of an environment. As supported in the literature review, becoming a member of an environment’s culture is critical for successful leadership. Recognizing and addressing the culture is even more critical, and in fact should be the starting point, when trying to bring about change within the organization (Hallinger, 2005).

All of my participants spoke strongly about the importance of recognizing relationships and teamwork in their schools. One began her tenure at her current school by starting with the culture, or attitudes, of staff.

What has helped turn this school around has been an attitudinal shift that has allowed the curriculum ideas to come forward and it has allowed the leadership potential of individuals here to come forward, but it has happened through a shift in the attitude...feeling good about who you are and knowing that when you do things, you can affect things and people in a positive way. (Principal E)

Another principal accomplished this through reflective practice discussions during school staff meetings.

If you give opportunities to people, they will grab them...we spent many hours at staff meetings reflecting on what we need to do to get things right...After a while it becomes a norm and it's just the things to do. You just reflect...You support the personal, but you reflect and you get to the professional. (Principal B)

A number of the principals spoke about culturing in terms of developing relationships and a high level of trust with their staffs. One spoke of culturing as a means of developing staff members who are willing to take risks and grow professionally.

Culturing...First you have to have the trust and respect...I am willing to work with people and support people and allow them to take risks, make mistakes and fix the problem. Teachers know whether they can trust you. They know the degree of support you are prepared to give them...It's a team thing. If you are in an environment where trust is there, then I think teachers will step to the fore. (Principal A)

Zepeda would support this participant's words "Leadership depends on trust, and trust is grounded in a shared understanding about what is working and what isn't, how practice might be improved, and what steady progress will likely entail" (Zepeda, 2004, p. 12).

The Importance of Having a Vision

Much has been documented regarding the importance of vision within the sphere of organizational leadership (Fullan, 2008). Through the narrative of the participants, it also seems to be crucial to the curriculum and instructional aspect of school leadership.

One participant stated that vision is critical to helping a staff focus, to remind them of the direction for year. She also believes that a successful leader of curriculum and instruction must be able to act on and live his/her vision for a school.

You have to be able to help people be able to see through the mess. You know. Here is where we are going and keep pointing it out... You've got a vision. You know where you want to go...for some the path is more direct than others for getting there. I don't think you can work without that and you can call it a vision, a theme or whatever. You have to have a vision, but you have to live it yourself.
(Principal B)

Another principal sees vision as, first, an expression of who he is as far as a leader and secondly, what should be done with that vision.

Vision is critical to me...People expect you to do things. They expect you to lead. So when you have a vision, lead it...people need to know what you stand for. I think the worst thing that could ever happen to me is if I was in a school for a period of time and I walked out and people didn't know what the Principal was all about. I think when I walk in and out of a school; people know what I am about. They may not always be with me, but they know pretty well where I stand.
(Principal D)

Another principal talked about vision in terms of having a personal vision for a school.

He stated that: "my vision for schools is to establish a safe, caring environment for children and to provide an environment that supports the needs of the community and the teachers in the school" (Principal B). A fourth principal, in contrast, spoke of vision as something that is evolved through input from the staff team. Because of his "simple faith in people" (Principal C) he prefers to listen to the staff and establish a vision from that point. He noted that sometimes teachers have many ideas for a school that "you need to pull in the reins sometimes" (Principal C) in order to prevent professional and committed staff from wearing themselves out for the sake of the students.

One participant seemed to intertwine the idea of having a personal and a staff vision together. She spoke about having a vision for a school only after she had experienced the culture and needs of the school's students. She told me that:

I don't think you can come (into a new school) and have a vision. You have to be in it, live it. Your vision for a place evolves once you have better understanding of what it is you're experiencing. I am still creating my vision for this school and it's becoming clearer and clearer. I get these kinds of mind maps going of how I would like to see how things function here. (Principal A)

Vision, however it is defined and acted upon, was expressed as an important aspect of instructional leadership by the principals. The variety of forms and expressions it seems to take in these schools further cements my belief that instructional leadership continues to be individually defined and understood by principals. Perhaps this principal offered an appropriate final comment on the importance of vision:

You have to know where you're headed and if you don't know where you want to go, you're not going to lead... You may have the greatest vision in the world. If you can't articulate it you can't work with people you're in trouble. (Principal A)

Or, in the similar words of Greenfield, "unless the leader knows where the whole venture is headed, it will not be possible to carry out the other tasks of leadership" (Greenfield 2004, p. 15).

Leadership during Times of Change

The participants in this study spoke frequently about feeling overwhelmed and of a need to slow down. They spoke of being confused from time to time because of the many initiatives and changes that are coming at them so quickly. These principals regardless of their leadership styles and beliefs about school are certainly in the midst of dealing with a phenomenal amount of changes in education. As mentioned earlier, curricula in Jamaica have been rewritten and introduced to schools at an alarming rate

over the last decade. A focus on leadership during times of educational change seems appropriate.

It is generally accepted that nothing in life remains static: accordingly, schools are constantly undergoing change. This view is captured very well and supported by Fullan (2008). In his view the change occurring in a school at any moment is dynamic and multidimensional. He further argued that the school, the community, government departments, business influences, economic climates, political demands, and educational research are some of the dimensions that are impacting on every school at any one time. All of these influences he contended create the ever-changing context in which the school operates.

Summary

The principals in this study represent both genders, and a range of very little to over ten years of experience in leadership at varying levels of the education system. They were anxious to share their narratives about their role of instructional leaders. Some of the stories reflected an opportunity for them to live out and express their personal beliefs and values about education. Other stories described how their role is carried out within the institution that they lead. All appeared to bring with them their own style of leadership and ways of interfacing with the public. All believe that they are instructional leaders.

Major Findings of the Study in Relation to the Research Questions

Research Question 1. Do Principals in Selected Primary Schools Engage in Tasks that Constitute Instructional Leadership?

The data revealed that yes, the principals in primary schools in Manchester, Jamaica did engage in actions consistent with instructional leadership, but assumed a lesser degree of responsibility than was desirable and expected by themselves and their

teachers. The study found that principals in the five schools did not assume instructional leadership responsibilities alone; instructional leadership appeared to be a shared responsibility involving staff members at various levels of the school system. This study supports the notion found in other instructional studies (Bridges, 1982; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Marzano & McNulty, 2003) that not all instructional leadership functions need to be carried out by the principal. The important issue is not who performs instructional leadership tasks but rather that they are performed. It also raises a question of how responsibility is delegated and how it is monitored.

Research Question 2. What is the Nature of the Tasks Relating to Instructional Leadership in Which the Principals Engage?

Consistent with the response to research question 1, all the principals in this study attempted to engage in all five major functions. However, the results from the study indicated that these functions were performed less satisfactorily than was desirable and expected by the principals and the teachers.

Principals surveyed in this study attempted to engage in all these functions, which constitute instructional leadership for a number of reasons. First, they have a commitment to academic excellence as part of their responsibilities as principals in their schools. The principals indicated that their main academic goals for the schools were aimed at academic excellence. However, this study found that academic goals developed by these principals were mainly aimed at improving academic performances of students in some grades.

Second, performing the functions related to instructional leadership was expected of principals by the Ministry of Education through the Education Officers. These

responsibilities were set out in a number of documents by the M.o.E. However, this study found that there were inconsistencies arising from this demand placed on principals (e.g. secretarial responsibilities) tended to override the proper performance of the instructional role.

Research Question 3. What are some of the Activities Mitigating against the Principals in executing his/her role as an Instructional Leader?

This study found that the principals surveyed performed unsatisfactorily in all functions but in three out of the five major functions (managing the curriculum and instruction; observing and giving feedback to teachers; and assessing the instructional programs) the negative results were obvious. In these three functions, principals were perceived to be least involved as these functions, which, according to the principals, were delegated to senior staff to perform. This conclusion is not surprising given the increasingly broad administrative role that principals are expected to play in our schools. “The principal is both the administrative director of state educational policy and building manager, both advocate for school change and protector of bureaucratic stability” (Reeves, 2004). Principals are extremely busy performing many pressing tasks such as taking care of the school grounds, dealing with disciplinary matters, engaging in secretarial duties and meeting with parents, just to name a few. The principals’ involvement in numerous tasks often leaves them with limited time to attend to matters related to instructional leadership.

This study also found that the principals themselves placed more emphasis on their administrative tasks as laid out by the Ministry of Education documents and procedures for principals at the expense of their instructional leadership. In addition, the principals’ involvement in subject teaching teams and actual classroom teaching, as well

as their heavy administrative responsibilities, restricted the time available for them to perform instructional leadership functions. The participants all have visions for their respective schools. And yet this vision seems to be quite distant at times when tasks other than the direct leadership of instruction are required of them by the various stakeholders. This causes frustration for them. The frustration may have roots in several sources. It appears, to some degree that these participants are struggling valiantly to maintain a balance between management tasks and instructional leadership issues in their roles as principals. This balance is tenuous as they work to be directly involved in curriculum issues while others are requiring more and more of their time in the procedural and management domains. This viewpoint is supported by Fullan who states, “Constant bombardment of new tasks keeps demand fragmented and incoherent with a short shelf life when the initiatives are dropped in favor of the latest new policy” (2002, p.6). Management techniques and solutions became fads and are too-easily abandoned for the next quick fix, top-down initiative. Fullan described education fads as time consuming, terminology confusing, quick fixes that rarely rose above common sense. Sammons (1999) described the difficult dilemmas principals faced as instructional leaders. The prime dilemma as an instructional leader resulted from the tension between caring for others and accomplishing goals. Sammons. Further asserted, “The relationship dilemma between principal’s need for bold action to improve the school’s performance often put staff relationships at risk” (p. 8).

Research Question 4. In what ways does the School Benefit from the role of the Principal as an Instructional Leader?

There is much research on the relationship between leadership and student achievement. Instructional leadership provided by the principal has been identified as a

contributing factor to higher student achievement (Walters, Marzano & McNulty, 2003). Likewise, Hargreaves and Fink (2006) found that the quality of school leadership is the means for continual growth, learning and advancement for both students and teachers. This study found that all participants agreed that instructional leadership is critical for the development of their positions as principals. One principal sums it up by articulating “...curriculum integrity is absolutely critical to me as a principal because I think that’s the kind of thing that keeps me on the straight and narrow.”

Principals committed to being instructional leaders actively engage in meaningful relationships with student learning. This viewpoint is supported by Kowal and Hassel (2005) who sought to determine the relationship between the instructional leadership behaviors of principals and student achievement. The author found that there is a substantial relationship between leadership and students’ achievement. The study also found that just as leaders can have a positive impact on students’ achievement, they can also have a marginal or negative impact on students’ academic outcomes.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION/RECOMMEDATIONS/CONCLUSION

The increased pressure of principal accountability and the need to close the achievement gap have placed more scrutiny on leadership practices (Gross & Shapiro, 2002; Waters et al., 2005; Wong & Glass, 2005). The phenomenon under investigation is the perceived responsibilities of principals in their appointed roles of managers of educational institutions designed to enhance the academic performance of students through meaningful instructional strategies. The general question raised by the research is to what extent the perceived demonstrated role of the principal manifests itself in initiatives aimed at improving instructional strategies. The semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and observation schedules were designed to explore this phenomenon in order to later unravel specific themes and sub-themes emerging from the data gathered.

As indicated earlier the data were presented in accordance with the four major research questions which guided the study. The study provided an opportunity to investigate the role of school principals as instructional leaders. There are some prevailing views that as leaders and manger the principal should be more engaged with administration. However, the focus on the role of principal as instructional leader would seem to suggest the principal is expected to devote equal time to instructional issues and activities. The themes below emerging from the study would seem to support this view.

Theme 1- Leadership Styles

“Roles do not exercise leadership; people do” (Chirichello, 1999, p. 117). This statement resonates through some of the research conducted on leadership in and beyond the boundaries of education. I found it to be true as I listened and responded to the stories

told by the participants in the confines of their offices or on the corridors. The participants in this study all undertook a variety of activities to play out their role as leaders of instruction. Some of these activities seem to be based on their personal beliefs and values while other activities seem to be dependent upon the expectations of the Ministry of Education, school context and staff expertise. Human aspects of leadership, combined with school context, appear to play themselves out in ways that some have defined as leadership styles.

It is my contention that defining leadership styles is far too inappropriate a way of labeling principals and that the ways in which leadership can be exercised are virtually limitless. However, a focus on leadership style helps to understand how certain categories of leaders can be used to further understand the roles principals assume and play out in the areas of instructional leadership.

Theme 2 - Shared Instructional Leadership

This study found that in the five primary schools surveyed, principals did not perceive that they bore sole responsibility for instructional leadership. As a result, they shared, delegated and distributed the responsibility to/with other staff at varying levels of the institution. This finding supported the notion posited in the literature review that not all instructional leadership functions need to be carried out by the principal, but rather they can be shared (Avila, 1990). However, this study revealed that although there was evidence of shared instructional leadership, the expected leadership follow-up through the provision of technical and personal support, professional direction and the monitoring of responsibilities delegated, was unsatisfactorily performed by the principals.

It can be concluded, therefore, that the teachers view the principal as the leader of the school and he/she must be held accountable for seeing that support, direction and guidance are given to teachers and students.

Theme 3 - Change and the Principalship

Micheal Fullan, an international leader in change research in education, confirmed that change is a snarled and complicated issue (Fullan, 2008). He also emphasized that change is a process that involves simultaneous and multidimensional aspect. The leadership role of the principal is ever changing. It is expanding and becoming more complex and demanding due to the emergence of a new educational environment. The reformed process in Jamaica has involved re-structuring of the education system, which forms the basis of the reform agenda. The broad aims of this agenda are to improve access, equity and the quality of education.

The role of the principal as an administrator has changed in Jamaica in the 1990s and 2000s because of the emergence of a new educational environment created by the introduction of the reformed educational system in the 1990s. The nature of the principal's role has changed considerably to cater to the broad aims of the restructuring of education for principals to carry out their roles as instructional leaders resulted in their inability to perform these tasks satisfactorily. One participant in the study suggested a three person administrative team to meet the demands of the principalship. Although the principals accept the claim that instructional leadership is their responsibility, under pressure, as demonstrated in chapter four, principals delegated these tasks to Vice-Principals and senior teachers. The findings revealed that in most cases, senior teachers were left in isolation to handle the functions that were beyond their professional training,

experience and capabilities. This puts them in a negative light in the eyes of the educators whom they lead.

The professional literature has established that the principalship is the key position in schools (e.g. Hallinger & Heck, 2005). The principals in this study reported growing concerns about increased responsibilities, authority and autonomy. According to one principal “the current role of the principal is all encompassing. We are faced with inadequate budgets with increased demands” (Principal A). The principals validated the importance of their role as the strategic instructional leader of the school by describing the power of the principalship and the importance of the principal as a visionary.

Although researchers stress the importance of the principal as instructional leader, the consensus in the literature and from this study is that principals spend most of their time dealing with managerial issues. The Jamaican school landscape, according to the National Education Inspectorate report, is riddled with accounts of failing schools. This would suggest that leadership involves more than managerial competences. Bryman (2007) speaks to the dramatically different role as the principal as an instructional leader. This role involves focusing on instruction, building a community of learners, sustaining the basics, supporting staff members while creating a climate of integrity and inquiry. With the implementation of educational reform in Jamaica, the nature of school leadership is undergoing significant change. Principals, in particular, need new kinds of knowledge, attitudes and skills to perform their work effectively and efficiently. The change in emphasis through the reforms justifies the need to re-examine the appropriateness, relevance and applicability of the training and preparation provided for beginning and practicing principals.

This study of the instructional leadership behavior of Jamaican primary school principals in the parish of Manchester found conclusively that although the principals perceive themselves as instructional leaders, the educators surveyed rated them as being unsatisfactory in the five major functions of instructional leadership. While there was evidence of shared leadership in all schools, however, the monitoring and the support given in setting directions for the delegated roles were unsatisfactorily performed by the principals to meet the expectations of the teachers who were delegated the responsibilities. It is vital that the principals devote resources to nurture teachers, communicate expectations, give technical and personal support, supervise, recognize and reward those with their charge.

Conclusion

The role of the principal has been expanded to include significant responsibilities for the instructional leadership of schools, ensuring that all children achieve to meet high standards. At the same time, principals are spending more time coping with student behavior problems. The managerial tasks of principals have also been expanding, and principals' report, increasing paperwork loads. Policy makers need to recognize the extensive responsibilities of principals and the real limitation of time on their ability to carry out their functions as instructional leaders. It should be recognized that the expectations that have surrounded the principals' role-expectations from teachers, students, parents, board members and other stakeholders have continued to grow even as the Ministry of Education officials have expanded the responsibilities of the role.

The literature has identified five key aspects of the role of effective principals. These core elements are (a) defining and communicating a school's educational mission,

(b) coordinating curriculum, (c) supervising and supporting teachers, (d) monitoring student progress, and (e) nurturing a positive learning climate. Principals need assistance if they are to meet the expanded expectations of their role. The principals in this study do not wish to thrust aside their responsibilities – they simply cannot perform all the tasks currently required of them.

It can be concluded that in order to understand and appreciate the changing and demanding role of the principal, there needs to be an understanding and knowledge of the changing educational environment in which principals operate. Principals are dealing with increased job related stress, heightened accountability, new curriculum standards and an increasingly diverse student population. As a result, the Ministry of Education needs to re-examine the selection, training and staff development opportunities afforded to principals and investigate the possible introduction of a mentoring system to enhance or improve the efficiency and effectiveness of beginning principals in their struggle to navigate the teaching and learning landscape.

Recommendations

A number of problems were identified as central to the successful implementation by principals who are called on to be instructional leaders in Jamaican primary schools. The study revealed that the need for training and staff development of principals in educational leadership and management is of great significance. I therefore recommend the following:

- The development of preparation programs geared towards competencies be implemented as these are critical to improving instruction, teacher quality and student achievement in schools. Principals must be knowledgeable about

instruction, how children learn, how teachers teach, what kinds of training help teachers the most and the important role leadership plays in all these factors.

- Support the principals with mentoring programs for new principals and ongoing professional development for principals throughout their career.
- Ensure that the principals receive effective evaluation of their performance on a regular basis.
- Discontinue giving principals full-time teaching responsibilities.

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APPENDIX A
DATA PLANNING MATRIX

Data Planning Matrix

Why do I need to know it?	What kind of data will address this question?	Where can I find this data?	Whom do I contact for access?	Time lines for acquisition
To assess the extent to which the principals' perceptions of leadership are manifested in their daily practice.	Administrator Interview, observation	Meeting with the administrators	Administrator	First week in January
To assess the degree to which principals are involved in instructional leadership	Administrator Interview, observation, minutes of meeting, record	Minutes of meeting, record logs, code of regulation	Administrator, Ministry of Education	Second week in January
To ascertain the extent that principals are involved in curriculum planning and development as this is a major factor in instructional leadership	Administrator interview, observation, minutes of meetings, log books	Interview, observation	Administrator, Teachers, Education Officer	First week in February

APPENDIX B

PRINCIPAL'S ACTION AND BEHAVIOR QUESTIONNAIRE

Principal's Action and Behavior Questionnaire

Part 1

Please provide the following information

- 1) Name of School: _____
 - 2) Location of School: _____
 - 3) Your position in the school: _____
 - 4) Sex: _____
 - 5) Age: _____
 - 6) Years of experience as a principal at the end of this school year: _____
 - 7) Teacher Training: _____
 - 8) Name of College/University attended: _____
 - 9) Qualification obtained: _____
-

Part 2

Please read each statement carefully and circle the number that best indicates how you demonstrated the specific behavior.

For each behavior, 1 represents “never”, 2 represents “seldom” 3 represents “sometimes”, 4 represents “frequently and 5 represents “always”.

1. Defining and Communicating The School’s Goals

Do you as a principal

Tasks	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Develop school academic goals that seek improvement over current levels of academic performance?	1	2	3	4	5
Develop academic goals that are easily translated into classroom objectives by teachers?	1	2	3	4	5
Communicate the school’s academic goals to teachers, students and parents at school?					

2. Managing The Curriculum and Instruction

Tasks	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Ensure that the classroom objectives of teachers are consistent with the stated academic goals of the school?	1	2	3	4	5
Evaluate teachers on academic objectives directly related to the national curriculum?	1	2	3	4	5
Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade Levels.					

3. Promoting a Positive Learning Climate

Tasks	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Set high academic standards for students at all grade levels?	1	2	3	4	5
Support teacher request for in-service activities which are directly related to the school's academic development?	1	2	3	4	5
Reinforce or reward excellent performance by teachers with the opportunities for professional development					

4. Observing and Giving Feedback to Teachers

Tasks	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Conduct formal/or informal classroom on a regular basis?	1	2	3	4	5
Point out specific strengths and weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post observation conferences?	1	2	3	4	5

5. Assessing the Instructional Program

Tasks	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Encourage the use of program evaluation for future curriculum planning?	1	2	3	4	5
In consultation with teachers assess and revise each grade's instructional program?	1	2	3	4	5

Feel free to make comments on the above or any aspect of the school life below.

Comment _____

APPENDIX C

PRINCIPAL'S ACTIONS AND BEHAVIOR
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Principal's Actions and Behavior Questionnaire for Teachers

Part 1

Please provide the following information

1. Name of School: _____
2. Location of School: _____
3. Your position in the school: _____
4. Sex: _____
5. Age: _____
6. Years of experience as a teacher at the end of this school year: _____
7. Teacher Training: _____
8. Name of College/University attended: _____
9. Qualification obtained: _____

Part 2

Please read each statement carefully and circle the number that best indicates how you demonstrated the specific behavior.

For each behavior, 1 represents “never”, 2 represents “seldom” 3 represents “sometimes”, 4 represents “frequently and 5 represents “always”.

1. Defining and Communicating The School’s Goals

Does your principal ...

Tasks	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
develop school academic goals that seek improvement over current levels of academic performance?	1	2	3	4	5
develop academic goals that are easily translated into classroom objectives by teachers?	1	2	3	4	5
communicate the school’s academic goals to teachers, students and parents at school?					

2. Managing The Curriculum and Instruction

Tasks	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
ensure that the classroom objectives of teachers are consistent with the stated academic goals of the school?	1	2	3	4	5
evaluate teachers on academic objectives directly related to the national curriculum?	1	2	3	4	5
make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels?					

3. Promoting A Positive Learning Climate

Tasks	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
set high academic standards for students at all grade levels?	1	2	3	4	5
support teachers' request for in-service activities which are directly related to the school's academic development?	1	2	3	4	5
reinforce or reward excellent performance by teachers with the opportunities for professional development?					

4. Observing and Giving Feedback To Teachers

Tasks	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
conduct formal/or informal classroom on a regular basis?	1	2	3	4	5
point out specific strengths and weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post observation conferences?	1	2	3	4	5

5. Assessing The Instructional Program

Tasks	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
encourage the use of program evaluation for future curriculum planning?	1	2	3	4	5
in consultation with teachers assess and revise each grade's instructional program?	1	2	3	4	5

Feel free to make comments on the above or any aspect of the school life below.

Comment _____

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR PRINCIPAL

Interview Protocol for Principal

- 1) One of the areas I believe may be very important to my study is an in-depth understanding of your background and the life events that led you to this position. So it would be very helpful to me if you start by telling me about your education and career path so far.
- 2) Describe some of the more challenging incidents you have had to either facilitate or arbitrate on.
- 3) Tell me about your principalship – your priority/strengths/weakness.
- 4) Describe your involvement in school matters relating to instruction.
- 5) Describe the mechanisms that are in place to inform you about how students learn?
- 6) Describe the major challenges to students' learning that you find most difficult to deal with.
- 7) How do you address these challenges?
- 8) Explain what you believe students need to learn and be able to do when they leave your institution.
- 9) Do you get involved in curriculum development activities? Describe your involvement.
- 10) Are you involved in curriculum planning activities? Describe your involvement.
- 11) Do you directly encourage students' learning? Describe how this is done.
- 12) Describe your goals for the institution.
- 13) Describe how you communicate your goals to teachers.
- 14) What do you consider to be the primary responsibility of your Heads of Departments?

- 15) In what ways do you encourage your Heads of Departments to initiate professional Staff Development activities?
- 16) How are decisions made in identifying areas of instructional emphasis for staff development activities?
- 17) Explain the ways in which you facilitate opportunities for sustaining professional development.
- 18) Describe the strategies that are employed to enhance the instructional capabilities of teachers.
- 19) Do you have a system in place to obtain feedback from students on teacher effectiveness? If so, describe what is done with the data after it is collected.
- 20) How do you think your teachers can get more useful information from internal examinations/tests results?
- 21) In what ways do you think your teachers can use examination results to influence instructional decisions?
- 22) Suggest some school related issues that militate against more allocation of your time to instructional matters.
- 23) Suggest some of the school related issues that mitigate against more engagement of your time in instructional matters.
- 24) Explain how you promote a positive learning climate within your school.

APPENDIX E

LETTER TO PRINCIPAL

Grove Town District

Pratville P.O.

Manchester

November 9, 2015

The Principal

Dear Madam,

My name is Donnalyn King and I am a teacher and Literacy Coordinator in the English Department at Manchester High School. I am also a doctoral student at Temple University. I write to ask you to be a part of a qualitative research on Instructional Leadership, more specifically “How do Principals perceive themselves as Instructional Leaders?” This is part of the requirements for a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership.

Participating in this study will include an interview conversation that should last sixty-ninety minutes and that will be conducted in a private location at a time convenient to you. Prior to this conversation, I will submit the interview questions to you. This dialogue will be recorded by a tape recorder. Also, I will be taking written notes. If needed a follow up meeting may occur which will allow me to check for accuracy of my notes and to ask any follow up questions I may have after reviewing the transcript of our meeting. Additionally, permission is being sought to distribute questionnaires to teachers based on the topic.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, your identity will be kept strictly confidential. Also, your name and your school’s name will not appear in the study. Your story will be referenced by a pseudonym. All the transcripts will be kept on a CD Rom in the privacy of the researcher’s home.

Please contact me by replying by email to dlynking@yahoo.com or telephone 452-0432.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Donnalyn King (Miss)

APPENDIX F
CONSENT FORM

Consent Form

I am willing to participate in a research project conducted by Ms Donnalyn King of Temple University. I understand that this research will gather information on my role as an instructional leader.

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation and that I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time even after the interviews without penalty, as long as I do so within two weeks.
2. I understand that if I feel uncomfortable in any way answering the questions, I have the right to decline.
3. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from the interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure as all participants will be asked to sign an agreement to maintain confidentiality. Subsequent uses of records and data will also be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.
4. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction.
5. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Signature

Date

Researcher's Name

Signature