

**The influence of contextual factors for principals
to promote quality teaching in the Marondera
District in Zimbabwe**

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Promoter: Prof HJ van Vuuren

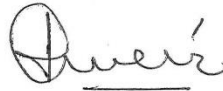
Graduation: July 2024

DECLARATION

DECLARATION

I the undersigned, Lizzie Muvevi hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lizzie Muvevi', written over a horizontal line.

Date 28 November 2023

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SUMMARY/ABSTRACT

Schools are not isolated educational organisations and as core institutions in society, schools face a plethora of influences from the community and contextual situations. It is widely claimed in the education fraternity that school effectiveness and reform is in direct relation with the quality of leadership in educational institutions. School effectiveness may not be optimised, unless school leaders are, amongst other aspects, aware of and prepare to act on the contextual challenges in and beyond the classroom and school fence that might have a serious impact on the overall performance of schools. The role of school leaders has changed considerably over time and school leaders need to account for the increased impact of contextual factors such as rapid technological advancements (the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution), socio-economic factors, cultural matters, political influences, unrest, health issues, globalisation and increased migration and mobility. Literature emphasises the liability of school leaders for their quick response, proactive action, and alignment of diverse practices to account for the impact of contextual factors on school performance. The contextual factor framework of Wolhuter, Van der Walt and Steyn (2016) constitutes the context of the research, while the core leadership practices as identified by The Wallace Foundation (2013) and Waite and Bogotch (2017) serve as theoretical basis for the research study. The purpose of the research is to develop a strategy for school leaders in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe to promote school effectiveness in response to the influence of contextual factors. A qualitative research design is followed with the use of semi-structured interviews. The study is conducted with a purposeful sample of nine participants who share their experiences and perspectives on the influence of contextual factors in their respective schools. All required ethical requirements are adhered to, to assure the trustworthiness of the research. The findings reveal that micro, meso and macro contextual factors in schools influence school effectiveness and there is need to develop a management strategy to promote quality teaching. The contribution of the research to the subject and Research Niche Area of Edu-Lead is consistent with the vision, goal, and aims of the research entity i.e. to promote the role and position of leadership in education with a focus on organisational development and to contribute to the academic improvement of schools.

Keywords: school leadership, contextual factors, school principals, strategy, school effectiveness.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTION

Education is regarded since the middle of the twentieth century as the most powerful means to shape the modernisation of and to eliminate the ills in societies (Todaro & Smith, 2012). However, the effectiveness of instructive management and structural growth in schools, especially within developing countries, are at risk. School leaders need to account for the influence of problems caused by circumstantial elements in their schools which carry a significant bearing on leadership practices that they possess and ultimately on their learners' performance (Wolhuter, Van der Walt, & Steyn, 2016).

It is widely claimed in research and the education professional fraternity that the success of educational improvement, development, and reform is in direct relation with the quality of leadership and management of educational institutions (Mulford, Kendall, Ewington, Edmunds, Kendall, & Silins, 2008). In this vein, Leithwood, Aitken, and Jantzi (2006) state clearly about lack of evidence of any one situation as regards to transforming an educational institution into a learning community of excellence in the absence of competent leadership. There is furthermore a tendency among scholars in educational leadership to focus narrowly on either leadership or management matters that pertain mostly to internal matters of a specific education institution or group of similar institutions (Westhuizen, 2007). It was for the purpose of this research focus, noteworthy to acknowledge that the professional work of educational leaders is particularly affected by some critical contextual factors beyond the school fence. Wolhuter, Van der Walt, and Steyn (2016) identify three such contextual determinants in particular that education leaders should think about, namely: (i) the teaching structure that provides a framework in which school effectiveness, organisational development and learner performance are to be realised, (ii) societal and, (iii) international contexts.

The aforementioned view resonates noticeably with comparable circumstances in Zimbabwe, where the national percentage pass rates have been displeasure to all concerned with quality education. According to the Zimbabwe Board Chairperson of the Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (Zimsec), Professor Mwenje (as cited in The Zimbabwe Mail, 2022) the 'O' level national percentage pass rate in 2019 it was 31.6 %, 2020 it was 24.77 % and in 2021 it was 26.34 %. Professor Mwenje also reported that in 2022, the 'O' level national pass rate was 28.96 % (Zimsec Press Statement, 2023). The persistent trend of poor school results has

brought about a public outcry from stakeholders such as parents, teachers, students, and especially from the educational authorities in the Marondera District of Zimbabwe.

Educationists, and those with an interest in education, speculate widely about the reasons and causes that contribute to the dilemma of poor results in schools and a variety of matters are mentioned in this regard such as biological factors, socio-economic issues, and the shortage of teachers.

Based on the preceding background information and brief introduction, the chief study inquiry researched was: *What leadership strategy can school principals within the Marondera District in Zimbabwe implement to account for the influence of contextual factors in their schools?* An all-inclusive focus on or analysis of the complex reasons and causes for the poor results in the schooling system of Zimbabwe is beyond the scope and reach of this study. Therefore, the researcher decided on the three-branched theoretical framework of Wolhuter, Van der Walt and Steyn (2016), which is apportioned into (i) education systems, (ii) societies, and (iii) international contexts as guiding agenda to delineate the focus of this research in a particular education district of Zimbabwe. The 'lens' for the leadership strategy was based on the five core school leadership practices as identified and described by The Wallace Foundation (2013) as well as Waite and Bogotch (2017) (see par. 2.1), which are central for effective school leadership. These core leadership practices are: *i)* crafting a vision / an inspiring dream, *ii)* ensuring a climate or pathway friendly for education, *iii)* nurturing leadership within others by co-operation, *iv)* advancing teaching by teamwork, and *v)* leading and managing resources, and practices for maintainable growth.

The outline of chapter 1 deals initially with some key concept clarifications, a literature review, research-specific questions and aims, research design and methodology, ethical considerations, and chapter division.

1.1 Concept clarification

A comprehensive and substantive section on the clarification of key concepts that is closely related to the research focus forms an essential part of the literature study of the thesis. Chapter 1 serves mainly to orientate the reader and to enable a common understanding and perspective on some of the main concepts.

1.1.1 Leadership

The terminology about leading and managing are regularly utilised similarly. However, the indicated concepts are distinctively different and the accountabilities connected with leadership involve distinct responses from the particular accountabilities connected with management. There are a plethora of viewpoints on these related concepts, but the influential stance of Clarke (2009) is relevant and accepted for the purpose of this research. Leadership is, according to Clarke (2009), concerned about direction and drive, whereas management deals with day-to-day operations for efficiency. Leaders concentrate with the outside and the future, while achievements obtained from future-focused transformation. Managers concentrate with the inside and the current, while achievement is obtained from amended operational structures of planning, organising, control, and command. An important aspect to keep in mind is that Clarke (2009) rightfully emphasised the significance that both leading and managing are crucial for the achievement of an educational institution. The implication is that an effective school principal should be competent as both leader and manager. This concise perspective of school leadership is accepted for this research where the focus is on the development of a leadership strategy for school principals in a specific delineated area. A brief and further exposition of leadership as concept is provided to ensure a common understanding.

Leadership as broad concept can be seen as flaming a path for others, moving in front, directing the course of action, escorting. Someone who leads others has got the character, appeal, awareness, vision and abilities to demonstration the approach into the future for other people, who are followers and where they operate jointly in the direction of shared objectives (Van Vuuren, Van der Westhuizen, & Van der Walt, 2016). A dominant part in the numerous descriptions of leadership in an education context is that there is a clear-cut process of influence, and in this sense, the description of Bush and Glover (2003) is supported in this research i.e.:

“Leadership relates to communication and exclusive messages to particular people and groups with whom leaders intermingle for the purpose of building and acting on a mutual and developing vision of boosted educational skills for pupils.”

Leadership for the purpose of this study entails thus a specific school leader to provide direction and purpose for those who share common interests to realise shared objectives in schools. This research strongly relied on a particular theoretical foundation for education leadership as this concept is widely researched and reported in literature. A report by the Wallace Foundation (2013), which looks at the school principal as a leader who guides schools to improved instruction and learning, was preferred as contextual theoretical scaffold for this

study. This particular theoretical framework encompasses five core leadership practices that are identified as crucial for effective school leadership and are briefly outlined as follow (Waite & Bogotch, 2017; The Wallace Foundation, 2013).

1.1.2 Shaping a vision (an inspiring dream)

The school leader is instrumental in developing a school wide vision (an inspiring dream) and get all concerned involved. Having high expectations for all in the school is fundamental to ending the achievement opening between privileged and less privileged school learners and for increasing the general attainment of all learners. In the shaping of a vision for the school, the influence of the contextual factors needs to be accounted for.

1.1.3 Building an environment and pathway friendly to teaching

Successful school leaders construct an environment in which learners and educators feel reinforced and answered to. A non-bureaucratic climate is supported and educators are encouraged to establish part of a competent community that is fixed in the educational and societal learning aims of the learning institution. In order to realise these goals, the influence of contextual factors need to be contemplated by the school leadership.

1.1.4 Cultivating collaboration and leadership in others

Effective school leaders realise that they cannot do all the work alone and have to utilise effectively all the expertise and awareness of each member of the school organisation. The greater circulated leadership is upheld in the school community, the healthier it is for learner performance and wellbeing in the school. This particular key feature of effective school leadership is not possible without taken into consideration the impact of contextual aspects on a school community.

1.1.5 Improving teamwork and instruction

The core business of productive school leaders is to ensure the success of the educational organisation and organisational leaders have to perform intensively by observing, communicating, and enabling professional development to improve achievement and

performance. The effect of contextual influences on the success of a school is crucial and need to be included in any strategy of a related nature.

1.1.6 Handling individuals, information, and procedures for sustainable growth

Successful educational leaders give meticulous care for appointments with stakeholders and demonstrate an ability to retain high performers. School leaders similarly recognise how to create the finest expenditure of information and learning to inquire valuable questions. The leadership is knowledgeable about the processes of planning, implementing action plans, providing support, advocating, communicating, and monitoring. Contextual influences effect on some activities of educational leaders and overall school performance is obvious and need to be accounted for in the school programme. The above-mentioned five core practices were accepted as a theoretical framework for this research topic.

1.1.7 Contextual factors

Context can be understood as any implicit and/or explicit information as well as situations that affect an entity and particular characteristics of such circumstances are termed as contextual factors (Cronsbein, Meiser, & Leyer, 2014). The concept of contextual factors refers to the circumstances, influences, forces, and situations that exist both within (internally) and outside (externally) the entity or institution and are likely to affect such institution's organisational culture, performance and programmes. A comprehensive listing, deconstruction and analysis of the variety of contextual factors was not justified as part of the chapter 1, but it was described comprehensively and in detail in the thesis. The descriptions of Waite and Bogotch (2017), Steyn, De Waal and Wolhuter (2011), and Van der Westhuizen (2011) were used as framework to identify and describe the relevant and main contextual factors. A brief explanation follows.

The contextual factors from within (internal) are amongst others, history, biography, culture, finance, and infrastructure. All schools have a particular historical development that influences the present and future of such a school. Influences on the functioning of a school emanate mostly from society with a historical background and the school principals as educational leaders should clearly understand the implication of the historical background (Waite & Bogotch, 2017; Van der Westhuizen, 2011). The biography of a school community needs to be accounted for reasons related to the manifestation of diversity and the accompanying impact on the school's culture and climate (Van der Westhuizen, 2011). The limited financial resources and

escalating demands on the finances of an educational organisation force leadership of the school to be realistic and skilful to generate and use this scarce commodity optimally in a way that is advantageous to the school and society (Steyn et al., 2011). All present and future endeavours by the school leader as the head of the organisation need to consider the availability and functionality of the resources of the educational institution (Steyn et al., 2011). These specific contextual factors and their related influences were described comprehensively as part of chapter three in the thesis.

Contextual factors from outside (external) can be seen as demographic, social-political, socio-economic and the wider culture (Iwasiwu, Goldenberg, & Andrusyszyn, 2009). Demographic factors are seen as the numbers and movement of people at all levels with an impact on the school community's composition (Van der Westhuizen, 2011). Contextual factors of a socio-political nature determine to a large extent, the learning institution's identity as well as moulding instructional management in accordance with education directives and related policies. The school principal is as executive official on behalf of the education authorities accountable to adhere to political-inspired policies and societal influences (Waite & Bogotch, 2017). Socio-economic factors point for the purpose of this research, to challenging milieus such as family structures, poverty, unemployment rates, crime, deprivation, accessibility etc. It is obvious that these socio-economic factors will have a major influence on the kind of control of the instructional leader (Steyn et al., 2011). The prevailing culture of the school community has to be accounted for with respect to, amongst other aspects, language, religion, and traditional customs (Van der Westhuizen, 2011).

Educational leadership, according to Wolhuter, Van der Walt and Steyn (2016), ought to take the contextual factors into account for effective development and change in educational institutions to ensure sustainable school improvement. The influence of contextual factors on any school, emphatically impact the way success is achieved (Orlowsky, 2004). This concise concept clarification is clearly indicative of the relevancy of the topic under investigation and underpins the selected and demarcated research focus.

1.1.8 Strategy

The term *strategy* stems from the Greek *stratēgos*, which is a compilation of two concepts, *stratos* (army) and *agein* (primeval Greek for guiding). With regards to this, *Stratēgos* indicates the setting of a plan for action (strategy) as a key responsibility of a

commander or leader. This interpretation is still part of modern language meaning (Rue & Byars, 2005; Dictionary.com, 2018), while the prominent element of leadership is discernible in the origin of the concept. It is important to realise that strategy is not one and the same as strategic planning. Strategy can be viewed by Davies (2003) as to

- comprise an organised design of activities to approach matters or developments
- be concerned with the intermediate to long-term instead of the short-term functional opinion
- be the result of strategic reasoning, and
- strategy can be taken as an outline against which to measure the existing, looking at concerns and developments

The aforementioned background information can be summarised as follows: people in leadership positions propose a strategy as a purposeful process with phases and a specific design of activities to address a certain subject or trend. Another definition of strategy is an intermediate to long-term interference plan with a clear focus on achieving specific results in a planned manner.

A description of strategy can be created by combining these many perspectives on it (Davies, 2003; Bateman & Snell, 2004; Hannagan, 2005; Rue & Byars, 2005).

Strategy refers to a premeditated and carefully designed plan by leaders as a process with a pattern of actions over the medium to long-term to achieve intended objectives in an organised and coordinated manner.

Due to specific effects and practices that occur in all institutions, leaders must be involved in strategy processes in every organisation (Linstead, Fulop & Lilley, 2004). For this reason, a strategy-approach was adopted for this research. A strategy consistent with the formulated definition was developed for school leaders to account for the influences of contextual factors in schools in accordance with the mentioned theoretical framework from The Wallace Foundation (2013) and Waite and Bogotch (2017) (par. 2.1).

1.2 Literature overview

A universal feature is that schools are not isolated educational organisations and as core institutions in society, schools face a variety of influences from the community and other powerful contextual situations and circumstances. School effectiveness may never be improved, without educational leaders being *inter alia* conscious of and prepare to act on the contextual challenges in and beyond the classroom and school fence that might have serious impact on the overall performance of schools (Clarke, 2009). It is evident from literature and related publications from the education profession that the aspect of school leaders has transformed significantly as time passed. School communities should thus continuously account for the increased impact of contextual factors such as rapid technological advancements (the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution), socio-economic factors, cultural matters, political influences, unrest, health issues, globalisation and increased migration and mobility (Pont, Nusche, & Moorman, 2008; Government Gazette, 2016). An outstanding feature of the mentioned role change is that school leaders need to consider what contextual influences from outside the school influence the school's efficiency and performance. Within the South African context, The South African Standard for Principals (Government Gazette, 2016) procedure states clearly that school leaders should strive to accomplish the maximum heights of success in the individuals' respective schools for the benefit of the organisation as well as the country in its completeness. According to the aforementioned policy on the South African Standard for Principals, the status of the leadership and the leadership's expertise are what determine how well-equipped educational institutions are to provide support and implement transformation and development (Government Gazette, 2016).

This strong policy imperative resonates far outside the boundaries of an individual school and can only be realised if the influence of contextual factors on school effectiveness and performance is meticulously accounted for by school leaders. Cunningham and Cordeiro (2009) further emphasise the liability of school leaders for their quick responses, proactive action, and alignment of diverse practices to account for the influence of contextual factors on school efficiency and achievement. The related statements from The South African Standard for Principals' policy and from Cunningham and Cordeiro (2009) served as a strong rationale for the focus of this research and are indicative of the need for such research.

A particular and noteworthy outcome from related research is the well-established, practical association between educational leadership and enhanced learner attainment (The Wallace Foundation, 2013). The two comprehensive examples of two extensive quantitative

studies demonstrate that a lot of school variables regarded independently had insignificant influences on education. The real payoff comes when conditions favourable to learning are created - and this particular aspect is also the responsibility of school leaders. Leadership is widely regarded as following only after classroom teaching amidst factors that are associated with school effectiveness that exert influence on learner accomplishment in an educational institution (The Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Schleicher (2012) confirms the indispensable role of a principal as the head of the educational institution to account for school contextual factors to sustain school effectiveness and performance. The previous reasoning emphasises the responsibilities of instructional leadership about taking into account all factors that may have an influence on the success of teaching and learning in a school organisation. It is of particular significance that extensive research has been published about various themes related to school leadership in developing countries, but little attention is paid to contextual factors and even definitional descriptions about education leadership lack relatedness to context-specific aspects and factors (Weinstein & Hernandez, 2016).

The emphasis on the relevance of leadership in education and the obligation to account for contextual factors in the schools served as strong motivation and as a key focus for this research. The rationale for this research is further supported by the views of Bush and Glover (2003), who state unequivocally that contextual factors are likely to have a substantial impact on the overall success of schools and furthermore that there is a deficiency of study about the implications and influence of contextual factors on school effectiveness. In line with this identified conundrum in literature, Bush and Glover (2003) recommend focused research to explore this important issue.

As mentioned, Wolhuter, Van der Walt, and Steyn (2016) classify these contextual factors firstly into an education system, secondly as the society, and finally in relation to the international situation. According to Van der Westhuizen (2007), the education system consists of clear identifiable components, i.e. i) teaching structure policy, ii) teaching structure administration, iii) organisation for instruction, and iv) support facilities. The component, education system policy, is viewed as the ideals, aspirations, and expectations that embrace the principles and ideology that form the basis of the education policy and subsequently determine largely the context of education provision. The education system administration indicates the specific structure through which the functionaries and personnel in the education system are organised to determine and to implement policy, which should make provision for dealing effectively with contextual factors. The

component, structure for teaching encompasses the structural combination of all education institutions with the primary function to provide structure for all instruction as well as learning undertakings in accordance with a set programme. The final component of support services refers to specialised facilities that are required to increase the quality and efficiency in teaching and learning efforts (Van der Westhuizen, 2011), which also have to take into account the influence of contextual factors. The four components of the education system are realised in practice in a unique way in the education systems of different countries in spite of the similarity of basic components. The uniqueness of each education system is attributed to contextual determinants that lead to the idiosyncratic character of each education system (Van der Westhuizen, 2007).

The second factor as identified by Wolhuter, Van der Walt and Steyn (2016) with reference to society includes matters related to demography, culture, language, religion, economic and political issues (see par. 2.2). The impact of wide ranging societal influences on the effectiveness of the school is regarded by Grobler (2003) as a crucial aspect that school leadership should meticulously account for. The final contextual factor is about the international situation and refers to the impact of globalisation on the education system and schooling system. No societal organisation consists in isolation and has to account for the influence of globalisation, which is directly linked to contextual influences (Van der Westhuizen, 2007).

The contextual factors in terms of the classification by Wolhuter, Van der Walt and Steyn (2016), have been discussed in detail and comprehensively in line with the effectiveness of instruction and schooling in the theoretical section of the thesis. These contextual factors constitute the parameters and foci of this research study.

Based on the preceding statements, argumentation and reasoning from a focused literature overview on the specific research focus, the following study question together with related research sub questions were developed to delineate the investigation and to serve as basis for an appropriate design and methodology.

1.3 Research questions and aims

1.3.1 Central research question

What strategy can school principals in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe implement to account for the influence of contextual factors?

In order to distil the central research question into more refined and meaningful sub divisions, related research sub questions were formulated to hone the research focus.

1.3.2 Research sub questions

- What is the relation between school leadership and school effectiveness?
- What contextual factors have an influence on school effectiveness according to the contextual forces framework?
- What are the contextual factors that influence the success of secondary schools in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe?
- What strategy can be implemented by the school leaders in the Marondera District of Zimbabwe to account for the influence of contextual factors?

1.3.3 Research purpose and aims

1.3.3.1 Research purpose

The purpose of the research was to formulate a strategy to be employed by school leaders in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe to promote school effectiveness in reaction to the effect of contextual factors.

1.3.3.2 Research aims

The research aims refined and enhanced the research purpose and intended to:

- i) Determine and describe the relation between school leadership and school effectiveness
- ii) Identify and describe the contextual factors that have an influence on school effectiveness according to the contextual forces framework
- iii) Identify and elucidate specific contextual factors that affect school effectiveness in schools in the Marondera District of Zimbabwe, and to
- iv) Develop a strategy for implementation by the school leadership in the Marondera District of Zimbabwe to account for the influence of contextual factors

1.4 Research design and methodology

The purpose of this section dealt with outlining and describing the study design and methods to realise the stated research aims.

1.4.1 Research design

According to the stated study topic and purpose (par. 1.4.2 & 1.4.3), I used an interpretivism approach, which entails working with qualitative data that show the thoughts and experiences of the participants who participated in that social research. The assumption was that human phenomena are fundamentally distinct from natural phenomena, which implies that I aimed at interpreting and to gain insight into human behaviour in a context-specific situation, rather than explaining or predicting it (Babbie & Mouton, 2008). My aim was to gain insight into the influence of contextual aspects on quality instruction and learning so as to develop the related strategy for school leaders in the Marondera District of Zimbabwe.

Phenomenology signifies that mankind is engaged in the procedure of creating sense of their actions in addition to experiences by constantly deducing, constructing, providing meaning, describing, rationalising and explaining their actions (Babbie & Mouton, 2008). Theorists who are supporting a phenomenological approach, question the validity of postulations from those who are supporting a positivist position and assert that human behaviour and actions cannot fully be understood by only positivistic methods. This particular outlook was adopted for this research. As an interpretivism study, the point of departure for gaining insight started with the persons themselves and how they acquaint themselves with the world around them (Cohen et al., 2011), which in this research was the experiences and views of principals as leaders of their school communities to assure quality teaching and learning. The basic assumption is that people attribute meaning to situations and circumstances that is continuously constructed and reconstructed by people's interpretations of the situations they are in (Punch, 2014).

Based on the preceding exposition, I utilised a qualitative research design based on interpretivist and phenomenological principles. Two key aspects of the data generation strategy were firstly, the sampling procedure and the selection of the participants.

1.4.2 Sampling and selection of participants

Sampling refers to the practice of selecting a portion or subset from a defined population with the intention of accurately representing that population (De Vos et al., 2005). The goal of this investigation was not to generalise the findings to a particular group of people, but rather to identify how contextual elements manifested themselves in a few chosen schools in order to develop a strategy for school administrators to take into consideration the influence of contextual factors. Therefore, a non-probability and purposeful selection method was chosen for the purpose of picking out schools.

Similar to quantitative research, qualitative research results are expected to gain more credibility with a sufficient sample size (Thietart, 2007). The drawback is a comparable increase in the time and expense of information collecting. The goal is to choose the ideal size that will permit a reasonable level of confidence within the parameters of the results (Thietart, 2007). The two Thietart (2007) principles of replication and saturation were recognised and used to choose the appropriate number of instances for this study.

Replication: Each instance is chosen because it will almost certainly lead to a different conclusion for foreseeable reasons (theoretical repetition) or because related consequences are predicted (literal repetition). Two to three cases may be sufficient if the subject at hand does not demand a high level of confidence. The total number of literal replication conditions depends on the extent of the observed differences and the anticipated level of certainty. Otherwise, five to six literal repetitions would be required when the desired degree of confidence is higher. The number of situations expected to have an impact on the phenomenon under study determines the number of cases where theoretic repetition occurs. The potential total of theoretical repetitions rises together with the number of scenarios, which will coincidentally improve the internal validity of the study (Thietart, 2007). Nine schools were included in the study because they met the criteria set out by Thietart (2007) and since it was unknown how much influence and what kind of impact contextual factors had on schools.

When more data cannot be collected to support the theory, *saturation* has occurred (Thietart, 2007). It is challenging to predict precisely how many instances will be required to avoid saturation in advance. This applicable standard is based on the principle of diminishing returns, which states that as more evidence accumulates, the amount of new knowledge becomes progressively less and less until it eventually becomes zero. When the saturation time has arrived, I could make an educated guess (Thietart, 2007). In this sense, as researcher I was

alert and vigilant for the manifestation of saturation in this research and confident that the number of selected schools (nine) was sufficient to prevent the occurrence of saturation.

Based on the preceding framework by Thietart (2017) about the number of cases and the types of secondary schools in the Marondera District, three schools for each type of the forty secondary schools were selected, namely from public, private and mission schools. Thus, a total of nine schools formed part of this research. All schools were accessible for me as the researcher.

The education authority in the Marondera District, namely the Marondera Education District Office was approached for assistance to identify the specific schools for inclusion in the purposive sample of schools. Participants had to be knowledgeable about the topic of investigation and therefore the preliminary criteria for the selection of schools were:

- The school principal demonstrates a basic appreciation of the effect of contextual factors about the functions pertaining to the school
- Some best practices are evident in dealing with the effect of contextual influences on the school effectiveness
- Qualities to deal with the effect of contextual influences are demonstrated by the school principal
- Policy directives are followed to account for the influence of contextual factors in the school
- Actions to account for the effect of contextual influences are implemented.

Participants for the research comprised school principals as the education leaders of their respective schools. Barbour (2014) states that it is essential for participants to have experience of the phenomenon under investigation and should be experts in the field (Barbour, 2014). Based on the statement by Barbour (2014), the school principals as participants in this research were *ex officio* regarded as educational leaders with experience and expertise in the education profession and they fulfilled a key role within the researched phenomenon and were therefore selected as participants.

1.4.3 Data generation

The data generation strategy for this research was closely related with the nature of qualitative social science research where spoken and written presentations as well as records of human experiences and views are investigated and studied (Barbour, 2014). The interview

stands out as the most notable data generation technique in qualitative research and is recognised as an excellent way to measure the views of individuals, opinions, connotations, and interpretations of reality (Punch, 2014). Punch (2014, p. 144) offers a short overview that is particularly pertinent for understanding why the interview was chosen as the research method:

In order to understand other persons' constructions of reality, we would do well to ask them... and to ask them in such a way that they can tell us in their terms (rather than those imposed rigidly and a priori by ourselves) and in a depth which addresses the rich context that is the substance of their meanings (p.144).

For individual interviews, Thietart (2007) states that researchers can either conduct a designed interview with a sequence of predetermined questions according to planned reaction classifications, or researchers may work more heuristically by using the information as it emerges to further explore the topic under discussion in a semi-structured manner. In line with the specific interview strategy as outlined by Thietart (2007), I conducted semi-structured interviews, which imply a series of pre-defined questions under main headings (focused categories), but allows for some degree of latitude in what is discussed (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2014). The management of the interview process involved preparation for the interview (training, testing, finalisation of the interview schedule, appointments, venues) and recording establishing rapport, refinement of communication and listening skills, question strategy (order and types of interrogations) and the closing of the discussion (Punch, 2014).

1.4.4 Data analysis

A conventional qualitative content analysis as described by Henning (2004) as well as Barbour (2014) was adopted for this research as the most suitable analysis approach to lessen the amount of information to more workable themes as well as categories in accordance with the research problem. A coding process was followed to identify key data in order to allocate it to a system of categories and sub categories. Differentiation was made between pre-determined codes derived from the literature and theoretical framework (deductively) and open codes, which naturally emerged from the data during collection, analysis and interpretation (inductively) (Henning, 2004; Barbour, 2014). In this sense, I approached the coding process not exclusively as a technical activity, but as a dynamic, interactive process. Once the data was coded into themes (categories and sub categories), I engaged in a process to identify patterns between and across such categories, and where relevant, across cases. In the final stage of the data analysis process, I made decisions about what was important and relevant to the research problem by

synthesising and summarising the data for inclusion in the final write-up of the report to elucidate my findings and recommendations (Brundett & Rhodes, 2014).

Barbour (2014) whom I related strongly to, makes the case that whether one conducts analysis manually or using a computer, the theoretical journey is the same. In addition, the key message is that using a computer to conduct analysis is not inherently more labour-intensive than conducting analysis manually. The investigator, not the analysis method, is responsible for ensuring that the analysis is methodical and thorough, and therefore, I followed a manual methodology.

1.4.5 The function of the researcher

According to Merriam (2009), a qualitative researcher may perform the following four tasks: entire participant, participant as observer, observer as participant, and whole observer. I took on the position of participant as observer within the parameters of this investigation since, in my capacity as a researcher, I engaged in intimate engagement with chosen interviewees as an interviewer.

1.4.6 Trustworthiness

The overall trustworthiness of this research is based on the benchmark work of Denzin and Lincoln (2005) as well as the position of Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen and Kyngäs (2014). There has been much debate about the most appropriate terms for assessing qualitative studies for instance, rigor, legitimacy and dependability, which are mainly rooted in a positivist conception of research (Elo et al., 2014). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) used the term *trustworthiness* in this regard, while the most widely used criteria for the evaluation of qualitative research are also proposed by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) namely: credibility, dependability, Confirmability, transferability, and authenticity. This research was creditable by ensuring that the participants in the research were identified as key informants and were described accurately. To adhere to the criterion of *dependability*, I adhered to research protocol for the gathering, analysing and reporting of data under different conditions. *Confirmability* was achieved by maximising objectivity and similarity between two or more autonomous individuals about the information's correctness, significance, or implication. The potential for extrapolation was explored on a continuing basis to allow for *transferability* to similar settings or groups. *Authenticity* was assured by conducting the research process in a fair and just manner by

describing precise detail of procedures and actions taken by me as the researcher. Over and above the listed criteria, the trustworthiness of this research was based on the gathering, interpreting and reporting of rich, appropriate and saturated data.

1.5 Ethical considerations

The ethical requirements of any research are universal and in connection to a specific context, and researchers should be aware of this (Brynard & Hanekom, 2010). The ethics for research relates to what is "right" and "wrong" in the course of carrying out research. There are basically two important matters that responsible researchers have to adhere to: firstly, responsibility in dealing with people who take part in a project; and secondly, accountability to the field of science, to be authentic and truthful in the broadcasting of research (De Vos et al., 2005). As a responsible researcher, I treated the participants strictly in accordance with the ethical standards for conducting responsible research and was also led by the academic prescripts from the discipline of Education Leadership and Management.

As researcher, I provided adequate information of the research to all role players. Permission was obtained from the relevant education authorities, school governors, and participants (principals) of the selected schools to conduct this research.

Every participant in the study was made aware of the necessity, aim, and justification for the study, their anonymous participation, and their right to withdraw from the study at any point during the investigation. Participants were given access to the investigation's data generation and findings for the purpose of verification. In order to ensure that all study methods are completed with the utmost care, accuracy, and integrity to guarantee the reliability of the results, the research was conducted and presented in an ethically acceptable manner (De Vos et al., 2005; Cohen et al., 2001; Brynard & Hanekom, 2014). All ethical clearance requirements of the NWU and Faculty of Education were adhered to in a strict manner.

1.6 Contribution of research

1.6.1 To the subject

In keeping with the purpose of the study, the research's contribution to the field of education leadership and management was to assist and to provide a framework for school

leaders and managers in understanding how to deal with the influence of contextual factors in their schools – with specific reference to the Marondera Education District in Zimbabwe.

1.6.2 To the Research Niche Area: Edu-Lead

The contribution of this research to the Research Niche Area of Edu-Lead is consistent with the vision, goal and aims of the research entity i.e. to promote the role and position of leadership in education with a focus on organisational development and to contribute to the academic improvement of schools. Existing theories were studied and challenged and a strategy for school leaders to account for the contextual factors was developed to enhancing the praxis of leadership performance in the context of an education district in Zimbabwe. The presentation, interpretation and discussion of theories, findings and recommendations will contribute to the current body of knowledge about the contextual factors that influence education quality in a demarcated education district in Zimbabwe.

1.7 Chapter division

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Chapter 1 | Introduction and statement of the problem

This chapter serves as an introduction to the rest of the thesis and covers related topics such as concept clarifications, a brief overview of the literature study, the research questions and research aims, the research design and methodology and concludes with the ethical considerations of the study. |
| Chapter 2 | School leadership and school effectiveness

The second chapter focuses on school leadership with an emphasis on concept clarification, leadership theories and leadership styles in a school context with relevance to the influence of contextual factors for principals to promote quality teaching in their schools. |
| Chapter 3 | The influence of contextual factors on the school

The final chapter on the theoretical or literature underpinning on the study describes the conceptual framework, an overview of the Zimbabwean education system, contextual factors and the influence of globalisation and professional development on the education system in Zimbabwe. |
| Chapter 4 | Research design and methodology |

The qualitative, interpretative research design, semi-structured interview procedure and actions, content analysis methodology and ethical considerations are described in detail in this chapter.

Chapter 5 Data analysis and interpretation

The data analysis process is presented and the findings are substantiated with relevant and trustworthy data, while a strategy framework and management plan is developed for school leaders to deal with the influence of related contextual factors on the quality of teaching in their schools.

Chapter 6 Summary, recommendations and conclusion

A concise summary of the research and key findings are formulated in this chapter with substantiated recommendations. The chapter ends with mentioning the strengths and limitations of the research, recommendations for further research and a personal reflection about the research process.

CHAPTER 2: SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

2. INTRODUCTION

The chapter uncovers the literature appropriate to this research on the influence of contextual factors for principals to promote quality teaching in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe. An understanding of the concepts and theories behind the subject of study is key, prior to conducting a research study. Three leadership theories will be studied in this research, to show the significance of the part that school leaders (principals) take in the success of schools that they lead. These include, the situational leadership, transformational as well as instructional. Although, educational leadership and transformational leadership are the most frequently mentioned models in instructional literature (Robinson et al., 2008) and this research as well, the situational leadership theory is also an appropriate model for use in this research. This research looked at the benefits of the three theories and their contribution to quality instruction and studying. These theories are preferred due to their link to the focus of the investigation, centred on the study questions and purpose of the research. Concept clarifications are the curtain lifter to the conversation of every single theory.

Lastly, a deduction is given, which highlights the significance of every one theory to the research in addition to how these theories are integrated within the study, to answer the research question which seeks to find the influence of contextual factors for principals to support outstanding instruction in the schools of the Marondera District in Zimbabwe. It is expected that this research helps the school leaders to account for the influence of contextual factors in schools and some strategies that may aid in the promotion of quality teaching in the different types of secondary schools in Marondera District are suggested.

2.1 Clarification and conceptualisation of leadership

Although the notions of leadership and management are clearly distinct from one another and the tasks associated with one involve very different responses from those associated with the other, they are commonly interchangeable. There are several perspectives on these connected ideas, but Clarke's (2009) influential viewpoint is pertinent and accepted for the purposes of this research. According to Clarke (2009), management is concerned with the day-to-day operations for efficiency while leadership is focused on providing direction and motivation. Those in charge look ahead and to the future while success is attained through visionary

transformation. Managers pay attention to the internal environment as well as the present, while success is attained through improved operational structures involving planning, organising, command, and instruction. It is critical to keep in mind that Clarke (2009) highlighted the need of both leading and managing as being essential for the effectiveness of an educational institution. The implication is that an effective school principal should be competent as both leader and manager. Thus, this concise perspective of school leadership is accepted for this research where the focus is on the development of a leadership strategy for school principals in a specific delineated area of Marondera District. Therefore, a clarification of leadership as a concept is provided to confirm a common understanding in this research.

As a general idea, leadership can be understood as paving the way for others, marching ahead of them, setting the course, and escorting. According to Van Vuuren, Van der Westhuizen, and Van der Walt, (2016), a leader is a person with the traits, appeal, awareness, understanding, and aptitudes to pave the way forward for more followers wherever they collaborate in pursuit of common goals. On the other hand, leadership is seen as a position of authority within an organisation or administration that grants the leader the power to direct a group of people who are responsible for and have a vision for achieving previously stated goals (Garca-Martnez, Daz-Delgado, & Ubago-Jiménez, 2018). It is obvious that the leader oversees, escorts and applies the institution's depiction. This causes certain underlying dynamics of influence to emerge between the institution's adherents and the person in charge (Harris, 2014; Piot & Kelchtermans, 2016). Leaders do not stand and watch at the back of a group to drive it to work but they position themselves in front of the group as they support progress and motivate the group to achieve organisational goals (CORAT, 2011). In another view, Torrington et al. (2008) contend that effective leaders are reflected by two orientations which are task-building and relationship-building. The importance of the two above orientations in leadership will be explained in this research through the leadership theories that have been chosen to explain the influence of contextual factors that obstruct success in educational institutions in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe. These theories will also assist the school principals to develop the best management strategy to promote quality teaching in the district of Marondera, in reaction to the impact of contextual influences.

A different interpretation of leadership claims that it is someone's capacity to persuade people to act in a way they find objectionable, but which they eventually appreciate (Polele, 2008). This definition brings back the idea of inspiration, where a group of people is inspired to work together towards a common goal. Leadership induces people to contribute willingly to

common organisational goals in accordance with their maximum capacity (CORAT, 2011). The notion of a common goal seems to be an important addition to the principles of leadership. Leadership, according to Dubrin (2010) entails the collaboration of leaders and their followers, which begins with collective leadership accountability. A sense of balance of control between the two sides becomes apparent from the perspective that it is a partnership. Understanding this collaboration or relationship becomes increasingly vital as a result. Dubrin (2010) emphasises the following four elements as being crucial for a successful partnership to underline this point:

- i) Purposeful argument – Continuous conversation all the time at any stage aids leaders to clearly express matters. From this, it follows that understanding the level of dialogue must help inform the nature and effectiveness of a school principal's leadership within their setting.
- ii) Deserving a right to express one's opposing view – where people have a contrary opinion, they should be able to voice it. Accordingly, school leaders should have such an open relationship with their subordinates, where their rights and views are considered and respected. Sometimes criticism from subordinates is constructive; hence school leaders should be aware of that. In support of this view, Torrington et al. (2008) assert that a leader should admit mistakes and say sorry when it is appropriate. It is important for a leader to show humbleness because employees work better if they are respected than if they are fearful.
- iii) Combined responsibility – when an organisation fails or prospers every individual is answerable. This principle will be of importance in this study since it will improve the respect of the dimensions as concerns school principals' leadership, with accountability being central in their performance.
- iv) The need for absolute honesty – due to distribution of power, people are expected to be honest. Particularly within the setting of a school which is usually a large organisation comprising of many people and stakeholders, the concept of honesty could be useful in understanding the impediments to school principal.

From the above clarification of leadership concept, it is clear that the key aspects in overall descriptions about leadership are acknowledged along these lines: influence, willingness, goals or objectives and relationships. For example, one former celebrated Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi understood the concept of leadership as referring to muscles, however, it involves working in harmony with everyone in the organisation (Taubenfeld, 2021). This

understanding centres on leaders building worthy relationships with their subordinates in order to develop successful leadership in successful organisations. Leaders do not have to force themselves onto followers, but they need to influence them through working with them cordially.

However, a crucial component within the numerous descriptions concerning leadership in an education context is that there is a clear-cut process of influence, and in this sense, the description of Bush and Glover (2003) is supported in this research, i.e.:

Leadership is about communication and invitational messages to individuals and groups with whom leaders interact in order to build and act on a shared and evolving vision of enhanced educational experiences for pupils (p.115)

Leadership, for the purpose of this study involves a specific school leader to provide direction and purpose for those who share common interests to realise shared objectives in schools. These identified core aspects will thus, be an imperative part of this research focus which seeks to identify the influence of contextual factors for principals to promote quality teaching in the schools in the Marondera District. The identification of specific contextual factors will help to develop a management strategy for school effectiveness. Having explained what leadership is in general, as well as in education and identified some of the major concepts related to it, the ensuing sections focus on the leadership theories which are most relevant to the education in schools, specifically in the Marondera District of Zimbabwe. The different leadership theories are employed in the research, with the hope of helping principals in the district of Marondera to account for contextual factors in schools and develop ways to deal with the contextual factors in order to promote development and success in their respective schools.

2.2 An introduction to leadership theories

Leadership theories have evolved significantly over time beginning with the Traits/Great man theories which emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These theories posited that leadership was an innate ability possessed by a selected few, often characterised by traits like intelligence, courage and charisma. The great man theory popularised by Thomas Carlyle emphasised the importance of exceptional individuals shaping history (Spector, 2016). However, this approach was criticised for its lack of empirical support and failure to account for situational factors. In response, the Behavioural approach emerged in the 1940s and 1950s, focusing on observable behaviours and actions rather than inherent traits. This shift led to the development of contingency theories such as those proposed by Fred Fiedler and Victor Vroom which

recognised the importance of context and situational variables in leadership effectiveness Suharyanto and Dwi Lestari (2020). Behavioural approach marked a significant turning point in leadership theory paving the way for more suitable and context-dependent understandings of leadership.

There are various theories which look at leadership from many dimensions and stand points, particularly, given leadership itself, is not a new concept. According to Emu (2012), leadership existed before the industrial era and was centred on beliefs and customary circumstances with an indication of existing culturally and communally. Leaders in different organisations, schools included, can employ different leadership theories in order to develop and be successful in their environments. The purpose of using a theory is to make it easier for the leader to select the correct leadership approach, in relation towards the follower. The theories chosen in this research may help principals with the right decisions to deal with the challenges in learning institutions, so as to support success within schools in the Marondera District. The following section looks at the situational leadership theory which benefits organisational leaders with styles that they can adopt for use at their workplaces.

2.2.1 The situational leadership theory

Hersey and Blanchard (1996) advanced the situational leadership as “life cycle theory” in the book, *Management of Organisational Behaviour* with the aim of helping organisational leaders with leadership styles that can be used in certain situations. Blanchard and Hersey claim that different leadership styles can be employed in different situations, denoting that, different leadership methods can be engaged since no style is regarded as flawless in all situations. A leader chooses a style which matches the situation on the ground, hence, the renaming of the theory from “life cycle theory” in 1969 to situational leadership theory in 1972 (Blanchard & Hersey, 1996). Considering the influence of contextual factors that are impacting on the success of educational organisations in the district of Marondera within Zimbabwe, the situational leadership is applicable in this research, when school principals employ the different situational leadership styles enclosed in the theory.

Setiawan et al. (2019) argue that situational leadership is defined as a style involving a leader being able to adapt to acclimatise to a style to suit the circumstances. The situation, according to Setiawan et al. (2019) is the circumstances among the leader’s followers which could strengthen the success of the related work. In relation to this research, which seeks to

describe the influence of contextual factors to promote success in schools, the Marondera District principals should be situational leaders who are able to change or adjust their leadership styles to suit the situation at their workplaces in order to develop their schools. Thus, in this respect, to be successful leaders, principals ought to use different leadership styles within their reach, to the advantage of their team members; as they match their governance style, in connection with the circumstances and the follower's needs (Hersey et al., 2001).

Since, according to the situational leadership theory, there is no one approach which suits all different situations (Northouse, 2007), principals in Marondera District need to identify and define the needs of the teachers or members, so as to choose the best leadership style in response to the situations in schools. Situational leadership encourages the flexibility of the leader, who is required to observe on the subordinates' needs and adapt accordingly (Shonhiwa, 2017). Still on flexibility, Mwai (2011) asserts that situational leadership concerns being malleable and making use of the desired leadership style to cultivate a specified growth status of a follower, in order to be prosperous in a specified operational setting. Thus, in line with this research, the flexibility of a school principal in dealing with different situations will be a recipe which will lead to successful leadership and successful schools because of the worthy relationship which exists between the leaders and subordinates.

Thus, with the above scenario, Hersey and Blanchard identified four different leadership styles that organisational leaders may apply in order to yield success in their organisations. These leadership styles are also applicable in this research, where the purpose is about establishing a leadership approach for school principals to promote success in schools, in accordance with the effect of contextual issues. UKEssays (2018) describe leadership style as a pattern of behaviour, which includes both action and words as displayed by a leader or as observed by followers. This theory circles around job-related maturity, where maturity has been described by Mark et al. (2009) as an individual's ability in carrying out a job and that ability determines the leader's actions. The member's education level and experience, yields the much needed maturity. Thus, school leaders in the district of Marondera need to understand this factor so as to promote quality teaching in their schools. A professionally qualified teacher with at least a diploma or certificate in education performs better than a teacher who does not hold any education related professional qualification. Many schools in the Marondera District still have unprofessionally qualified teachers (known as temporary teachers in Zimbabwe), though they may be graduates with Bachelor's degrees. In support of this factor, Mukeredzi (2016) argues that educators with inadequate information are associated with lesser quality instruction and

learner's successes. Therefore, this might be a contextual factor that is impacting on the success of Marondera schools. However, an understanding of the four situational leadership skills by Hersey and Blanchard helps the Marondera school leaders to develop strategies that promote success in the schools. Hence, the four leadership styles will be discussed in relation to the phase of job development of the subordinates.

Expressed differently, are the school leaders able to apply the leadership styles in different circumstances, as they try to help and motivate their followers so that quality teaching and development are attained? The section which follows explains the four leadership styles.

2.2.2 Hersey and Blanchard's four leadership styles

The Free Online Library for Managers (2015) presents the Hersey and Blanchard's four situational leadership skills as involving to tell, to sell, to participate and to delegate. Telling is where the leader directly tells the follower or member what to do and the way the task should be done (Free Online Library for Managers, 2015). The explanation of this style is that the leader has to be very clear and concise with the instructions that are given to the subordinate in order for the task to be carried out as per the leader's expectation, to achieve success. The followers have to simply follow the instruction as given and fulfil the leader's will. It is predominance of one-way communication (Halima, 2006). This style, according to Kerry (2013), is high on directing behaviours and low on supporting behaviours on the part of the leader because it lacks collaboration between the leader and the subordinate. The leader just gives orders which have to be followed. It is the leader who makes decisions and then communicates them to the followers. Applied in schools, this is where the principal makes decisions for the teachers regarding the work-related activities. This is where school policies may apply. The school principal is an executive official on behalf of the education authority, accountable to adhere to political inspired policies and societal influences (Waite & Bogotch, 2017).

The second situational leadership style, Selling, gives a bit more opportunity for collaboration between the leader and the subordinate (Free Online Library for Managers). According to Kelly (2013), this involves the leader, selling and elucidating the idea and message to the group members in order to get them to accept the practice, for example, a school leader may engage with teachers and explain to them how a task should be done and in turn the teachers will freely give their opinions about the task. Although the principal may be directing the teachers, the notion of "selling" comes in when the person who leads may need to stimulate the

subordinates to agree to take a certain way thereby, leading to the expected result. Participating is the other style that leaders in organisations can opt for. Kelly (2013) maintains that the leader gives less direction and agrees to participants of the group to do a more active role in coming up with ideas and making decisions. What it means here is that the leader has to become part of the followers and try to construct relations. This style gives a chance to the members to showcase their talents when doing the job and the sense of job ownership of the success is created.

Because the members are given the chance to make decisions concerning a given task, most work is done with perfection. Thus, the participating style can be recommended to school principals because of its leader-member relationships.

The fourth situational leadership style is the Delegating style. Hersey et al. (2001) also called the style a “hands- off” approach because of its nature where the subordinates are left to make most of the decisions. The leader gives powers to the individual followers in the organisation. The leader delegates the responsibilities and then monitors the progress of the work (Kelly, 2013). The leader has trust in the group members because of their experience and thus, may not need any supervision. This may be an effective style if implemented in schools by principals, because the subordinates (like senior teachers and heads of departments) may feel empowered and trusted by their leader. Positively, delegation of responsibilities by the leader may also develop followers’ careers and experience which will in turn benefit the school as a whole. In a school environment, for example, the principal may assign the teachers with duties like dealing with indiscipline in the school, inspection of school grounds and checking on absenteeism by learners. Because the teachers know that they are in charge of the task and are trusted by the principal, they tend to do a perfect job. That will result in school success. As mentioned before, these four situational leadership styles have four maturity levels that match and help to describe the group members that are mentioned in each of the four styles. These maturity levels are discussed below.

2.2.3 The four situational leadership maturity levels

In the maturity level one (M1), the leader uses the telling leadership style because the followers do not have the required skills and therefore cannot take the responsibility for the job that has to be accomplished in a certain period (Kelly, 2019). Because the members of this group have low competence and low commitment, they may do their job successfully under a leader who is more commanding and autocratic. This group may be associated with new staff members

in a school who may still need a lot of help from the principal. The group simply needs to be told what to do. Therefore, the leader has to clearly explain to the members what needs to be done in order for the task to be done according to the leader's expectations and this may also lead to the members gaining job experience. Total direction for most of the tasks is what the followers still need in this maturity level. Because the members are still at the beginner level, all decisions are made by the leaders who communicate these to them.

The maturity level two (M2) matches with the selling leadership style (Hersey & Blanchard, 2001). According to this style, the leader endeavours to sell the ideas to the staff by explaining the assignment directions in a convincing way, trying to win them. Unlike the telling style, the members in this maturity level have got the capability to do the job but they lack the enthusiasm to do it. This is where the leader should come in with the selling leadership skill and explain the significance of the task to the success of the organisation. The leader may win the keenness of the members and get the job done. The third maturity level (M3) matches with the participating leadership style (Hersey & Blanchard, 2001). According to this level, M3, it includes those followers who have enough skill and ability to work but Kelly (2019) argues that the members in this level lack the assurance to take up responsibility for the result of the task. These members still need to work with the help of the leader by jointly making judgments. Thus, the engagement and collaboration of the members in this group and the leader will yield the expected results. The leader in this M3 group involves and encourages everyone to take part in the process of executing decisions concerned with the organisation. Thus, with the influence of contextual factors on the Marondera District schools, school leaders should find it helpful to use the participating style, with teachers who may fall under the M3 group.

Lastly, according to Hersey and Blanchard (2001), the fourth maturity level (M4) matches with the delegating situational leadership style. Hersey and Blanchard also called this style, "a hands-off responsibility from a leader to a worker." The leader gives full responsibility to the group members and leave them to work with minimum supervision. Members of this group have the job experience (Zhang, 2017). The members in this group have sufficient skills and have the confidence and willingness for the assumption of duty and the responsibility of the task outcome (Kelly, 2019). There is no need for the leader of this group M4, to be present whilst the duties are being carried out because the confidence and honest by the members, allow the leader to leave the followers to work autonomously.

Therefore, with the above explanation of the situational leadership theory, the argument posed by Dubrin (2010) that in order for collective leadership accountability, there must be

cooperation between the person leading and the group members. However, this theory cannot go without mentioning the benefits and drawbacks of its implementation in organisations by leaders.

2.2.3.1 Advantages of using the situational leadership theory

Most researchers approve that the situational leadership theory is user-friendly, that is, it is easy to understand and to apply it in real situations at workplaces. The situational leaders strive to create environments that are conducive to all workers (Gaille, 2018). Because all workers at an organisation have different experiences, views and abilities that create diversity, leaders should not treat every staff member the same, from one angle. According to Gaille (2018), it calls for the leader to be flexible by not maintaining on a particular set of procedures that should be followed by every person. The flexibility encourages school leaders, for example, to create environments that inspire teachers to come forward and share their opinions for the achievement of schools' success. The situational leadership theory also creates job satisfaction for employees through the leader's selection of an appropriate leadership style (Hersey, 1985). In agreement with Hersey, Slamet et al. (2013) assert that situational leadership is capable of increasing job satisfaction, thereby improving performance and this satisfaction can be boosted by the leader who pays attention to the dominance of the employee's capability to develop (Setyorini et al., 2018). Job satisfaction makes employees to be comfortable with their job, which in turn can lead to low employee turnover because a favourable environment, every employee is given an opportunity to reach a progressive result (Gaille, 2018). As stated by Abassi and Hollman (2000), the turnover of workers is the revolving of employees from one place to another within the job market, among organisations, occupations and careers; and between the situations of occupation and joblessness. In line with this research question which seeks to discover the influence of contextual factors in Marondera district, it is imperative for school leaders to increase the teachers' job satisfaction by being able to employ the situational leadership styles, to avoid high staff turnover.

According to George and Jones (2005), job satisfaction refers to a worker's emotional reaction to various job-related factors, which results in feelings of pleasure, comfort, confidence, rewards, personal growth, and various positive opportunities, including upward mobility, recognition, and appraisal done on a merit basis with money as compensation. Employee turnover, on the other hand, is defined by Mayhew (2019) as the quantity or proportion of workers who leave a company and are replaced by new hires. Thus, to avoid negative

consequences, for example, low organisational performance, low productivity and employee turnover from job dissatisfaction, Ali (2016) advises organisational executives and managers to put into effect policies that will improve employee satisfaction. Hence, in schools, principals ought to be conscious of how satisfied their subordinates are in order to develop the quality of their services, thereby, retaining them on the job.

Staff turnover could be a contextual factor that impacts negatively on school success, so, if principals are aware of the significance and benefits of job satisfaction among the subordinates, most Marondera District schools can witness success. Yang et al. (2011) maintain that a lack of understanding of how job satisfaction, in relation to leadership skills, directs to great worker turnover, lessened worker manufacture and business disaster. Another advantage of the situational leadership is its ability to take the maturity levels into account (Hersey & Blanchard, 2001). The situational leader considers the different individual employees' situations separately instead of just bunching them into one group (Gaille, 2018). An appropriate style, which can be changed any time if need arises, is used in connection with the experience of the team members. Another advantage is that situational leadership is a relationship-oriented approach (Henkel et al., 2018). When the leader leaves the team members to do the job on their own, it allows the followers to find shared ground with each other, promoting positive relationships which will in turn lessen the possibilities of developing internal clashes. Since conflicts or clashes impact negatively on school development, it is hoped that the current study shall support educational principals in the district of Marondera to avoid this problem in schools and develop a strategy to encourage staff members to work together, sharing ideas and decisions through the delegated responsibilities.

However, the situational leadership approach cannot go without being criticised on some of its shortcomings. With the above discussion of the advantages of the situational leadership theory, it is justifiable to also determine its disadvantages. The following section discusses the pitfalls connected with the situational leadership theory.

2.2.3.2 Disadvantages of the situational leadership

A particular weakness of the situational leadership style, according to Galilee (2018) is that it places more attention on short-term needs than long-term ones. Galilee thinks that situational leadership is founded further on meeting a particular necessity at that time than looking at the long-term aspirations of a group. Situational leaders may encounter challenges

that need them to respond quickly to an urgent circumstance rather than maintaining focus on all the objectives they have set. To support the above factor, for example, Marondera District schools may have a challenge of incompetent information technology teachers (ICT), which can also be a contextual factor in the schools. Instead of the principal, always inviting the only one competent teacher or two competent teachers to help their colleagues whenever they have an ICT lesson, which can be a demanding burden, the principal can arrange for ICT training for all the teachers in the school for staff development. To increase the quality of education and achieve instructional goals, teachers should continue to improve instructional approaches, resources and performance standards through on-the-job training (Halema, 2006). This will be a motivational long-term solution which may lead to school success, as well as job satisfaction for the staff.

Some researchers have also raised concerns about the situational leadership's lack of explanation on the theoretical basis of the changes in the composition of the four maturity levels. They argue that it is difficult to understand how the competence of the group members in the different developmental levels is given an advantage by the situational leader, to qualify to be in a certain maturity level. The proponents of the situational leadership approach, Hersey and Blanchard (1988) assert that further investigation is needed to establish the connection concerning competence and the developmental stage of members who belong to the group as regards the implementation of the situational leadership styles by the leader.

Therefore, equipped with the advantages and disadvantages of the situational leadership, school leaders can be able to select the leadership styles that best suit situations within their schools. If the first chosen style yields no results, the flexibility that is associated with the situational leadership allows the leader to move on to the next style. However, the application of the styles should also reflect the employee's matching developmental level. The most important factor about the situational leadership theory is its flexibility and applicability to the school environment (Raza & Sikandar, 2018). As put across by Hersey and Blanchard, successful situational leaders adjust themselves according to the prevailing situation in order to develop the organisation.

Having discussed the concept of situational leadership approach, its advantages and disadvantages and how it can be applied in real situations, the subsequent section touches on another leadership theory, the transformational leadership theory, that school leaders can also employ in school settings to promote the quality of teaching.

2.3 The transformational leadership theory

According to Ellen (2016) the introduction of transformational leadership is generally accredited to Burns (1978) who employed the term to differentiate between those who led through the exchange of performance for rewards (i.e., transactional leaders) and people who led by stimulating followers to target for and realise ambitious goals (i.e., transformational leaders). Transformational leadership, according to Burns (1978), is a style of leadership in which the person in charge and the people under them encourage one another to get to the highest ethical and emotional levels. Transformational leaders enhance followers' level of commitment and ownership. This theory was further developed by Bass (1985) by explaining how transformational leadership impacts on follower motivation and performance. As put forward by Bass (1989), a leader who advocates for change, encourages others, provides support and recognition; and inspires people to reach for the unbelievable. Leaders like these encourage their employees to put in more effort than is specified in their service agreements and they focus on the employees' higher-level goals (Khorshid & Pashazade, 2014). The degree of the influence that a transformational leader has on his followers is the measurement that is used (Kotlyar & Karakowsky, 2006). For the reason that the employees have faith, appreciation, allegiance and admiration for their leader, they are bound to work harder surpassing what they did at first without being coerced by the leader (Kotlyar & Karakowsky, 2006). Achievements under successful transformative leadership ultimately surpass organisational expectations (Farnsworth et al., 2019). According to Shatzer et al. (2014), transformative leaders put a focus on building school values and a vision to increase school effectiveness, foster employee development, and improve organisational performance. Creating a management approach for school leaders was the aim of this research. Thus, by understanding the impact of contextual factors in schools, the transformational leadership approach is seen as fit to help principals in Marondera district to work towards influencing the behaviour of teachers in order to have both, successful leadership as well as successful schools.

According to Korenjani and Sharbaz (2016), by showing commitment, passion and loyalty among the followers, the transformational leader can mobilise the organisation's members to make important changes in organisations, so that they gain the necessary capabilities for moving in new directions. Some researchers argue that transformational leadership is about an extensive change in the organisation, developing people and empowering them hence being seen as a role model and challenger of ideas. Torrington et al. (2008) argue that a transformational leader focuses on things as they are perceived by the staff and consider their interests, persuading them that the changes were in their best interests rather than just telling

them what to do. Hence, the leader should make effort to be accessible to staff. Thus, in line with this research, school leaders should have a shared vision of the successful schools that they want to have. School leaders need to work hard through commitment and eagerness so as to attain the intended objectives. Four attributes of transformative leaders were articulated by Bass (1985) in his book, *Leadership and Performance*. These may aid the Marondera District school leaders in lessening the influence of contextual factors that are hampering development in schools. Bass's transformational leadership approach is expected to pave way for the school leaders towards developing a strategy to promote successful schools. The school leaders should be the agents of change, who should strive to fight the status quo in the schools in the Marondera District, if success is to be recorded in this district.

Transformational leadership approach can help organisational leaders to become outstanding leaders (Farnsworth et al., 2019). Thus, four transformational leadership qualities that should be possessed by leaders have been explicated in the section below.

2.3.1 Bass's transformational leadership qualities

As made clear by Northouse (2001), transformative leadership entails a route that modifies and changes persons thus, causing valuable and progressive change in followers and social structures. For this, it is vital for instructional leaders to understand the four capabilities for transformational leadership described by Bass (1985) so that they can employ them appropriately so as to transform schools into successful organisations. According to Bass (1985), the four qualities are called inspiring motivation, individual attention and intellectual motivation and idealised influence. Inspirational motivation, according to Farnsworth (2019), is about leaders who encourage acquaintances to be devoted to the dream of the company. The leadership also promotes cooperation within the members in order to reach organisational aims. In relation to schools, school leaders should be able to inspire their subordinates by giving them ideas of how they should work in order to take their schools to the levels that they expect. In other words, school leaders should be visionary leaders, who are able to explicitly explain in clear language, the path they would want to take in order to develop their schools. School leaders should show subordinates, a vision that is worth fighting for. The school goals should be explained with a sense of purpose in a persuasive way that will stimulate the followers to work hard to achieve the goals.

Individual consideration describes leaders who assume the responsibility of being coaches and advisors to the associates (Farnsworth et al., 2019) by encouraging comrades to attain objectives which support the companions and the institution together. In relation to this research, principals need to be aware of the members that they head, honouring the variety of the group as well as binding it successfully. Individual consideration builds relationships which allow the school principals to understand individual teachers deeper. For example, being able to take note of their strong sides, what they desire and their flaws would help to direct the followers towards the tasks which focus on their strengths, which in turn will result in successful schools.

The third capability that transformational leaders ought to hold is intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1985). Intellectual stimulation calls for leadership which stimulates improvement in addition to resourcefulness, through criticising the usual convictions or opinions of the team (Farnsworth et al., 2019). According to Farnsworth et al. (2019), leaders who possess intelligence motivation support logical reasoning as well as finding solution in trying to build a health organisation. In view of that quality, in schools, school leaders should instruct followers, challenging them to better and more effective followers than they were before. Principals should also lead subordinates to new thinking directions and challenging an existing direction in order to improve quality of teaching. For example, if the leader feels that team-teaching enhances academic pass rates, he has to call every teacher and have a discussion, to “sell” his idea (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988) and persuade the teachers to take up the new innovation after explaining its advantages to the school and learners as well. Hackman and Johnson (2004) claim that transformational leaders are always searching for new ways and ideas to do things, hence, they are creative and challenging the idea of business as usual. Therefore, planned reasoning as well as being able to perceive opinions from various angles, can be associated with intellectual inspiration, a quality that transformational leaders should possess and it actively lays down situations for resourceful thinking, finding solutions and worthy conclusion-making.

Quality number four for transformational leaders is idealised influence (Bass, 1985). According to Farnsworth et al. (2019), this quality talks about leaders who are inspirational to their followers. People who possess ideal inspiration are always reliable and can be valued by their followers to create favourable decisions for the institution (Farnsworth et al., 2019). For example, in schools, principals should know that subordinates want to follow leaders that they can trust, leaders who are fair-minded and honest, as well as leaders who are open. According to Grant (2012), through leading by example and stressing on the significance of having a solid sense of purpose, the transformational leader can impact positively on employee motivation.

Besides Bass's qualities for a transformational leader, Hackman and Johnson (2004) also explain factors for transformational leaders to be considered as they discharge their regular duties, for example, interactive, empowering and passionate. Hackman and Johnson (2004) argue that transformational leaders are engaged people and always communicating with followers, thus, they are interactive. It is through communication that transformational leaders can be aware of their followers' needs and communication. According to Hackman and Johnson (2004), only when a leader has a strong bond with subordinates, can be able to devise methods to improve things. Thus, in connection with this research, school leaders should socially engage with teachers and be strong communicators to connect with people that they work with every day and other principals so that there is success in the schools. This also brings in the element of the importance of school principals learning communication skills in order to know the appropriate language to use with their subordinates.

Hackman and Johnson also raised the importance of empowering followers through delegation of responsibilities, the same capability that situational leaders should possess (Bass, 1985). As shown by Hackman and Johnson (2004), transformational leaders empower their subordinates through delegation of important duties, trusting followers by giving them chance to make decisions without the leader being directly involved in the decisions and supporting them. For school leaders in Marondera District, empowering senior teachers or heads of departments could be a quality to exploit in their schools in order to fight the contextual factors that impede success and development in schools. In short, thus, if principals want visible change in their schools, empowerment, is the route to take.

Another factor that is conspicuous with transformational leaders is that of being passionate. Hackman and Johnson (2004) assert that transformational leaders are passionate people who strongly believe in their organisations and they demonstrate extraordinary commitment to their job. Transformational leaders are preoccupied about the problem they are confronting and are always confident of yielding positive and expected results. According to Grant (2012), transformational leaders are precisely optimistic that even when they are stressed they see value in what they do, thus maintaining their optimistic view of their mission. Hence, school leaders need to be passionate about their work to achieve school success, even in the face of failure because with commitment there is always light at the end of the tunnel.

Though transformational leadership is a choice for many leaders in organisations today because of its array of advantages, some of them mentioned in the above discussion, the

transformational leadership approach has some noticeable challenges that go with it. The section below explains some of the problems with transformational leadership approach.

2.3.2 Disadvantages of transformational leadership

Although transformational leadership approach encourages leaders to embrace risk-taking, it is disadvantageous to the followers and the organisation (UKEssays, 2018). For example, in a school, the principal may feel that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) should be added as a subject to the school curriculum. Despite the subject being introduced for the first time, the principal will push the teachers to register the subject and get it written during the public examinations of that year. This will be a risk, taken by both the leader and the followers and may lead to failed results for the school due to lack of experience from the teachers and lack of material resources in the school. The above example shows that transformational leadership is time-consuming (Dionne et al., 2004), which is a weakness on the part of the approach. Leaders of change should spend time and effort, creating faith and making followers to have confidence in a common dream, nevertheless, institutions which put in a transformational leader with the hope of realising immediate results, are likely to be upset and let down.

Being a role model or being exemplary is what transformational leaders should be and the followers are likely to emulate that quality. Avolio and Howell (1992) criticised the idea of a transformational leader being a role model by arguing that, there is likely to be a danger that followers might want to copy the leader's unethical decisions. Thus, transformational leadership is influential but not always used ethically as not all leaders who stimulate, suit the definition. For example, in a school situation, if the principal is known by his subordinates to always divert school funds to unintended business, there is high likelihood that the followers may commit the same crime.

Another disadvantage is that transformational leadership approach puts pressure on the followers through the delegation of duties by the leader. Charalambos (2019) argues that although delegation of duties gives autonomy to the employees over their responsibilities, some followers might feel that they are being over-worked and thus, they oppose the leadership style. Their commitment will be reduced. On the other hand, Hackman and Johnson (2004) noted that creativity and innovation through collaboration are strengths of transformational leaders which

could turn out to be a weakness if individual employees are left to do the task alone. This is so because some employees will be used to depending on others (dependency syndrome).

Although transformational leadership theory has its share of weaknesses, just like any other leadership theory, its strengths dominate the weaknesses. Thus, transformational leadership theory can be recommended for use by school leaders in Marondera District. With the above discussion on the significance of transformational leadership at workplaces, the following discussion centres on the importance of school leaders employing the instructional leadership theory in schools.

2.4 Instructional leadership theory

According to Cotton (2003), instructional leadership involves the principal of the school showing interest in pedagogical issues and school programmes that directly affect student achievement. It focuses on the academic progress of students (Cruickshank, 2017). The assumption of the ideal according to Day et al. (2016), is that a principal's energies should be directed on improving student performance and emphasising the importance of enhancing the value of classroom instruction and knowledge. According to Hoerr (2008), principals should take the lead in leading teaching because they are thought to possess the most expertise and knowledge of anyone. The word "principal" comes from the term "*principal-teacher*," which refers to a teacher who is responsible for forecasting education and ensuring that students are studying according to Hoerr (2008). This means that in addition to managing student conduct, improving safety and hygiene, athletics, relationships with close relatives, personal observation, assessment results, and creating adequate annual goals, are also responsibilities for principals. At times, the instructional leader is closely committed in a zone, but delegation takes place. However, according to Rieg and Marcoline (2008), a school leader is typically defined as the person who holds a significant position within an educational institution and is perhaps its most vital constituent.

In order for learners to develop and acquire knowledge, educators must also develop and gain knowledge, according to Barth (1991), hence the other duty of principals is to support teachers in their professional development. A principal encourages teachers learning through collegiality, which is described by Freedman (2009) as the cooperative, interpersonal relationship between colleagues. On the other hand, Barth (1991) discusses four aspects of collegiality which can be found in a school as: collective discussions among teachers regarding students, joint

programme expansion, peer teaching supervision, and peer coaching are all examples of how teachers interact with one another. Hoerr (2008) discussed a trait of educators and administration cooperating with one another to develop a solution to a specific school problem in addition to Barth's four components of collegiality. According to Hoerr (2008), these aspects add to teacher collaboration in the school. For example, when teachers talk together about students, the principal may attempt to enrich the discussions by pushing the teachers in the direction of a growth viewpoint. The principal may again ask those learning areas that the students might be struggling with and the reasons why they are facing difficulties and may ask teachers to come up with solutions. When teachers observe each other, they encourage, share feedback and give each other ideas on how to get students improve and pass in their subjects.

However, sometimes it needs the principal's push to get the teachers to observe each other (Hoerr, 2008) and explain how beneficial the observations could be to the growth of the teacher. Hoerr (2008) expounds that today's teachers want to understand that the job that they are doing is being comprehended, being valued by their leader and the leader identifies their problems and irritations. Actually, educators would want to see their school leaders as companions in instruction, encouraging each other as well as making use of their expertise. In backing, one famous luminary, Mahatma Gandhi, previously believed that leadership formerly was all about muscles until now when it is understood as associating positively with followers (Taubenfeld, 2021). These views from Mahatma support the symbiotic working relationship which must be there between the principal and his teachers to achieve school success.

As indicated by Flath (1989), leadership in teaching reveals the activities that a school leader chooses to encourage development in learner schooling. Most school reforms come through the principal and thus, as educational experts, principals take part in laying down understandable aims, assigning materials to teaching, taking care of the school programmes and checking lesson procedures (Jenkins, 2009). According to some researchers, much attention is being put on student improvement but not much on improving the role of the principals, thus, school leadership has been neglected. In support, Jenkins (2009) assert that although many would approve that educational leadership is vital in the attainment of successful schools, it rarely receives emphasis. Some of the explanations given for not as much of importance to instructional leadership are described by Fullan (1991) as increased paperwork, insufficient extensive coaching regarding positions for principals, insufficient time plus society's view of the principal's status as that of a manager.

However, according to Jerkins (1991), lately instructional leadership has bounced back with additional significance laid down on academic importance as well as the necessity for schools to be answerable. Because of that awareness, a lot of school principals today try to find justice in their function as one who manages and being an educational leader. Thus, the present research, seeks to understand the impact of contextual factors in schools in the Marondera District and help to advance an approach for the school leaders, to promote quality teaching. Through instructional leadership, the acquisition of knowledge should be granted urgency, as all other things circulate about the improvement of education. For that reason, the instructional leadership theory which puts emphasis towards functions for principals as educational leaders was seen fit in this study to aid in developing a strategy for the Marondera school principals to promote success in their institutions.

Thus, for instructional leaders to be successful, they should have an understanding of the influence of contextual factors and be equipped with some skills to help their schools achieve the educational goals. To understand some of these skills, this research, as its theoretical basis, employed the five key roles of the principal as a school leader, identified by the Wallace Foundation (2013) and Waite and Bogotch (2017). According to the Wallace Foundation (2013), instructional leaders perform roles in order to become effective leaders who will achieve their school goals. The identified five key skills are; establishing a vision for academic achievement for all learners, making a hospitable environment to instruction, developing leadership within followers, improvement of teaching as well as handling individuals, information and procedures. According to the Wallace Perspective, for each section to be successful, the five responsibilities must interact with the additional four. For instance, a school principal cannot put into practice a vision of learners' achievement if the school environment is characterised by students' disengagement. Thus, well-planned tasks will see the principal achieving success. Hence, the five vital skills by the Wallace Foundation (2013) and Waite and Bogotch (2017) are described in the ensuing section.

2.4.1 Shaping a vision of instructional achievement for all learners

According to the Wallace Perspective (2013), researchers who have examined education headship concur that effective school leaders are responsible for a comprehensive school vision of adherence to exceptionally high standards and the achievement of every learner. To achieve the success of all learners, there must be planning. Planning, according to Jerkins (2009), begins with a clear identification of the goals or vision to focus on and a convincing appeal for

commitment and zeal. By speaking with participants, reading relevant documents, and keeping track of what will be happening within the institute, for instance, it is possible to determine the changes that need to be made (Jerkins, 2009). A leader's most important responsibilities include establishing a vision and inviting others to participate in its expansion. According to SHRM (2012), an effective school vision statement talks about what the institution hopes to achieve while also inspiring and motivating learners.

The Principal Professional Learning Community (PPLC) (2014) suggests the effective practices or steps that principals should consider for a fruitful development and recording of a school dream, which are, soliciting, collaborating, presenting and unveiling. According to the PPLC (2014), a principal should ask for contribution from every teacher and institution's shareholders concerning the principles to be incorporated in the school vision report. A report of school vision should not be conscripted separately, rather, forming a successful vision calls for leaders to ask for contribution from school shareholders concerning what the community treasures and what the anticipations and visions are, regarding the learners and the institution services (PPLC, 2014). The PPLC (2014) claims the significance for school leaders to reconsider the institution district's dream at the time of shaping the statement of the school's dream, so as to make sure that the two visions agree with each other for their effectiveness. The principal should work in partnership with the school leadership team (SLT) when crafting a school vision centred on contribution collected from different interested parties. According to the (PPLC, 2014), it is important to involve SLT to avoid different interpretations and that involvement is likely to intensify the probability of the school vision emerging an active, vibrant part of organisational determination and school principal behaviour. The PPLC contend that, collaboration of the two parties (principal and SLT) helps them to identify information in the data that they can use in producing a record of collective principles. After the drafting a vision statement, a principal should present it to the whole school staff for feedback because the staff may have suggestions for some additions or subtractions on the draft. The approved changes are to be included in the final draft (PPLC, 2014).

Thus, involvement of staff in the vision drafting will give a feeling of ownership of the school vision statement to the staff, which will lead to the submission to the school vision by every stakeholder and unity among the staff. This brings in the assertion by the PPLC that, developing to become successful, for a school leader, might be an isolated excursion except when one has concerned and gifted associates who can be trusted. Finally, according to PPLC (2014), the final revised draft of the vision statement is revealed to the whole community that is

expected to benefit. The presentation process should pass the communication of the support by the school vision statement to the district vision and also representation of the anticipated route for the school's improvement for the subsequent years, three or five (PPLC, 2014). Thus, for every activity carried out in the school to be successful, it should be guided by the institution's vision statement. It is therefore very important for school principals to regard the impact that a school's vision has, as a contextual factor, on the success of principals and school achievement. Having discussed the significance of having an institution's vision statement, the next argument is on the effect of building a hospitable environment for instruction, by the school leader.

2.4.2 Building a hospitable environment for education

The Wallace Perspective (2013) contends that successful heads guarantee that their schools permit grown-ups and youngsters to place education at the core of their everyday routine. The school atmosphere should be conducive to teaching and learning. According to Guffey (2013), a person's performance at work is influenced by the activities going on around him or her. This means that the school environment affects the achievement of educators in the school. For example, every activity that takes place in the school, an effective school leader should always communicate with subordinates, this shows transparency. A conducive school environment is created when school leaders, educators and learners relate well with each other (Mupa & Chinooneko, 2015). An effective instructional leader should develop and maintain positive relationships with students, staff and parents (McEwan, 2002). Positive friendships that are found in organisations are certainly the basis of all instructional undertakings (Shields, 2006). The Minnesota and Toronto institutions (2004) claim that strong leadership improves the motivation of educators and their working environments. In order to improve outcomes and reduce instances of indiscipline, school leaders, according to Rieg and Marcoline (2008) should spend more time establishing relationships with students, teachers, and community members. Sorensen and Machel (1996) argue that leaders of schools should try to develop positive relationships within all organisational departments by consulting for better decisions for improvement instead of continuing with the state of affairs. An effective school principal should also take note of the significance of engaging the community within some of the school activities to create a hospitable environment for the success of the school. Connors (2000) maintains that construction of progressive associations within a school upholds organisational efficiency and effectiveness and successful leaders understand that settings which are built on expertise, integrity and respect are centres of success.

Contrary, according to Rieg (2007), a school leader must be present and visible throughout the institution, mingling with students and staff and establishing and revising the school's core principles. However, with a lot of responsibilities associated with principals, their visibility might be difficult. From my experience as a deputy principal, the administrative and instructional duties bar me from being visible all the time. According to Fullan (1997), school heads are always burdened, busy with current school business and occupied with the planning for all school events. Thus, being visible is sometimes a challenge for principals, although they have to find their way out. Therefore, building relationships to create friendly climates in schools could be a strategy that could be implemented in order to achieve success in school organisations. With a friendly atmosphere prevailing in the school, the Wallace Foundation (2013) argues that the principal can also make the school achieve success by cultivating leadership in others.

2.4.3 Cultivating leadership in others

It is important for school principals to cultivate leadership in their subordinates in order to lessen the burden associated with school leaders. Some researchers argue that school teachers are leaders within their own classrooms and they display leadership qualities that can be useful beyond the classroom. Hence, principals should be encouraged to help teachers to develop these qualities for the achievement of school success. The Wallace Foundation (2013) says that leaders from different lines of business and diverse institutions like civic and private need support from other institutions for the attainment of the set goals and nurturing of leadership within the employees of the institution. Thus, principals as well, as school leaders need to develop leadership in teachers, as illustrated by the studies from the colleges of Minnesota and Toronto (2004) that those leaders whose followers produce quality grades for developing conducive learning environments are always at the top of other school leaders for their eagerness to cultivate leadership in their subordinates.

In order to execute the leadership qualities within educators, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (2019) encourages principals to find small actions or ideas that they recognise as potential leadership in teachers and talk to the teachers. The principal should tell the teacher what inspired him or her and encourage the teacher to pursue a leadership role in the department and extend it beyond the classroom, with the principal's support. The NASSP (2019) continues to say, principals should be acknowledging that teachers are the leaders in

their own classrooms and therefore, the principal should be searching for reasons and methods of designing class activities in order to accelerate education.

One great quality of leadership is asking questions which encourage educators to give thought to what they do and then provoke their reasoning. The questioning, if phrased in a positive manner, will show curiosity and respect in the teacher's teaching. That consideration makes available backing in addition to assurance which makes the educator relaxed in following activities for leadership (NASSP, 2019). NASSP (2019) suggests that principals should encourage teachers to embrace risk-taking by trying something new in their lessons and if they fail, they should not be bothered. Accordingly, it is also significant for principals as school frontrunners to take risks themselves plus acknowledge failures and accomplishments. Principals should be in a position to concede accountability for failures and not to blame anyone, as alluded by Torrington et al. (2008) that where there is success or failure in an organisation, each person is accountable. In other words, there must not be a blame shift by principals in the event of failure. This will earn them respect from the teachers and motivates them to operate solidly so that the school attains effectiveness. The other aspect is for the principals to urge collaboration among the teachers in order to cultivate leadership in them.

According to NASSP (2019), sharing negative and positive results of brave deeds, clears the path for conversation, driving leader educators to motivate their associates. For example, if a teacher is well-informed in a certain learning area and always scores higher than others, the principal should encourage sessions where the teacher would share with others how he or she is doing it or to invite the other teachers to watch as the successful teacher delivers the lesson. By doing so, leadership is being cultivated in the teachers who are sharing with others the tips of scoring high in a learning area. Thus, collaboration among teachers is a strategy which may help to promote quality teaching in the district of Marondera. Principals are expected to put a lot of effort towards the improvement of instruction in the schools. The Wallace Foundation suggested some of the ways that principals may adopt so that instruction gets better within their institutions. The ensuing section describes these means.

2.4.4 Improvement of instruction

Many researchers have argued that improvement of instruction is one of the goals that principals should accomplish in schools. Researchers at the University of Washington found out that it calls for successful leaders to work tirelessly for the good of education, stimulation of

quality predictions, encouraging association of teachers and being in the class where learning is taking place (Wallace Foundation, 2013). As put forward by Leithwood et al. (2004) in the Wallace Foundation Report (2013), there is need for successful leaders to motivate their staff to keep on developing their teaching skills, with special importance on approaches that are grounded on study so that school effectiveness is promoted and invite conversations with staff on teaching methods, individually and as groups.

Therefore, in line with this research, for the principals in Marondera district to promote value in education in learning institutions, they should encourage teachers who do not have professional qualifications to enrol with different universities in order to professionally develop themselves academically. Principals agree on the record of activities that should be done to staff develop employees for the upgrading of their abilities and carrying out class supervisions to promote effectiveness (Leithwood al., 2004). According to Segeovanni and Starrat (2006), the aim of overseeing the work of an educator is to allow expansion of the knowledge base of the teacher to become an expert in the area of teaching. Bouchamma and April (2015) also raised the importance of class visits and supervision in the development of a teacher's work and relations with administration. As a result, the above discussed strategies to improve instruction might be of great help to the principals in the Marondera District if they employ them as they discharge their duties, aiming to achieve their educational goals in their respective schools. The following section discusses the importance of principals being able to manage people, data and processes in school organisations in order to be successful leaders.

2.4.5 Managing people, data and processes

Managing staff is sometimes a challenging task for the principals in schools. Although effective leaders have to nurture and support their staff, they are sometimes faced with reality of teachers who do not work (Wallace Foundation, 2013). Faced with situations like that, school leaders are sometimes forced to discharge from duty those members who are unwilling to transform (Wallace Foundation, 2013). If school leaders do not take the radical decision, which may appear cruel to some teachers, most schools will be sinking ships. Principals should also use data in order to promote quality teaching in schools. The teachers should use the information from the learners' test scores in order to improve the learner achievement. The Wallace Foundation Report (2013) gives an example of Hensley, as principal, figures how one teacher uses data to improve instruction, for example, testing the learners once, to see where they will be and if incapable, learners are re-taught and re-tested until they reach expectations. In their

article, Roediger et al. (2011) assert that schools do internal examinations mostly to see the learner's ability and marks are allocated in order to rate the students in class according to their intelligence (standardised examinations) and serving other purposes in an educational setting of greatly improved performance.

Thus, for the reason that school leaders expect advancement of quality levels of education, they insist on outlining demanding objectives (preparation), they bring the whole department together and execute everything expected in order to promote school success (applying), learners and educators are inspired to work hard to attain the set objectives (encouraging) disagreeing with less opportunities and less finances for learners who are disadvantaged (recommending), ensuring that people are conscious of all the educational objectives (interacting) and making sure that check-ups are done to be always up-to-date (observing) (Porter et al., 2009). It is thus, important for the offices that deal with the appointment of school heads, to understand that achievement of school effectiveness is not a short-term process but takes some years for any change to be noticeable. The Wallace Foundation (2013) asserts that a rule of thumb is that a school leader's presence at a station has to be roughly up to seven years so that there can be some identifiable changes that would have taken place. The Minnesota-Toronto researchers carried out a study in eighty schools where they found out that a school leader normally had duration of four years stay in an institution. The indication was that most principals in schools were transferring before they reached five years, which showed a slight couple of years expected for a head to be at a school. According to the Minnesota-Toronto researchers, the high turnover of principals affects the climate of the school negatively. Schools affected with rapid principal turnover are usually affected by insufficient collective intention; the followers do not trust their leader's capabilities of taking the school to high levels of school effectiveness (Leithwood al., 2004). Following this research, the Marondera District principals should understand the negative effect of this contextual factor (principal turnover) on school success by avoiding unnecessary transfers.

Although literature has cited the importance of using the instructional leadership theory in school organisations today, it also has its challenges that can be pointed out. The following section describes some of the problems associated with the instructional leadership theory.

2.4.5.1 Shortcomings of instructional leadership theory

Bainbridge and Thomas (2001) criticised the idea of referring to the school leaders as responsible for instruction. Instead, they maintain that the work of school principals should be seen as giving aid to teaching and providing finest methods while actual teaching should be left for educators. On another hand, Prytula et al. (2013) question the hierarchical nature of instructional leadership. In support, Goddard (2003) points out that a descending connection exists where teachers take orders from the school head who has the knowledge of and monitors the school programmes while the educators implement the school programme. In secondary schools, the situation is different because a principal may be an expert in Mathematics but not an expert in History. Therefore, the advice for principals is to delegate the responsibility to departmental heads of the different learning areas because these are the real experts in their learning areas. A school principal is mostly tied up with leadership duties so he/she cannot be proficient in all areas in the school. Therefore, with the above discussion of the limitations of instructional leadership, the succeeding section summarises this chapter.

2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented related literature concerning the study topic on the influence of contextual factors for principal to promote quality teaching in the district of Marondera. The bulk of the reviewed literature focused on the global researches, because of inadequate studies in Zimbabwe, on the research topic being explored. The chapter looked at the three leadership theories which are situational, transformational and instructional. The three leadership theories were selected for this research because of their applicability in school organisations and might help principals to identify and address the contextual factors in their schools. Since the drive for this investigation is to develop a strategy for the district of Marondera principals, to respond to the contextual factors, the three leadership theories might aid with some ways to address the factors. Shortcomings of the three leadership theories were also considered in this chapter.

The literature review has shown that for both leadership and school to be successful, principals have to build relationships with all the school stakeholders. It is of paramount importance for leaders to always remind themselves that leadership is not dictating, being forceful or imposing but it is doing service to others. Literature has revealed that principals must also focus on teachers' growth as well as students' growth for both leadership and school success. Literature has also shown that most school reforms come through the principal. For that reason, in order for the school leaders to execute their duties diligently, they need to

seriously comprehend and apply the above leadership models in order to promote school effectiveness.

The subsequent chapter three discusses connected literature on the influence of contextual factors on school success. Through the related literature reviewed, a management strategy for the school principals in the district of Marondera in Zimbabwe may be developed in order to promote academic achievement in schools.

CHAPTER 3: THE INFLUENCE OF CONTEXTUAL FACTORS ON THE SCHOOL

3. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on a review of theoretical literature related to the study where three leadership theories (transformational, situational and instructional) were discussed. It takes a school principal who understands that change and development in an institution or a school leads to academic achievement. By employing different instructional strategies which are suitable to the different circumstances in a school, principals can form successful schools. Hence, the adoption of the three theories of leadership discussed in the foregoing literature review chapter two. This will aid in explaining how principals can employ the leadership theories in order to deal with the different contextual factors that hinder success in schools. Cunningham and Curdier (2009) emphasise the liability of school leaders and managers for their quick responses, proactive action and alignment of diverse practices to deal with the impact of contextual and circumstantial factors on school effectiveness and performance. The purpose of this research is to develop a management strategy for school leaders in the Marondera District of Zimbabwe in order to deal with the contextual factors that deter achievement in schools.

It is behind the purpose of this research's background that this chapter focuses on the concept of contextual factors and their influence on the school success. The discipline of education is, as with other disciplines, significantly affected by various contextual factors. The majority of these factors significantly impact on the vast aspects of education, including learning effectiveness, teacher psychological attachment, curricula and school principal leadership performance, among others. Key literature is reviewed in the current chapter, depicting some contextual factors which affect the effective running of schools by principals as school leaders. Among the aspects included in the review are, an overview of contextual factors which include their explanation and providing an outline of the contextual factors in schools. Thus, the following section describes the conceptual framework by Wolhuter et al. (2016) embraced in the research.

The focus of the present chapter was to review literature on the contextual factors which influence the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Among the conceptual factors included in the review are micro, meso and macro level factors. Literature reviews on the micro-level contextual factors which focused on such aspects as school characteristics (school ownership type, school-community relationship, availability of instructional materials and resources and school technology and e-learning) were dealt with. School principal characteristics, teacher personal characteristics (such aspects as teacher's Age, gender, teacher perceptions, beliefs

and practices as well as the level of professional development) were also presented. The meso-level factors included in the review were the concept of time, external awareness and the political context of the school. In terms of the macro-level factors, the review included national and international educational policies. A summary section on school contexts and contextual factors was also presented in this chapter.

From this review of literature, it was established that the majority of the contextual factors significantly affect the abilities of teaching and learning in schools, as well as the efficacy of school principals. However, one of the critical issues within the academic literature includes the lack of explanation of the causal pathways through which each of the specified factors affects teaching and learning. Added to this, the majority of these factors, by virtue of being contextual, cannot readily be generalised to the unique contexts of schools in Zimbabwe and particularly, in the Marondera District. However, this review of literature could be useful in guiding investigations into the contextual factors which affect school learning and teaching in Marondera District. The literature significantly covers various research contexts which include the issues of school type, school-community relationships, as well as teacher and school principal characteristics, among others which could help inform the present study.

In the following section, the conceptual framework approved for the present study is outlined, deliberated and justified.

3.1 Wolhuter, Van der Walt and Steyn's (2016) conceptual framework

In order to understand and explain the influence of contextual factors in secondary schools in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe, based on the three selected and discussed leadership theories in chapter two, the three factor conceptual framework by Wolhuter, Van der Walt and Steyn (2016) was adopted. The existing knowledge described by Wolhuter et al. (2016) helps this research to be understood. The three contextual factors that educational leadership should consider, according to Wolhuter et al. (2016), are: (1) the structure of the educational system within which school leadership, organizational change, and development take place; (2) the societal context; and (3) the international context. This conceptual framework was chosen because of its relatedness and connection to this research, where the impact of contextual factors on schools was described and a strategy for school principals to promote quality teaching was developed, in order to achieve both school leadership success and school success in the Marondera District schools.

Wolhuter et al. (2016) conceptual framework was chosen as a lens through which, as researcher, I could see what I wanted to understand, focus on and the participants that I wanted to interview. Instead of concentrating on countless variables, this selected conceptual framework also assisted to delimit the focus of this research. The variables highlighted in Wolhuter et al. (2016) associate well with the emphasis of this study. Although not all aspects have been explained by the conceptual framework, this research filled the gap and identified some of the issues that were not explained by Wolhuter et al. (2016). The next section gives a clarification of some of the contextual factors that have an impact in schools.

3.2 Clarification of contextual factors

Contextual factors can exist and apply to various settings of professional practices, such as in healthcare, development studies as well as in the current study, in education. Owing to their multi-dimensionality and dependence on context of usage, there are various explanations of what contextual factors are. Contextual factors are broadly defined as all intervening factors that affect a complex phenomenon, are recognized as critical to education delivery and implementation (Stanger et al., 2012; Bate et al., 2014). Perhaps the keyword in this clarification is that contextual factors are intervening factors, variables which tend to interfere, arbitrate or mediate in a particular relationship of interest. In other words, they are go-between determinants of, as in the case of the current study, the relationship between a school principal's leadership and aspects of the school performance, such as teacher engagement, student academic achievement and overall school performance. Hence the aim of this study, to identify some specific contextual factors that hinder the quality of teaching in schools in the Marondera District and help the principals to respond to these factors appropriately.

Context can be understood as any implicit and/or explicit information or situations that affect an entity and particular characteristics of such circumstances are termed as contextual factors (Cronsbein, Meiser, & Leyer, 2014). Contextual factors are thus, those circumstances, influences, forces, and situations that exist both within (internally) and outside (externally) the entity or institution and are likely to affect such institution's organisational culture, performance and programmes.

Another key issue in the description of contextual factors is offered in the definition that contextual factors are the components that surround a particular implementation effort and affect its achievement (Rabin, Bronson, Haire-Joshu, Kreuter, and Weaver, 2008; Damschroder, Aron,

Keith, Kirsh, Alexander, & Lowery, 2009). Whilst this interpretation reiterates the go-between nature of contextual factors, it brings to the fore, the issue of implementation, as contextual factors tend to affect the manner in which particular goals are achieved in the practice. Within the scope of the current study, therefore, contextual factors can be understood as those determinants which impact on the execution, accomplishment and realisation of distinct school goals by school principals.

Contextual factors include the qualities of the intervention, the social and physical environment, the availability of resources, and the characteristics of the people involved in implementation, according to Damschroder et al. (2009). Contextual factors from within (internal) are amongst others history, tradition, culture, finance, and school infrastructure while contextual factors from outside (external) can be demographic, systemic, professional standards, social-political, socio-economic and the wider culture (Iwasiwu, Goldenberg, & Andrusyszyn, 2009). On the other hand, Wolhuter et al. (2016) argue that societal and global contexts, as well as the features of the educational system in which organizational change and development are to take place, are contextual influences that educational leaders should consider. In order to effectively develop and change in educational institutions and ensure long-term school improvement, Wolhuter et al. (2016) contend that educational leadership should take these contextual elements into account. Any school's context affects how teaching and learning are accomplished (Orlowsky, 2004).

The above concise clarification of both internal and external contextual factors is already revealing of the relevance of this selected and demarcated research focus. However, the depiction of what these factors include is context-specific. In the field of education, which is the area of interest of the current research, there are many varied contextual factors that influence the business of school leaders and some, have been acknowledged by Wolhuter et al. (2016). Thus, based on the major challenges faced by principals as school leaders, cited by Wolhuter et al. (2016), the following section gives an overview of the Zimbabwe education system that the principals in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe operate under. It was the aim of this research to identify some of the contextual factors that affected schools at macro, meso and micro levels, in order to develop a strategy for the principals to promote quality teaching and learning in the district of Marondera.

3.2.2 An overview of Zimbabwe's education system

The principal of a school in a developing country, according to Wolhuter et al. (2016), is always found on the receiving end of the difficulties of change and development since they work

in an education system that was built and operates in a specific way. This means that, whatever the school principal does at the school, educational policies that were made by other people are being followed, no matter how these policies make the principals and schools suffer.

ChiShona and IsiNdebele are Zimbabwe's other national languages, and English is the country's official language of instruction (Musarurwa, 2011). Mupinga and others (as reported in Musarurwa, (2011), Zimbabwe uses the 7-4-2-3 system of education, which consists of seven years of elementary education, four years of secondary education, two years of advanced high school, and three years of college or university. The secondary education system in Zimbabwe is divided into three two-year phases: ZJC (Zimbabwe Junior Certificate), 'O' Level (Ordinary Level- Zimbabwe General Certificate of Education), and 'A' Level (Advanced Level Certificate), according to Musarurwa (2011). Mupinga et al. (as stated in Musarurwa, 2011) argue that high school is a term used to describe the first two levels of secondary education. In support, Kanyongo (2005) claims that secondary education consists of a two-year Advanced Level ('A' Level) cycle and a four-year 'O' Level cycle, with the official admission age being 13 years. While 'A' Level students major in a minimum of three courses, the 'O' Level cycle includes a broad curriculum and different institutions provide different subjects depending on how resources are collected (Kanyongo, 2005). Parents can choose to send their children to a private, missionary, or public school when form one (grade 8) of secondary education begins (Kanyongo, 2005). According to Kanyongo, government (public) schools are mostly day schools while private and mission schools are typically boarding schools. Secondary school tuition is paid for by the parents, and boarding schools are typically highly exorbitant (Kanyongo, 2005). Additionally, those with means favour enrolling their kids in residential institutions (Kanyongo, 2005).

The majority of Zimbabwe's teachers, according to Musarurwa (2011), are educated at one of the nation's fifteen teachers' training institutions, from which one receives a Diploma in Education (DipEd). Universities that offer the PGDE (Post Graduate Diploma in Education) or other degrees with an education component also train a sizeable number of teachers (Musarurwa, 2011). It is thus, under this system that the school leaders (principals) in the Marondera District find themselves functioning. However, most school leaders (principals) face challenges as they execute their duties and these hitches disturb the development of schools. According to Rabinowitz (2016), leadership constantly puts leaders and their skills to the test. The difficulties, according to Robinowitz, are an opportunity to go up a level, test one's limits, get better as a result, and demonstrate one's capacity for overcoming seemingly impossible or tough tasks. Therefore, it is important to understand that problems are unavoidable in organizations

and can serve as a yardstick for a leader's strength. Therefore, the goal of this research is to create a management strategy for the district principals in Marondera, who have been battling the contextual issues that have caused numerous schools to fail. The principals should be aware that each school must adapt to its particular environment and set of problems, which necessitates active and deliberate leadership (Norberg, Tornsen, & Arlestig, 2014). What school principals consider and what they must deal with depend on the specific circumstances that exist in a school, the local circumstances, and the difficulties that the school, community, and developing country in which the school is located, must overcome (Neuman, as cited in Wolhuter et al., 2016).

In order to establish a plan for the principals to encourage success, the research's goal is to determine the contextual factors that interfere with students' academic progress in the Marondera District schools. The macro-, meso-, and micro-level contextual factors that influence quality teaching in schools are discussed in this chapter's literature review. The literature that follows explores some of the macro-level issues that have an impact on principals' job as school leaders and, consequently, have an impact on the effectiveness of schools. The impact of the education system, which is one of the contextual factors that affect schools' overall achievement, is covered in the section that follows.

3.3 The education system and policies

The macro-level factors concern the national or state policies and international trends among others as indicated in the discussion above (cf. par. 3.2.2). Quality learning, safety, expectations and accountability are standards that policies help to create in schools. Policies also support structures and functions which are necessary to provide educational needs of learners.

A report by the Granite School District (2020) indicate that policies put into effect rules and regulations and there are firm procedures for schools on how operations are transmitted down to every small detail, so that educators, staff and learners recognize what is expected and can act in view of that. It is therefore of paramount importance for organisations to make available to stakeholders all policies, instruments and circulars which have got matters to do with school effectiveness. National policies and global trends in areas like curriculum and assessment, professional development, and telecommunications can have an impact on classroom applications. All policies within organizations must adhere to relevant laws and related

governmental regulations (Rue & Byers, 2005). Van Wyk and Marumoloa (2012) assert that policies serve as vital directions or guidelines for a school's ongoing operations. In view of the importance of national policies, the following state policies were some that were identified as imperative in the running of Zimbabwean schools to achieve school effectiveness. It is also from the state policies that the school-grown policies emanate from. These policies play an integral part in the success of schools hence their importance in the development of a strategy for school leaders in the district of Marondera to promote quality teaching:

- The Zimbabwe Education Act (Chapter 25:04)
Different educational policies, including circulars sent by The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, are derived from The Education Act. Some of the guidelines of this act for school leaders include ensuring:
 - Adequate infrastructure used for instruction and accommodation for both teachers and learners
 - Provision of effective instruction in schools with reference to number, ages and sex of learners at school
 - Adequate financial provision for proper maintenance of school
 - Proposed equipment allow satisfactory tuition in subjects offered in the school
- Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19)
The Financial Management Act empowers school leaders to manage the financial resources in the schools as well as holding them responsible and answerable for the finances that they exploit. Schools have got different projects that they carry out in order to get money, so the Act comes in to guarantee transparency, liability and effective management of the income through provision of budgets and financial statements.
- The Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No.20) Act, 2013
Its importance is to guide state and all institutions and agencies of government. Schools are also institutions that operate under government. Some of the values included in the constitution are:
 - Fundamental human rights
 - The nation's diverse cultural, religious and traditional values
 - Recognition of the equality of all human beings
 - Gender equality
 - Transparency, justice and accountability

- Equitable sharing of resources.
- Statutory Instrument 1 of 2000 (SI 1 of 2000)

This instrument comprises laws and regulations passed by government and they apply to all public service workers, who include those in schools.

Laws are put in order to control the organization and unite people to follow a lawful system. It is the government which forms statutory laws as a way to make people to follow certain guidelines with a society by the threat of a punishment in contempt of those laws, so that society functions in a planned way (Nowaczyk & Shorey, 2022). Thus, in line with this research, school leaders are also expected to function under the laws of the above Acts and instruments, in order to achieve success. The regulations are there to guide and control school leaders towards the attainment of school goals as well as those of the Ministry of Education. The development of a strategy for principals to promote quality teaching in schools in response to contextual factors was influenced by the legislation already discussed. The phases, objectives, and action steps of a strategy are governed by legal and policy mandates (Hannagan, 2005). In order to be clear about what is specifically anticipated and envisaged from a strategy for the management of contextual factors, a policy is necessary. A declaration of purpose, the justification, and the parties involved, and the ways in which the strategy advances the mission and values of the organization are all included in a policy for managing contextual factors. Although there is frequently a disconnect between national policies and the classroom practices which they are intended to affect, Cohen and Hill (2001) found that when curriculum instructional materials and instructional advice are coherent, practices are more likely to be influenced.

According to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Basic Human Rights of the United Nations (Mubika & Bukaliya, 2011), most developing countries adopted the Education for All Policy which states the right to education for everyone (Wolhuter et al., 2016). After realising that education is a fundamental human right (Maravanyika, 1990) and that investing in human capital accelerates and sustains economic growth, Zimbabwe also joined the lobby with the aim of addressing the educational qualitative and quantitative imbalances in the colonial-inherited system. The Zimbabwe Education Act (Chapter 25:04) includes policies which are expressive about (i) children's fundamental rights to education, (ii) compulsory education and (iii) minimum fees for education. Therefore, the Zimbabwean government proclaimed that no child would be denied a vacancy in a secondary school owing to a lack of school fees with the Education for All policy in mind (Maravanyika, 1990). Although a commendable notion, a lot of literature has argued that the policy has been marred with a lot of challenges in schools. One of the problems includes an

increase in the number of students, which has affected the quality of teaching (Suresh & Kumaravelu, 2017). In support, Maravanyika (1990) claims that the policy caused secondary school enrolment in Zimbabwe to increase from 66215 to 422538 whereas the number of secondary schools increased from 177 at independence to 1206 in 1984. According to Maravanyika, this sharp rise in schools and enrolments had negative implications on schools where human and material resources were scarce. On the other hand, Suresh and Kumaravelu (2017), on the sharp increase of students, assert that remedial classes are necessary to address the problem and advance high-quality instruction because this has caused a rise in the abilities of the students.

3.3.1 Remediation

Remediation, according to Chikwature and Oyedele (2016), functions as a form of partnership and supportive schooling between learners' and teachers' aims to provide for personal learning differences and assist learners who lag behind. The two authors contend that additional teaching should be focussed at the least performing learners and these learners should be given extra special attention through carefully designed intervention within the classroom and where essential, through pulling out from the classroom for undersized group individual coaching. Thus, remediation in schools is crucial as it acts as one of the support services rendered to learners in order to achieve school success in response to the influence of contextual factors. However, according to Suresh and Kumaravelu (2017), remediation has been difficult to practise in the developing countries because of inadequate funds in the instruction sector, caused by big numbers of students and has led to the insufficiency of resources. Since remediation is an important tool in achieving effectiveness in schools, as indicated by different researchers, it is thus crucial for school leaders to find ways to help the success of remediation within those challenges of large classes with learners who have diverse abilities. Thus, as can be seen, it validates the creation of a principal's approach to deal with large numbers of students in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe.

Therefore, the above mentioned challenges, large classes, lack of human and substantial resources in schools, are a major blow to the school principals today, as they cannot discharge their duties effectively, without, for example, qualified teachers, money and text books. Hence, this research is expected to help in developing a strategy for the Marondera school principals in order to promote progress in their schools. Although their schools have little funding, principals in underdeveloped nations are frequently challenged to deliver high-quality education (Wolhuter et

al., 2016). According to Wolhuter et al. (2016), the effect of the financial difficulties in schools in underdeveloped nations is poor physical infrastructure and high learner-to-teacher ratios. For instance, the majority of Zimbabwe's rural schools lack enough classroom space and inadequate facilities for sporting, cultural, and artistic activities; also, the majority of teachers' homes in rural regions are uninhabitable (Parliamentary Portfolio Committee Report, 2012). Poor school facilities can have a negative impact on student learning, according to Partelow et al. (2018). In the words of Maxwell (2016), a study of middle schools in New York City discovered that among other elements of the physical and social settings, the state of the buildings was a contributing factor to academic success. However, more than half of public schools in the United States are in need of renovations, as described by Alexander and Lewis (2014), who also contend that everyone in school should be able to learn in a secure and comfortable atmosphere. These problems have resulted in most qualified teachers avoiding teaching in rural schools (Parliamentary Committee Report, 2012). According to the research, the Zimbabwean government has failed to uphold the one teacher to forty learners ratio because most teachers particularly those in rural regions, should manage large classrooms. The teacher-to-learner ratio in Zimbabwe is at intolerable levels and the majority of rural instructors are required to attend classes with an average of sixty students (Parliamentary Portfolio Committee, 2012). Teachers' workload is one of the variables that affect learners' academic progress (Osagie & Okafo, 2012). Therefore, the situation of unrealistic big classes is a contextual factor that may derail principals' leadership in the Marondera District and should be accounted for in order to formulate a suitable strategy to deal with it.

The majority of school heads are full-time classroom teachers who are responsible for planning, recording, and monitoring supervision while also carrying out administrative activities, which has a negative impact on the quality of teaching in schools (Parliamentary Portfolio Committee Report, 2012). According to Rajbhandar (as cited in Wolhuter et al., 2016), principals must contend with a global trend that decentralises authority, duties, and responsibilities all the way down to individual schools. Wolhuter et al. (2016), claim that when this trend starts to disrupt schools in emerging nations, education authorities are given extra responsibilities. Therefore, this impacts negatively on the curriculum of schools as decentralisation also reduces the administrative and financial help given to schools by central government. This has also seen the deterioration of school achievements by most schools in Zimbabwe, which later led to the then President of Zimbabwe to set a commission of inquiry led by Professor Nziramasanga in 1999 (dubbed the Nziramasanga Commission) to inquire on the relevance of the education system of Zimbabwe (Pedzisayi et al., 2014). Hence, the subsequent section debates on the challenges

(which have affected the success of schools) associated with the Zimbabwe school curriculum, as identified by the Nziramasanga Commission (Pedzisayi et al., 2014).

3.3.2 The Nziramasanga Commission on the Zimbabwean school curriculum

Pedzisayi et al. (2014) state that although the Nziramasanga Commission found that the secondary school curriculum at the time was academically valuable, it did not adequately prepare students for the workforce. After completing their basic education, students should be prepared to compete and perform in the workplace, preparing them to enter the workforce (Rose, 2008). According to Coltart (2012), who was Zimbabwe's Minister of Primary and Secondary Education at the time, one of the main issues with the country's educational system has been its preference for academic subjects, which prevents it from adequately preparing students for the country's economy. With reference to the Nziramasanga Commission (1999), Coltart asserts that one of the Commission's agenda items was the inquiry on the biased academic subjects which led to the Zimbabwe education's failure. However, as always being reminded by post-colonial scholars and the world systems analysis, Wolhuter and Van Niekerk (as cited by Wolhuter et al., 2016) assert that principals in developing countries also have to deal with curricula heavily influenced by models inherited from developed countries. Hence the argument by Wolhuter et al. (2016) requires developing countries to place a focus locally, adapting the educational curricula in accordance with their requirements and conditions. Due to their importance for the formation of a fully-rounded individual who is expert in both art and industry, the majority of Zimbabweans support the integrated curriculum that covers both academic and vocational topics (Nziramasanga Commission, 1999). As a result, the Commission recommended a two-prolonged secondary school curriculum (two-pathway education curriculum) with strong technical/vocational and business/commercial component relevant to the world of work, to be implemented as policy, by all secondary schools throughout Zimbabwe, regardless of the schools' capacity in terms of resources (Pedzisai et al., 2014). This background of the Zimbabwean School Curriculum, thus, justifies the need to develop a contextual factors school strategy to promote quality teaching in schools. With the above argument, the following section, discusses the challenges of the new curriculum policy implementation, as a macro contextual factor, faced by school principals in Zimbabwe, particularly, in the district of Marondera.

3.3.3 The new curriculum policy implementation challenges

The Policy Circular Number P77 of 2006 (Zimbabwe Government, 2006) provides guidelines for the implementation of the new-look curriculum initiative, according to Pedzisayi et al. (2014). It was designed to give students a wide range of Technical/Vocational and Business/Commercial subjects to choose from, allowing them to shape their career opportunities in vocational education courses. Paper-based learning, which according to Edutopia.org, is a dynamic classroom approach in which students actually explore real-world problems and gain a deeper understanding, is targeted by the framework. This was echoed by Lazarus Dokora, the then Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, in his argument published in the Herald on July 10, 2017. As a result, many schools in developing nations are tasked with developing the skills of those who earn a living in such circumstances. This is because many developing countries are seeing the emergence of a sizable informal economic sector that supports the livelihoods of many citizens (Wolhuter et al., 2016). Thus, the new curriculum aims to ensure that learners demonstrate desirable literacy and numeracy skills, as well as practical competencies essential for life, and that they are prepared for life and work in an indigenous economy and an increasingly globalized and competitive environment (Herald, 28 October 2015).

However, with all that effort of giving a new shape to the school curriculum, some challenges linked to its implementation are always met. Those who implement policies, principals and teachers (school management) are usually side-lined from the policy-making initial stages by those at provincial or national level. The following section discusses the composition of the school management structure and its duties which help to facilitate the success of set school goals.

3.3.3.1 The School Management Team

Maja (2016) identified the school management team as consisting of the principal, deputy principal, senior teachers, and heads of departments, and this structure depends on the size of the school. The principal leads the school management team (SMT) in the successful implementation of educational policies in school environments (cf. par. 3.3). The school management team mentioned by Maja, resonates strongly with school management teams in the Marondera District schools. However, SMTs in the Marondera District include responsible authorities as well as the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education officials, for example, the District Schools Inspector (DSI), other officers and the Provincial Education Director (PED). Their presence is important in giving guidance to the SMT and making sure that they operate within

the dictates of the education policies. A noted responsibility of the school management teams (SMTs) is to manage an organised curriculum of the school. According to Ntuli (as cited in Luhailima & Mulovhedzi, 2016) one of the organisational duties for SMTs is to deal with school curriculum. After completing their basic education, students are prepared by a rigorously supervised school curriculum to perform in the working world (Rose, 2008). Luhailima and Mulovhedzi (2016), on the other hand, assert that the main responsibility of SMTs is to ensure the successful implementation of the school programme by setting goals and achieving them through the use of the five essential administrative functions of planning, coordinating, staffing, directing, and managing the use of human, financial, and material resources. Hence, management teams are important in developing strategies to promote the accomplishment of school goals. Luhailima and Mulovhedzi (2016) indicated that for the implementation of any school programme, the management teams need to be committed to the implementation and success of the programme. So, based on the discussed importance of the SMTs to facilitate quality teaching and learning in schools, their existence is inescapable.

However, for a management team to be successful in school effectiveness, the establishment and inclusion of school development committee (SDC) in the management team is critical in every school. This is in line with Section 36 of the Education Act (Chapter 25.04) of 2006. The SDCs in Zimbabwean schools are made up of five parents who are elected by the parents or legal guardians at an annual general meeting (AGM) (SDCs Handbook, 2010). As it is obligatory for The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) to make available value, all-encompassing and total education to all Zimbabweans, MoPSE found it essential to embrace parents in the running of schools in order to supplement the costs of education (SDCs Handbook, 2010). In support of the inclusion of SDCs in the management of schools, MoPSE identified their roles in The School Development Committees Handbook as:

- building infrastructure
- mobilising resources
- overseeing school finances
- managing disputes
- creating conditions that are favourable to learning and teaching for students, instructors, staff, and parents

The above SDCs' duties have an end aspiration of improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Therefore, the above discussion on the importance of SDCs justifies their inclusion in the SMT which is involved in developing strategies for school effectiveness. If these

duties and responsibilities are put into effect professionally and successfully the desired curriculum results will be realised. The aim of this study was to develop a management strategy for school leaders to deal with contextual factors in order to promote school effectiveness (cf. par. 4.3.1). The successful implementation of a curriculum appeals for talented and competent SDCs as school leaders as well, to plan, handle funds and asserts, provide infrastructure, mobilise resources, and deal with conflict effectively to improve the teaching and learning environment (SDCs Handbook, 2010).

Bottom-up theorists emphasise target groups and service providers, contending that policy is made at the local level, according to Matland (as cited in Cerna, 2013), and Chompucot (as cited in Pedzisayi et al., 2014), who claims that the bottom-up implementation theory emphasises starting at the actual implementer level. Furthermore, according to Winters (as mentioned in Pedzisayi et al., 2014), the bottom level personnel (principals and management teams) are far more knowledgeable about issues than the top level staff, hence it is ideal for the bottom-up theory to start with these individuals. Winters's (2006) argument emphasises the need for both public and private parties to be included in the implementation process so that they may evaluate the objectives, plans, and programmes they have developed. Teachers may not have adequate confidence and trust in the new curriculum if curriculum reforms are not made obvious to them (Chisholm & Lyendecker, 2008). This makes it difficult for school leaders to confidently carry out class supervisions if they were not engaged in the curriculum's creation. The development and maintenance of efficient educational programmes within their schools and the promotion of the improvement of teaching and learning provide challenges for principals (J.C.A, 1991). These change processes call for more complicated approaches than the conventional top-down policy making since they take place in education systems that are becoming increasingly complex (Viennet & Pond, 2017). It is therefore, important for the policy implementers in Zimbabwe education to realise the significant role that the school principals and school management teams play in implementing policies, hence, their (principals) need for inclusion in the processes.

Stakeholders can be included in the implementation process itself, which can be advantageous to both them and the education system as a whole (Viennet & Pond, 2017). The focus on centrally placed actors who create and carry out government programmes is one of the advantages of the bottom-up approach; thus, contextual considerations inside the implementation environment are crucial (Cerna, 2013). For instance, for implementation to be successful, policymakers must comprehend, engage with, and support school leaders

(principals) as actors with their own goals, strategies, and actions (Cerna, 2013). A lot of literature has also cited the lack of resources as an impediment to successful school curriculum implementation. The subsequent section discusses how lack of resources has been a hindrance to school principals, leading to failure of school achievement.

3.3.3.2 Impact of lack of resources on curriculum implementation in schools

It is a challenge for principals to supervise instruction in schools where teachers do not have resources. Bogliaccini (2007) contends that if there is a lack of resources like text books, furniture, and study materials, teachers in many nations encounter frequent hurdles. The Zimbabwe Teachers' Association (ZIMTA) chief executive officer, commenting on lack of resources, in an article in The Chronicle (2017, January 17) says,

“Our first challenge is that there are no resources to support the implementation of the curriculum. Most teachers do not have the copies of the syllabi, as there is no funding to facilitate the production of the copies” (The Chronicle, 2017, p.1).

Principals can only fulfil their different duties if resources are accessible. According to Bush and Clover (2003), principals must oversee the curriculum throughout the school, evaluate student performance through analysis of internal continuous assessments and examination results, monitor the work of heads of departments (HODs) through examination of their work schedules and work portfolios, ensure the HODs monitor the work of teachers employed in their subject areas, and set up a schedule of class visits. Hence, if resources are absent, it then makes the job of the principals challenging. Therefore, it calls for the principals to find approaches to counter-attack the resource challenges in their schools. It is thus, my hope that this research will help the Marondera District secondary principals with some strategies they might use in their schools to achieve development because, according to (Early, 2013; Yu, 2009), principals are in charge of improving best instructional practices by fostering pleasant school climates, inspiring teachers and students, and efficiently managing resources. Another challenge that principals come across in schools on curriculum implementation is that of human resources, specifically, the challenge of unqualified teachers. It is therefore, significant to describe the challenges of lack of qualified teachers faced by principals in schools.

3.3.4 Influence of lack of qualified teachers in schools

According to Research Clue (2020), the major objective of education in society is to instil information that will help people become more integrated into society and better equipped to handle their difficulties. However, the goal is sometimes far from being achievable in schools because school principals are faced with lack of qualified teachers. Qualified teachers, according to the Research Clue (2020), have been seen as an effective instrument towards achieving quality teaching. The quality of every educational system depends on the calibre of its instructors, and instructor calibre is the most significant school-based determinant of student accomplishment (Adeogun, as referenced in Research Clue, 2020). Furthermore, the success of any human effort, particularly in the area of teaching and learning, is closely associated with the quality of personnel who perform the tasks in the organization (Ebietomiye, 2009). As a result of the aforementioned affirmation, secondary school principals should evaluate the characteristics of teachers in connection with their training, expertise, and pedagogical style in order to guarantee the quality of the education provided to the students (Research Clue, 2020).

There is literature with indications that lack of qualified teachers has great bearing on student achievement, although Rivkin et al. (as cited by Research Clue, 2020) argue that there has never been an agreement among researchers on the particular teacher's factors that influence student academic attainment. This is also supported by Adaramola and Obomanu (as cited in Research Clue, 2020) who contend that, in Nigeria, the availability of unqualified teachers, led to an on-going poor performance of students in most science related subjects.

The same challenge has affected secondary schools in the Marondera District, in Zimbabwe. According to Chiwanga (2014), of the 98 446 teachers in Zimbabwe, 12 713 were professionally unqualified and thus, leading to most schools performing badly in the Ordinary and Advanced level examinations (Majongwe, 2013). It is therefore, crucial that for any success to be recorded in the academic secondary school performance in Marondera, the issue of teacher's professionalism and qualification should be prioritised. Hence, the motivation of this research, to identify the contextual factors in schools in the Marondera District in order to develop a strategy that will help principals, to promote quality teaching and learning.

Mhkhwanazi (2007) proposes programmes to be held in order to expand the teachers' knowledge, skill, attitude, and values; and this upgrading should be an ongoing process to enhance their teaching skill and knowledge, so that they are able to teach learners more successfully. This would help to alleviate the challenge of unprofessional teachers. Ghavifekr et al. (2016) also cites lack of teachers' competency in using computers, as another challenge

faced in schools. According to Newhouse (2003), many teachers are uninterested in changes and the integration of supplemental learning involved with introducing computers into their teaching practices. They also lack the expertise and skills to use computers. Thus, some researchers recommend that teachers need to be provided with suitable facilities, software and training to be able to implement them in technology learning-teaching process (Salehi & Salehi, 2012; Tiwari & Singh, 2018). It is my hope therefore that this research will enlighten the school principals in the District of Marondera in Zimbabwe to understand the importance of assimilating information communication technology (ICT) in teaching and learning in order to promote academic success in their schools. The significance of technology teaching-learning in schools, leads to the discussion in the following section on the impact of globalization, at macro-level, on education.

3.3.5 The influence of globalisation on teaching ICT in schools

Steemit (2020) asserts that because of globalization and the subsequent convergence of cultures, educational systems must endeavor to incorporate information and communication technology (ICT) into routine learning procedures. This will make it easier to comprehend how technologies operate and how they could impact people's lives around the world (Steemit, 2020). According to Fox and Hundley (2011), globalisation is the connectivity of people and enterprises around the world, which ultimately results in the integration of global cultural, political, and economic systems. To conduct business abroad, one must have the freedom to travel and connect with people anywhere in the world (Fox & Hundley, 2011). The demands of industry and the job market for graduates and what colleges generate are in conflict. ICT graduates must acquire a variety of knowledge and abilities, according to research (Ekstro et al., 2006). Andriole (2006) notes that the computing curriculum is failing to take into account the demands of the outside world and that the gap between theory and practice is growing. Governments are having trouble enabling their educational institutions to turn societies into information and knowledge-communities as a result of globalisation and the "global village" (Goddard & Conford, 2007). In order to fill new digital job profiles like network managers, web administrators, developers, programmers, and security specialists, modern organisations need technical talent. However, universities appear to be in trouble; for instance, despite an increase in student enrolment in ICT-related courses globally, the number of ITC graduates still falls short of the demand (Ezziane, 2007). Hence, this review will be an eye-opener for school leaders particularly in the district of

Marondera, to be aware of programmes (learning areas) which work in tandem with courses in demand on the job market.

In response to the influence of contextual factors, the Nziramasanga Commission in Zimbabwe (1999) suggested using ICT for teaching and learning in all learning institutions. Even in the most remote rural area the presence of ICT may create new opportunities for teaching and learning (Wolhuter et al., 2016). Walker (2021) claims that ICT comprises all the technological tools and resources that we use to communicate, create, disseminate, store and manage information on computers and in the cloud. Walker (2021) asserts that because ICT is focused on communication, it encompasses the internet, mobile devices, and wireless networks. In consent, Steemit (2020) notes that the introduction of ICT into the classroom is changing the way that education is delivered to learners, gradually paving the way for a new form of electronic literacy, increasing the availability of educational programmes and materials in electronic form, teachers preparing materials in electronic form, and students producing papers, assignments, and projects in electronic form, as well as note books that have begun to fade away, giving allowance for laptop usage. Principals in the district of Marondera should therefore be aware of these developments for them to incorporate ICT in teaching and learning in their schools to promote quality teaching in response to the impact of contextual factors. They (principals) should also be reactive to the challenges that accompany the introduction of ICT in their schools, and it is my hope that this research will help them to identify the correct strategies to deal with individual problems.

3.3.5.1 ICT integration challenges

Although globalisation has seen the development of ICT in education, its integration in schools has been hampered by lack of resources. Despite the fact that access to power and other modern technological resources is crucial for the spread of ICT integration (Mndzebele, 2013), educational institutions frequently lack these resources (Yildirim, 2007). The shortage of classroom time, on the other hand, prevents learners from using computers enough, according to Salehi and Salehi (2012), who support this in their research findings. Beggs (2000) emphasises that a significant number of researchers mentioned time constraints and the challenge of scheduling computer time for classes as a barrier to teachers using ICT in their instruction in support of that claim. Becta (as cited in Ghavifekr, 2016) argues that teachers face the issue of a lack of time in numerous areas of their work, as it interferes with their capacity to complete tasks like lesson preparation, exploration of various websites, and examination of various features of

educational software. Therefore, the Marondera District principals should be encouraged to take note of these ICT integration challenges that can be faced by schools, if school effectiveness in their schools is to take place. Globalisation has also seen the teaching of English Language in schools being prioritised. Hence the argument in the ensuing section on the global status of teaching English in schools.

3.3.6 The effects of globalisation on English education in schools

English is the most widely used language in the world for international trade, diplomacy, mass entertainment, international telecommunications, scientific publications, as well as publishing newspapers and other books (Rao, 2019). It is also considered to be the first global lingua franca. The Reader's Digest (1993), defines the term "lingua franca" as a common language adopted for use between speakers whose native languages are different. English is thus, an important subject that should be included on the school curriculum. Since practically all publications in the fields of science, engineering, information technology, tourism, and business are exclusively written in English, the majority of students who travel abroad to pursue their higher education should be able to speak it (Rao, 2019).

However, the teaching of English in schools has been faced with some challenges. English language teachers are dissatisfied by their low ability in speaking English and using technology during teaching times, according to research findings by Behroozi and Amoozegar (2014). These constraints are in addition to external ones like inadequate teaching periods and scarce teaching resources. Therefore, school leaders should strive to acquire resources for the efficient teaching of English in schools and enough time should be allocated to the subject to avoid negative impact on the linguistic learning ability of students (Bista, 2010). However, all that effort by school leaders can also be frustrated by the political context of the school. The following discussion highlights how a school can be influenced by its political situation.

3.3.7 The political context of the school

The political environment within a school is also another factor which can decide the effectiveness of the school in response to the impact of contextual factors. People or organisations with the power to provoke or plan long-term campaigns of unrest or violence may have an impact on schools. According to Kelshall (2016), organisations or people like trade unions, traditional tribal chiefs, criminal gangs, or even civil society can have an impact on a

school's performance. Zimbabwe's education has also been affected by different unions which represent teacher employees in schools, with the aim of bargaining for better working conditions and remuneration for teachers. Unions may increase teacher performance by boosting employee morale and professional commitment through advocacy for better working conditions and higher salaries (Vachon & Ma, 2015). Mhizha (2015) contends that unionism and politics are therefore intrinsically connected because of Zimbabwe's past and current political situation. Since political parties and leaders have more weight than labour associations in the post-colonial era, and as a consequence of this marriage of convenience, trade unions have suffered (Mhizha, 2015). Coulson (2010) makes the case that public school employee unions are polarising and politically motivated organisations in support of Mhizha. On the other hand, Lilley (2021) asserts that in New Jersey, the unions are prioritising politics. According to Lilley, the New Jersey Education Association's (NJEA) leadership has turned the union into a political-organizing engine over the past ten years, making it the most influential political actor in New Jersey.

In Zimbabwe, the existence of two strong opposing political parties ZANU PF and MDC has divided trade unions along partisan lines with unions like Zimbabwe Teachers' Union (ZIMTA) backing ZANU PF and Progressive Teachers' Union (PTUZ) behind MDC (Mhizha, 2010). PTUZ has consistently called for teacher walkouts and strikes, but ZIMTA has consistently chosen a different strategy for advocating for workers in Zimbabwe (Mhizha, 2010). A common viewpoint among policymakers in many nations is that teacher strikes interfere with instruction and have a negative influence on students' ability to learn (Jaume & Willen, 2018). As a result, teacher unions, particularly the most powerful South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU), has come under fire for their disruptive effects on both student learning and the overall operation of the educational system (Wills, 2014). Some countries have even gone to the extent of endorsing legislations that relentlessly limit teachers' rights to strike. However, Jaume and Willen (2018) debate that despite the frequency of teachers' strikes across the globe and the disputes that surround them, there is shortage of empirical work that reliably examines how they (strikes) affect students' long-run academic outcomes. Thus, teacher strikes and stay away, called for by teacher unions negatively impact school success and need to be avoided. In particular, the school leaders in Zimbabwe's Marondera geographical area may use the data from this study to design a strategy to overcome these obstacles and foster success in their institutions.

Above and beyond the discussed contextual factors at macro-level, that affect school leaders, there are also some societal contextual factors (Wolhuter et al., 2016) that cannot be

ignored. These also affect daily activities and should be accounted for, thereby making appropriate action to circumvent them. The next section describes the societal contextual factors, at meso-level, which are beyond the school boundary that influence academic achievement in schools. Societal contextual factors should be accounted for and dealt with by principals in the district of Marondera, if they are to run their schools effectively to promote school effectiveness.

3.4 Societal contextual factors

According to Fulmer et al. (2015), the concept of meso level is conceptually larger than the school alone because it can take into account elements that go beyond the school, such as parental wishes and expectations and the local community. According to Wolhuter et al. (2016), the social contextual factors influencing schools in the country and the surrounding community include geography, history, social composition (demography), economy, and ecology. According to Forest and Alexander (as cited in Chang & Mun, 2010), communities are growing more and more diverse while local, national, and international borders are thinning. According to Forest and Alexander (2014), students today represent a variety of racial, linguistic, socioeconomic, gender, religious, and other cultural origins in the classroom. As a result, there is diversity of every kind in classrooms, which should be of particular interest to all professionals working in the field of education as it suggests that changes to the educational system are required (Forest & Alexander, 2014). Chang and Mun (2010) contend that schools can play a significant role in fostering social integration by offering shared experiences for all students. Social integration in school context refers to the integration of minority groups such as newcomers into the school society (Geek & Nerd, 2016). On the other hand, the APA Dictionary of Psychology (online) defines school social integration as the reduction or elimination of racial segregation in public schools. For example, schools should improve the environment to provide enough common areas where diverse common cultures can coexist effectively. This requires an increase in the awareness and understanding of other cultures among school leaders. Additionally, school leaders should offer events that anybody may participate in, like sporting competitions, adventure camps, and global service learning. As a result, the school has excellent potential to create diverse environments (Chang & Mun, 2010). Therefore, through this research, school principals in the Marondera District can be stimulated to consider cultural diversity as one of the contextual factors that may influence the development of academic achievement. Schools need to embrace different learning areas that cater for every learner in the school.

It is imperative for principals, as school leaders, to be aware of these factors in order to deal with the problems effectively and promote success in their schools. With the high rate of academic school failure in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe, it is anticipated that, through this research, a strategy can be developed, which may result in the promotion of quality teaching. One contextual factor that poses challenges to principals in schools is the economy of a country, which results in poverty of the community. A discussion of this problem is deliberated in the succeeding section.

3.4.1 Influence of poverty on school's achievement

According to Wolhuter et al. (2016), a significant factor affecting a school is a nation's economy, notably the fact that widespread poverty is pervasive in many developing nations. According to the World Bank, which was referenced by Wolhuter et al. in 2016, the majority of the world's poor population reside in developing nations. Therefore, it is the responsibility of principals to take into account the limitations that poverty frequently places on people's lives, especially those of children, as well as how such circumstances affect academic attainment (Parret & Budge, 2016). According to Winters and Cowie, as reported by Parret and Budge (2016), mobility, access to physical and material resources, literacy and language development, were some of the factors that are impacted by poverty. Living in economic hardship, according to Parret and Budge (2016), can adversely affect students' mental health, self-efficacy and self-image. Beegle (2006) also agrees that motivation to do well is also destroyed by economic hardships. Parret and Budge (2016), also continue to state that health and well-being are interrelated factors which influence students' ability to benefit from schooling, for example, substandard housing and inadequate medical care, poor nutrition, which can affect the rate of childhood diseases, premature births and low birth weight. In support of the above assertion, a study carried out by Wolhuter et al. (2016) about the experiences of school leadership in the Masaiti District in Zambia of the Foundation of Cross Cultural Education (FCE) Schools, found out that, the FCE schools find themselves in a context where employment and poverty are rife, with food shortages and malnutrition experienced in the dry season; and the lack of basic knowledge of health care affecting the quality of life in the community. To counter the food shortages and malnutrition which affect the FCE schools, a school feeding scheme in each school has become part of the school (Wolhuter et al., 2016).

The same feeding scheme has also been adopted by Zimbabwean schools. Tshili (Herald, 4 March 2020) claims that the feeding programme aims to retain learners in school while

enhancing nutrition. The Heads of States of the African Union (AU) decided to implement domestic feeding programmes as a continental strategy to improve student performance and retention in schools during the AU Summit in January 2016. As a result of this decision, March 1 was designated as "Africa Day for School Feeding" (Tshili, Herald 4 March 2020). It is predicted that the feeding programme will enhance learning outcomes and achieve positive nutrition and health results for all (Tshili, Herald 4 March 2020). It is therefore, noteworthy for the school principals to account for these challenges in schools in order to find approaches to deal with them (challenges) accordingly, to promote school success.

Additionally, school leaders should be aware that, in terms of language and literacy development, students from low-income families frequently enter school behind their wealthier counterparts (Parret & Budge, 2016). Neuma (as cited in Parret & Budge, 2016) argue that research shows that children with poor backgrounds hear few words with more limited syntactic, complexity and fewer conversation-eliciting questions, which makes these children find problems in acquiring new words and discriminating among words. This challenge of language development by children from poor backgrounds (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2008) is brought about by disparities in reading material accessibility between low-income households and their more affluent classmates. According to Irvin (1980), reading frequently is linked to the growth of refined language structures, greater levels of comprehension, enhanced word analysis skills, and meritorious performance by pupils on standardised achievement exams (Morrow, 1983). Thus, school leaders are encouraged to have adequate amount of reading materials in school libraries and classrooms; and supplying a quiet, comfortable environment to read between learners who have access to books outside of school and those who don't (Santa et al., 2000) in order to achieve a fair balance.

Textbooks are an essential component of any learner's education (Milligan, 2017), so school administrators must support teachers and librarians financially by allocating funds from the school budget for book purchases, and school librarians must assist with the proper use of the books (Guice, 1994). Although they would want to inculcate a reading culture in school learners, principals are always faced with financial problems in schools, making it difficult for academic improvement to be achieved. Citing an example in a case study in the Zaka District in Zimbabwe, Ngwenya et al. (2008) affirm that similarly, the schools have no money to buy books and stationery for both learners and teachers. Eight or more children share a single book, instead of one child per text book (Ngwenya et al., 2008). Ngwenya et al. (2008) contend that the school community should assist the development of the school by, among other things, paying

tuition for underprivileged students and buying textbooks. Therefore, it is essential that school leaders appreciate the starring job that parents and the entire school community play in schools' development. Thus, principals should encourage them to continue to give aid to the schools. The following section describes the importance of family support in the child's academic achievement, which the school principals should be aware of, in order to stimulate quality teaching in their schools.

3.4.2 Impact of family support in academic achievement

Clifton and Cook (2012) argue that learners begin compulsory schooling at a level that is determined in part, by their family background and upbringing; and it is known that pupils' progress over the course of compulsory schooling is lower from learners from poorer backgrounds. Parents decide how much they will invest in their children's education throughout childhood and school, and they create the so-called "home learning" environment, which offers resources and establishes expectations (Cook, 2013). A child's performance at school can be affected by investments such as reading assistance, homework assistance, private tutoring, extracurricular activities, books in the home, and home computers (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011; Ireso, 2004; Kaushal et al., 2011; Evance et al., 2010; Beltran et al., 2008). Financial expectations set by parents are also likely to have an impact on individual accomplishment, according to research on how unemployment affects a child's learning trajectory (Gregg et al., 2012; Davis-Kean, 2005). The home learning environment has a significant impact on learners' achievement both immediately and throughout the course of the term, if the aforementioned aspects are taken into account together (Goodman et al., 2010).

Therefore, schools that accept children from low-income families should try to learn as much as they can about the conditions in which their learners live (Parrette & Budge, 2016). Similarly, faced with the educational inequalities among the pupils from different backgrounds in schools, principals should seek for ways to help those pupils who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, if school success in the district of Marondera is to be accomplished. Hoskins and Barker (as cited by Wolhuter et al., 2016) assert that although education and schools are anticipated to act as vehicles for upward social mobility, there are signs that the positions that children ultimately occupy as adults in the socio-economic hierarchy will be determined by their parents' socio-economic status rather than their own educational accomplishments (Halsey & Tunic, as cited by Wolhuter et al., 2016). As a result, it is essential for principals to comprehend the circumstance in order to react effectively (Wolhuter et al., 2016).

As part of their commitment to assisting all students in realising their full potential, effective schools should view boosting the achievement of underprivileged students (MacLeod et al., 2015). They should put a priority on providing all students with high-quality instruction, view attendance, behaviour, and emotional support as important, and make an effort to understand each student as an individual so that school curricula are designed with that in mind (MacLeod et al., 2015). It is therefore important for principals in schools to make sure that the schools psychological support services departments are active in schools and provide support and mental health services to school pupils, in order to promote success in schools in reaction to the influence of contextual factors. Thus, the subsequent section describes the importance of the help offered by school psychologists in schools and principals should be aware of their (psychologists) services.

3.4.3 Importance of school psychological services in schools

In order to assess, diagnose, and create various treatment programmes for learners with learning and other difficulties, school psychologists work closely with learners, teachers, and parents (Reynolds & Gutkin, 1998). This collaboration enables students to achieve their full potential in school, studies, and life. Therefore, in order to deliver effective school psychological services, these psychologists must unavoidably be well versed on the psychological requirements of schoolchildren, symptoms of distress, behavioural difficulties, and treatment strategies (Merrell et al., 2006).

Partelow et al. (2018) state that mental health and behavioural concerns, such as delinquency, attention deficit disorder, and substance misuse, can occasionally affect schools and prevent children from succeeding. According to Needham et al. (as cited by Partelow, 2018), psychological distress may increase the likelihood of homework difficulties, absences, and course failure, and having experienced trauma like violence or abuse is linked to lower standardised test scores, not just for the affected students but also for their peers. ICT has improved education, but it has also been tarnished by incidents like cyber-bullying, which could compromise school safety (Wolhuter et al., 2016). Thus, faced with these indiscipline challenges in schools, principals find them difficult to deal with because of lack of professionally qualified staff in this area (Hoestr, 2010). Partelow et al. (2018) reiterate that many students' needs go unmet because there are so few school-based mental health professionals working far below the expected ratios. As a result, they argue that hiring more specialised student support services staff can address students' needs that hinder learning. However, by inadequately financing

schools, the government harms the long-term economic potential of the country while also performing a disservice to the kids (Partelow et al., 2018).

On the other hand, Zimbabwe is not an exception in this predicament of the lack of qualified psychologists in schools. According to Nkoma (2019), in 2018, fifty educational psychologists were servicing about 3 339 000 primary school learners and that ratio translates to one educational psychologist to 65 471 learners. Thus, with that awkward ratio in Zimbabwean schools, which is far from the recommendation by the United Nations Social and Cultural Organization, of 1 to 700 (Mpofu et al., 2007), it is clear testimony of the need for more educational psychologists to do traditional psycho-educational evaluations (Nkoma, 2019). Most learners end up not receiving the services of educational psychologists, which leads to the services being provided by other professionals (Nkoma, 2019). This becomes a challenge for principals in schools who have no option but to ask the inexperienced classroom teacher, who is already overburdened with high learner numbers, to deal with the learners' psychological needs which need the services of professionals. Hence, the introduction of the guidance and counselling programmes in secondary schools in Zimbabwe, where most learners are in the adolescent stage (Nkenchi, 2016). The syndrome of alienation, which includes distrust, anxiety, pessimism, geocentricism, meaninglessness, normlessness, and impotence, affects adolescents throughout this time (Robert & Elizabeth, 1983).

Therefore, school principals in the Marondera District should be aware of the fundamental role played by the guidance and counselling teachers in assisting students to understand their developmental stages in order to adjust to school life. The challenge of school dropouts which principals face in schools is also lessened by that assistance given to the disadvantaged students through guidance and counselling sessions.

Besides the influence of contextual factors that are outside the school boundary, school leadership and school success are also affected by contextual factors within the school boundary. These factors are the micro contextual factors and they include professional development, the period that principals spent at a school and the innovation level of a school. The literature on the influence of professional development in schools is reflected in the following section.

3.5 The influence of professional development

It is important for school principals to acknowledge the significant role that professional development plays as one of the micro contextual factors that influence school improvement from within the school enclosure. It is important to keep in mind that people can also learn informally through discussions and debates among co-workers, independent reading, research, or peer learning. Professional development is typically described as engaging in formal practices like training programmes, conferences, seminars/workshops, collaborative learning in networks/teams, or training courses at a college or university (Mizell, 2010). Waniganayake et al. (2008) define "professional development" as ongoing professional learning that helps professionals to maintain up-to-date knowledge of recent developments in their industry while also acquiring new information and abilities. Personal growth and professional development go hand in hand (Practice Potentials, 2008). The commitment of the principals to grow professionally, through formal and informal learning opportunities, enables them to uphold high standards in the school organisation that ultimately benefit all stakeholders. Effective professional development has an impact on children in public schools, claims Mizell (2010).

Improvements in the design and development of teaching and learning processes are made possible through professional development as a continuous process supported by educational leadership (Marcelo, 2012).

"It is now widely accepted that teachers need initial training to be effective classroom practitioners and continuing professional development throughout their careers" (Elmore, 2010, p. 418).

A significant mass of academic literature reiterates the position that professional development is one of the critical determinants of contextual factors affecting teaching and learning practices in school. For instance, in Ghana, Coffie, Aboagye, and Johnson (2019) aimed to identify the variables influencing the adoption of professional development concepts by the college physics tutors. Four physics tutors who were purposefully chosen from four different colleges of education were used in the qualitative case study. The study found that the support of the professional development team and the dedication of school leadership aid in the execution of professional development initiatives (Coffie et al., 2019). The implementation process was hampered by instructors' resistance to change, tutors' perceptions, and a lack of resources, a lack of time, and the lengthy duration of professional development (Coffie et al., 2019). Hilton, Hilton, Dole, and Goos (2015) examined the effect on the professional development of teachers and school leaders in a different study. About 70 teachers from 18 schools participated in a

professional development programme over the course of two years as part of a study. Principals and other school leaders were also invited to participate, and 20 leaders from 11 schools opted to do so. Surveys, interviews, and workshop discussions were used to gather information from teachers and participating school leaders on their professional development. The results demonstrated that school leaders' involvement in teacher professional development programmes has a positive impact on teachers' ability to apply and reflect on new knowledge and practices, as well as a positive impact on the leaders' own professional development (Hilton et al., 2015). Hence, this review may aid the Marondera District principals to focus more on their primary obligation of ensuring effective instruction in the classroom, to promote student achievement. According to the above literature, this can be done through the collaboration of the principals with their teachers and supporting these teachers to maximise their potential, resultantly, offering the best to the school communities in the district of Marondera.

Mizell (2010) elaborated on the significance of professional development in teaching and learning practises by stating that educators, including school and district administrators, should constantly advance their knowledge and expertise in order to apply the most effective instructional strategies and achieve success. Effective professional development is ongoing and includes instruction, practise, feedback, enough time, and support in the aftermath (Schleicher, 2016). The principals' own experiences at work along with the information and skills acquired through professional development programmes, influence whether or not their tenure in schools is effective or unsuccessful. Every school has distinct qualities, and these must be controlled and organised as such. There is no secret to becoming a successful principal that can be learned in a professional development course. Deborah (2016) argues that professional personalities and practices are shaped by actual life experiences as well as professional learning. Deborah contends further that there is no universal recipe for learning because it is a highly individualised process. In order to secure the achievement of school objectives, Hilton et al. (2015) emphasised the necessity of building principals' competence to lead changes and enhance teaching methods in schools. Teachers' willingness to making constructive changes in their schools might be encouraged by training. According to Helterbran (2010) and Uribe-Florez et al. (2014), teacher leadership programmes must foster the growth of teachers' self-confidence and their desire to step outside their comfort zones and embrace the idea of influencing school transformation. Helterbran (2010) asserts that educators should reject the maxim "just a teacher" (p. 363). Teachers need to be leaders who take the initiative to find solutions to obstacles that stand in the way of learners' success. According to Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010), some of the important variables include teachers' preferences for subject-related learning and/or professional

development, their students' academic achievement, their relationships with other people in the school setting, and their positive interactions with parents.

Additionally, a lot of academics have emphasised how important it is for school leaders to help teachers by giving them access to resources, encouraging them to attend class, and giving them continual reinforcement (Chen & Yeung, 2015). For instance, using a mixed-methods explanatory-sequential design, McKay (2016) investigated the personal and contextual factors that influence teacher activity and self-efficacy when creating and implementing individual education plans (IEPs). The findings showed that a number of personal and contextual factors, such as strong pedagogical knowledge, teaching experience, the capacity for collaboration, and awareness of the teacher's role within an IEP team, influence teacher activity when planning and implementing IEPs. These factors are necessary for teachers to feel more self-efficacious and in charge of their classrooms. Time, inclusive school rules, and having collaborative relationships on the IEP team were contextual factors that both supported and constrained teacher agency and self-efficacy (McKay, 2016). Similar to this, Hoxha and Hyseni-Duraki (2017) look into how teachers' opinions of leaders' and principals' actions relate to their own self-efficacy, with a particular focus on transformational leadership techniques. Passive management for example was the only leadership feature that had a negative correlation with self-efficacy, while all four characteristics of transformational leadership were strongly associated with those characteristics (Hoxha & Hyseni-Duraki, 2017).

Given the abovementioned, academic literature has already established the role of teacher and school principal professional development in their performance and in that of the school as an organisation. However, issues remain in such aspects as understanding the context of the professional development itself, as well as that of its application in diverse study settings, for example, within the schools found in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe. Studies are required in this respect, especially when professional development itself is a broad term which can include the most basic forms of teacher training, such as an oral pep-talk from a principal, to something as considerably big as having a doctoral course. Thus, this research helps principals in Marondera District to develop a strategy to help them attain their school goals and visions.

However, school leaders need to understand that transformation is a process, and it takes time to be achieved. Therefore, it is significant for a principal to be aware of the risks associated with untimely transfers to other schools. The following section deliberates on the influence of the time that a principal takes at an institution.

3.5.1 Time at a school

The time that a principal stays at a school is another contextual factor that impacts school achievement. Researchers and decision-makers assert that school development takes time. They contend that for a principal to have a positive impact on the school, they need serve for at least five to seven years. According to a longitudinal research done in 80 schools, a principal typically serves for 3.6 years. School performance is impacted by high principal turnover. In support, Louis, Leithhood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) state in their study that learner performance on reading and math achievement exams was negatively correlated because turnover negatively impacts the school's overall climate. Therefore, even if a principal was very successful at their former school, it takes time for them to adjust to their new setting. According to research, a new principal may need up to five years to fully implement policies and practices that will have a beneficial effect on the school's performance as well as stabilise and enhance the teaching staff (Louis et al., 2010). The impact of a new principal is seen temporarily in all schools, but it is more pronounced in low-performing, high-poverty, and marginal schools because the incoming principal is probably less skilled and effective than the outgoing principal. At low-performing, high-poverty, and minority schools, achievement gains have been seen to slow down for longer periods of time when a new principal takes over (Beteille, Kalogride & Loeb, 2011). After less than five years working at a station, many principals transfer or depart their positions. However, according to Clark, Martorell, and Rockoff (2009), effective principals continue to make significant progress during their early years, and their efficacy unquestionably grows over time.

Thus, through this investigation school principals in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe can understand and appreciate the importance of staying at a school for longer periods in order to record notable improvements in their educational organisations. The goal of this study was to create a district-wide plan for principals to support high-quality instruction in the classroom. The Education Officers (EOs) in the district might also appreciate the significance of encouraging school principals to stay longer at their stations and avoid transferring to other schools before five years, for the sake of school development in the Marondera District schools. For that reason, the ensuing section describes the school innovation level as a contextual factor that influences school leadership.

3.5.2 School innovation level

The level of innovation at a school is one of the important micro contextual factors found in literature that affects school principals during the execution of their obligations. It is commonly established that innovation benefits from strong organisational leadership and a positive work environment. Therefore, innovation practices are more likely to occur in a setting where the administration of the school is in favour of the practice, the practice is supported by the structure of the school, it fits within the curriculum, and it is a regular occurrence (Fullan, 2001; Keursten & Plomp, 1992). This basically means that the originality for school development should be welcomed and supported by all stakeholders. For instance, in some nations, technology may be included as part of educational reform or school improvement, which is defined as "a systematic sustained effort aimed at change in learning conditions and other related internal conditions in one or more schools" (Van Velzen, Miles, Eckholm, Hameyer, & Robin, 1985). These initiatives frequently entail integrated curriculum, instructional, and learning emphasis adjustments for both instructors and learners, placing various demands on resource use and allocation (Louise & Miles, 1991).

Background conditions and school culture play a crucial role in fostering change, according to studies on school reform (Fullan, 1991, 1993; Dalin, 1994 & Huberman, 1992). Given that parents and instructors collaborate while acknowledging the complementary roles they play in the children's lives, parental involvement appears to be essential in ensuring success (Fullan, 2001). Unquestionably, there is proof that learners who have their parents involved in their education tend to do better (Henderson & Berla, 1994).

It is therefore, indispensable for school principals to involve all stakeholders, particularly, teachers, learners and parents, in any reforms for schools to be effective. The discussion on transformational leadership, literature review (chapter 2, par. 2.3) supports the importance of school leaders working together with their followers to promote change in organisations. Principals should be visionary leaders who are able to explicitly explain in clear language, the path they would want to take, in order to develop their schools (chapter 2, par 2.3.1). Thus, it is prudent to discuss, in the next part, the impact of principals' characteristics on school achievement.

3.5.3 School principal characteristics

The characteristics of the school principal considered fundamental in this research have also been identified as being amongst the key micro-level contextual factors which determine the school achievement and principal effectiveness within organisational roles at the school.

According to Hauseman, Pollock, and Wang (2017), the complexity and volume of school principals' work is increasing. School leaders are now more than ever expected to establish connections with groups and institutions that are involved with the student body and the school community (Hauseman et al., 2017). It is expected of school leaders to play a key role in improving the standard of instruction in their institutions. They should have a specific set of abilities in order to fulfil their obligations to assist teaching and learning as leaders of institutions known as schools, where teaching and learning take place (Sijako, 2017). This indicates that the focal point of any change required at the school level is the principal. By fostering a conducive environment for teaching and learning in the school, he or she is supposed to establish a pleasant learning environment.

In the majority of the academic studies, the fundamental duty of the school principal as an effective leader on whom the success of various parts of school functionality depend is emphasised. For instance, Khan and Khan (2014) assert that if an institution lacks an effective, resourceful, and ethically sound leader, it would inevitably fail. The principal is the leader and the centre of the administration of the school or institution. Leadership is necessary at every level of the hierarchy for efficient and meaningful management. Since the principal has a lot of authority, he or she must be more qualified, knowledgeable about the subject matter, conversant with modern teaching techniques, and up to date on administrative developments than other subordinates in order to effectively manage the institution and achieve the established goals (Khan & Khan, 2014). A principal who has a high sense of self-efficacy is also more equipped to meet the demands of the classroom. According to Campo (2011), self-efficacy refers to people's assessments of their capacity to carry out a specific task. According to Sata (2013), several management and entrepreneurial phenomena have been conceptually and experimentally related with self-efficacy. Bullough, Renko, and Myatt (2014) contend that people are more willing to confront stressful situations and are more successful at changing them to their liking the more efficacious they feel. Regardless of whether a person has the skills to pursue a course of action, the lack of self-efficacy restricts their ability to make decisions (McStay, 2008). Principals may find it difficult to keep their professional teaching staff strong enough to maintain and improve student progress. According to research, effective school leaders must exhibit specific leadership traits, such as encouraging faculty professional development and exhibiting efficacy in pedagogy (Honig, Copland & Rainey, 2010). According to research on teachers, principals must completely comprehend the difficulties associated with teaching and learning processes in order to help them and understand them themselves (Paulsen & Martin, 2014). Additionally, collaborative relationships between school leaders and teachers may be beneficial in

coordinating efforts and resisting the onslaught of negative undercurrents, according to research on educational leadership.

One of the key thematic areas of literature on the characteristics of a school principal is that of their personal characteristics. According to Hoxha and Hyseni-Duraku (2017), school principals' leadership style is thought to have a significant impact on teachers' perceptions of their own efficacy. The goal and vision of creating a great school will be realised if the principal possesses the qualities of successful leadership. On the other hand, if a principal exhibits signs of ineffective leadership, this will have a negative impact on the academic success of a school. These identified principal characteristics relate well with the five leadership practices that are crucial for effective school leadership raised by Waite and Bogotch (2017) as well as The Wallace Foundation (2013) (cf. literature overview. par. 2.1) and their inclusion will play a critical part in the development of a management strategy for the Marondera District school leaders.

Literature also appears to emphasise the importance of leaders in a community. Hauseman et al. (2017) report on the impact of opportunities for school-community involvement on the work principals do on a daily basis and detail how participation in such activities influences and impacts their workloads using findings from a large-scale survey of 1,400 Ontario principals. According to survey results, school-level principals participate in an average of 4.4 community participation opportunities, and nearly two-thirds of principals said that this involvement adds to their workload (Hauseman et al., 2017). According to Hauseman et al. (2017), there are four ways that work intensification affects principals' efforts to engage with the community, including how it takes away from their ability to engage in direct instructional leadership practices. According to Small (2010), children who have their parents interested in their education do better in school. When parents are informed, supportive, and interested, learners exhibit higher academic and behavioural levels, have higher goals, and exhibit other beneficial school habits. In urban schools, parental involvement has been shown to have a positive effect on students' academic performance. The timing of school events or interactions and direct contact from the school, such as individual invites to events, are two key elements that affect parents' active involvement, according to the findings (Small, 2010). Contextual factors may have an impact on how teachers build ties with the community. Researchers (Leithwood, Sun & Pollock, 2017) came to the conclusion that parents must be involved in their children's education because they can have a significant impact on their academic progress by supporting their learning at home. Therefore, this is significant in light of that conclusion. Being an instructional leader is also considered as a leader characteristic which affects in-role

performance and contribution to the school as a whole. The Centre for Educational Improvement (CEI) (2013) asserts that in order for principals to be more effective instructional leaders, they should be masters of their trade and not just textbook smarts. Additionally, they should be able to put concepts into practice in a way that promotes a healthy school climate, supports their teachers, and shows that they are actually "leading" their schools rather than merely adhering to district-wide directives from above (CEI, 2013). For instance, Garcia-Martinez, Diaz-Delgado, and Ubago-Jimenez (2018) focused on the ideas and methods of instructional leadership that enable teachers to play important roles in educational settings. They claim that rather than incorporating these ideas into professional training programmes, the Mexican and Spanish educational systems continue to use a "technically oriented" training paradigm that divides the goals of education from those of the workplace (Garcia-Martinez et al., 2018). The advantages of integrating instructional leadership orientations within "educational cooperation," "Cooperative education," and "Team teaching and teacher leadership" at schools have been outlined in numerous research projects. According to the findings of the majority of studies, instructional leadership is an effective tool for fostering shared responsibility between teachers and head teachers and for fostering professional learning communities. Garcia-Martinez et al. (2018) main finding is that this information emphasises the necessity of avoiding current bureaucratic procedures in schools in order to replace the traditional "technical orientation" of training programmes. Some of the necessary changes in the context of global educational reform may be made possible by instructional leadership.

Similar to this, Bush and Glover (2016) note a growing acceptance that instructional leadership may be the best path to take for school improvement in South Africa in their evaluation of the literature on school leadership and management in South Africa. According to Bush and Glover (as stated in Robinson et al., 2008), school leaders should focus more on the basic activities of teaching and learning if they want to have a good impact on student outcomes. Bush and Glover (2016) claim that this can be accomplished through phase and learning area talks among educators as well as appropriate class visits. More precisely, instructional time management is emphasised by other researchers (Taylor, Mabogoane, & Akoobhai, 2011) as a crucial component of instructional leadership. These researchers observe ineffective time management practices in numerous South African schools. Arriving at school, getting to class, and covering the material in class are the three levels at which this manifests. Taylor et al. (2013) discovered the prevalence of poor management practices along with extremely low levels of teacher subject expertise and damaging union activity in their mixed method study conducted in high schools from the Eastern Cape and Free State regions.

Sijako (2017) on the other hand, looked at what the members of the school management team thought about the function of principals as instructional leaders. The case study was founded on a qualitative research methodology, and the school management teams' perspectives on the function of principals as instructional leaders were examined using the interpretivist paradigm as an epistemological foundation. Eight members of the school management teams were chosen from each of the two institutions, and data were gathered through in-person semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Data revealed that participants' opinions on how principals fulfil their position as instructional leaders varied, principals used various approaches to promote teaching and learning in their institutions, and the emphasis was on control rather than support (Sijako, 2017). The data also showed that there was a lack of professional support at all levels in the chosen schools, parents were not involved in their children's academic work, and it was determined that there did not appear to be a systemic and coherent support strategy focusing on teaching and learning due to differing opinions on how principals carry out their instructional leadership responsibilities (Sijako, 2017). In order to understand how principals' modelling of instructional tactics affects teachers' adoption of practices that foster more learner engagement and learning, Barrett and Breyer (2014) conducted a study. Along with other unfavourable undercurrents like poverty, teacher satisfaction, salary, and instruction, it was determined that maintaining teachers' passion for teaching and giving educators the drive to motivate learners to participate in lessons through effective leadership and modelling were crucial contextual factors (Barrett & Breyer, 2014).

Yet still, some studies focus on the transformational characteristics of school principals (see chapter 2, par 2.3). In order to increase the standard of school teaching and learning, develop individuals, and enrich the organisation, transformational leadership focuses on building school culture and vision (Shatzer et al., 2014). Transformational school leaders define and communicate the school's mission, set a positive example for others to follow, cultivate a culture of learning, and support staff members as they pursue professional growth. According to Shatzer et al. (2014), the four main focuses of transformational leadership theory are as follows:

- i. Inspirational drive
- ii. specific consideration
- iii. Idealised charisma (influence) is part of this
- iv. Mind-stimulating activities

According to research, emphasising people more has a good impact on teachers' attitudes and satisfaction, as well as the school atmosphere (Bogler, 2005). School leaders are

likely to have a much bigger impact on learner outcomes if they concentrate more of their influence on enhancing the quality of teaching and learning at their institution. Dinham (2008) revealed that schools with exceptional learner outcomes have a strong explicit emphasis on teaching and learning. The ability of teachers to teach, learners to learn, and exceptional achievements to occur are all reliant on the leadership of principals (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). Although transformational leadership has a significant positive impact on teachers, Ross and Grey (2006) found that this impact is significantly less pronounced on learner achievement.

A significant number of studies have focused on the effectiveness of a school principal within their leadership roles. Such studies suggest that principal effectiveness is a key characteristic which determines school learning and teaching. For instance, effective school leadership preparation has long been viewed as desirable, if not required, in Australia and around the world, according to Simon, Christie, Heck, Graham, and Call (2018). With varied degrees of success, schools, school systems, higher education institutions and educational authorities have made an effort to encourage teachers who want to become principals to prepare thoroughly for the challenging task that lies ahead (Simon et al., 2018). Peer support, teamwork, and collegial professional learning all aided in the self-development of postgraduate education students, increasing the necessary character traits, social skills, and interpersonal abilities of modern school leaders (Simon et al., 2018). Similarly, Chen and Cheng (2017) looked at 2,177 public school teachers and 189 private school teachers where they concentrated on the discrepancies between principals' leaderships and teachers' teaching performances in public and private schools. Building Block Equation, the study's analytical methods, modelling analysis and analysis of variance showed that while there is not a noticeable distinction between public and private school principals in terms of various leadership behaviours, private school principals outperform public school principals in terms of teaching performance. Public and private schools have various leadership styles (Chen & Cheng, 2017). This research was crucial in developing a management approach for school leaders in the Marondera District by comparing public, mission, and private schools.

Cansoy (2019) conducted a systematic review to examine the association between school principals' leadership behaviours and teachers' job happiness in a study related to that of Simon et al. (2018) and Chen and Cheng (2017). The research comprised 27 papers that were located in various databases, and the majority of these studies looked at the connections between teachers' job satisfaction and the transformational and interactional leadership

behaviours of school principals. School principals' transformation leadership behaviours were found to have stronger relationships with teachers' job satisfaction compared to interactional leadership behaviours and were an important predictor of job satisfaction (Cansoy, 2019). Cansoy (2019) also found those school principals' administrative behaviours that encourage participation and are flexible, sharing leadership at school, and exhibiting individual-oriented and supportive leadership behaviours were revealed to enhance teachers' job satisfaction. Therefore, cultivating leadership skills in teachers by principals contributes immensely to school effectiveness.

Ibrahim and Alshuhumi (2016) looked into the efficiency of the teaching in Malaysian schools and how leaders provide credibility in relation to the learning process, keeping the trait of successful leadership in mind. In the study, where emphasis was drawn for leaders to plan and organise the activities for development, a secondary way of data collecting was employed to gather the pertinent and associated materials. According to the study, leaders cannot guarantee good teaching on their own; teachers and learners must also assist them. The study also offers suggestions for how school leaders can support teachers by encouraging them to do their best throughout instruction and learning (Ibrahim et al., 2016). Ibrahim et al. (2016) also found that without a shared understanding between teachers, learners, and the ministry of education, principals alone are unable to fulfil the goals and objectives of the school and the ministry of education. Instead, they should plan and organise the core curriculum activities based on the requirements and interests of principals and learners in order to meet the stated objective of Malaysian plans for achieving teaching effectiveness and extracurricular activities. The aforementioned studies are beneficial to this research since they help create a management approach for Zimbabwe's Marondera District principals to encourage change in their schools. As a result, for the school to succeed, school officials must guarantee that everyone in the school is aware of the aims of the institution.

Some studies suggest that the effectiveness of a leader is a characteristic rooted in other personal characteristics of the leader. For instance, Westerberg (2013) examined extensive research to write on leadership and included pertinent experiences from his job as a principal to create a list of ten qualities that distinguish successful leaders from the irrelevant. According to Westerberg, good leaders define a vision of efficient teaching and evaluation and give specific illustrations of what this vision entails. It is also crucial that everyone uses the same vocabulary and common language when communicating instructional and assessment topics. According to Westerberg, every principal needs to keep up-to-date on the technical aspects of teaching by

reading specialised literature, going to conferences, and participating in a professional learning network. Leaders must also be eager to collaborate with teachers as partners in achieving a common objective and to share what they have learnt with them.

Effective school leaders should actively participate in the planning, carrying out, and assessment of high-quality professional development for teachers as well as use faculty meetings as a forum for modelling high-quality instruction (Westerberg, 2013). School leaders need to be seen as partners in cooperative, fruitful interactions and be able to show pedagogical understanding and proficiency. The goal of Sayed's (2013) study was to examine how the performance of particular schools in South Africa's Gauteng Province was impacted by the leadership of their principals. Stakeholders from schools were interviewed for the qualitative study, and they were also watched. The research sought to determine whether principal leadership and style have an impact on school performance by examining what leadership and leadership styles in the school context entail, the concept of school performance, the attributes of leadership as perceived by principals, and how these attributes impact school performance. According to the research, principals cannot increase student achievement unless they are well-versed in management and leadership techniques (Sayed, 2013).

There is growing evidence that leadership is essential to enhancing schools (Bryk, Sebring, & Allensworth, 2010). Since principals are entrusted with leading schools, they are in many ways accountable for fostering educational improvement. Effective principal leadership has been related to school improvement in study about each new generation of school reform, commencing with effective schools in the late 1970s to today's studies (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Preston, Goldring, Guthrie, & Ramsey, 2012). The actions of leaders associated with inclusive, high-performing schools, where almost all students achieve challenging performance goals and students with disabilities play a significant role in these improvement initiatives, have also become apparent over these decades (Billingsley, McLeskey, & Crockett, 2014). Particularly, it has frequently been underlined that for principals to successfully carry out school development work, instructionally oriented or learning-centred leadership practises are essential (May & Supovitz, 2011; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). The development of a compelling school mission, the evaluation and feedback of teachers, and the management of organisational resources like funding and instructional time are all examples of learning-centred leadership behaviours.

Collaboration as a quality of the school principal has been the subject of some academic investigations. Improvements in student learning are said to result when a number of factors are

in place that encourage collaboration (Bahous et al., 2016) and the centre's vision is refocused on pedagogy (Gumuseli & Eryilmaz, 2011). It has also been argued that leadership becomes focused on pedagogical dynamics that are dispersed in the pursuit of an organisational transformation (Harris & Jones, 2010). Furthermore, there are two ways to think about leadership in education. First of all, as it places a strong emphasis on the dissemination and adoption of a vision, it can be understood as a collection of relationships (Spillane, 2013). Alternately, it can be understood in terms of (Lazaridou & Beca, 2015) accomplishing educational objectives as well as those established in a field of study centred on the analysis of the interactions between educational systems and the interests of stakeholders. The organisational structure of educational systems, stakeholder agency, and access to decision-making are the three key elements identified by educational leadership research in both situations.

From the discussion above, a number of important concerns regarding the qualities of the school principal as a leader are raised. Although research generally support the idea that teacher-leadership is essential to school reform, it is not a strategy that is frequently used in classrooms today (Crowther, 2009). Collay (2006) urges education faculties to support teachers in forging strong professional identities, but programmes should boost teachers' self-assurance and capacity to exert more influence over the school systems they work in before university faculty can join forces in developing teacher leaders (Uribe-Florez, Al-Rawashdeh, & Morales, 2014). It is a widely held belief that educational leadership's primary goal is to improve teaching and learning. Nothing else is as significant. Educational leadership that does not make a direct contribution to the quality of teaching and learning is either a distraction or an oversight (Burnharm, 2016). Educational leaders and managers have a critical role in establishing and maintaining high standards of teaching and learning in schools (Steer, 2005). The brief clarification also provides a solid rationale for the research focus in a particular demarcated education location in Zimbabwe and the school principals are expected to benefit from it (research). However, it should also be noted that the characteristics of a school principal may also be affected by the nature or type of a school.

3.5.4 Type of school

Apart from the influence of the principal's characteristics on school improvement, the nature or type of the school itself has also been a leading issue within debates, on how the school can be a contextual factor that affects its success, as well as its leadership. Within these debates are the issues of whether or not a school is public, private or mission in ownership. In

actuality, there are differences between public and private schools in terms of organisational design and growth. For instance, Weshah (2011) observed that there were significant differences between public and private schools in terms of organisational development (including attitudes, beliefs, and efficiency in schools) in Jordan (officially the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan). The authority of teachers in public and private schools differs as well. According to Dills and Mulholland (2010), the compassion of teachers' unions in public schools outweighs that of teachers' unions in private schools. School leadership is also impacted by the influence of teachers' unions (Discussion part, par. 3.3.7). Though some school leaders still use it, the authoritarian leadership style has fallen out of favour in modern schools (Pan & Chen, 2011). Teachers' professionalism must be regularly improved, and school leadership styles must be altered in today's schools with their complex conditions and different value systems. Additionally, the number of classrooms is a cost-benefit and economic concern for both public and private schools (Dills & Mulholl, 2010); whereas private schools segregate learners into distinct classes based on level, public schools do not.

Prior studies on public and private schools compared the two groups' disparities in learner achievement. According to research, private school children may perform better academically because of instructors' teaching abilities and principals' leadership (Chen & Cheng, 2017). As a result, some research suggested that public school pupils' learning is of worse quality than that of private school students. Additionally, private school operations are more economical than those of public schools (Goyal, 2009).

In a nutshell, earlier research indicated that learners at private schools may perform better academically as a result of instructors' superior teaching abilities or principals' higher levels of leadership behaviours. There are, however, few actual studies that back up the assertion that principals' leadership and teaching effectiveness are superior in private schools. Still, these positions could be helpful in understanding the contexts within the schools in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe as per the aim of the current study. In particular, understanding whether a school is private or public could be helpful to explain both the level of teaching and learning at the school as well as the efficacy of the school principals as leaders within the particular settings as they exist in Zimbabwe. Having deliberated on the challenges that the type of school poses on school leadership, the following section summarises the matters presented in this chapter.

3.6 Chapter summary

In order to create a management strategy for school principals in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe to support high academic success, the current chapter's main goal was to evaluate literature on the contextual factors that influence achievement in schools. Among the conceptual factors included in the review were macro-level, meso-level and micro-level factors. Literature reviewed on the macro-level contextual factors focused on national and international aspects such as how an education system of a country influences success in schools. That led to the discussion on lack of resources in curriculum implementation in schools, lack of qualified teachers, the political context of the school and the influence of globalization on teaching ICT and English Language in schools, as contextual factors that impact school leadership and school success. Literature also reviewed the meso-level factors, the contextual factors influenced by the surrounding society. These included the influence of poverty on school achievement, family support in academic achievement and the importance of school psychological services. In terms of the micro-level factors (factors within the school boundary), literature reviewed the impact of professional development, the time that school principals stay in school, characteristics of school leaders and the school innovation level.

From this review of literature, it was established that the majority of the contextual factors significantly affect the capabilities in schools, as well as the efficacy of school principals. However, one of the critical issues is that the majority of these factors, by virtue of being contextual, cannot readily be generalised to the unique contexts of schools in Zimbabwe particularly in the Marondera District. Furthermore, most of the reviewed researches were conducted in countries outside Zimbabwe, mostly developed countries, as a result, they may be inapplicable to school environments in Zimbabwe, hence the knowledge gap. However, this review of literature may well be useful in guiding examinations of the contextual factors which affect school attainment in Marondera, mainly since the literature significantly covers various research contexts which include the issues of school type, school-community relationships, as well as professional development, among others. Understanding these examined contextual factors may help school leadership in Zimbabwe's Marondera District build a management strategy. In light of the reviewed and relevant literature, the fourth chapter that follows explains and defends the research's design and methodology.

CHAPTER 4: RESEACH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter concentrated on a review of the available literature on the contextual elements that affect the effectiveness of teaching and learning in schools. This chapter's goal is to outline and describe the research philosophy, methodology, and methods used in this study in order to respond to the research question, which asked whether contextual factors had an influence on secondary schools in the Zimbabwean District of Marondera in order to support high-quality instruction. The research design that was chosen for the study is also covered in detail in this chapter, along with the reasoning behind it. The sampling method and selection of the sample are also described and the justification for their selection. A description of the research instrument that was employed for the data generation in the research is also given, as well as the rationale behind its choice. The chapter also includes the method used for the analysis of the generated data and a discussion on the role of the researcher. Lastly, a section on ethical considerations in the research is included and discussed in the chapter.

4.1 Research philosophy

Research philosophy is crucial because it aids researchers in defining how they view the subject matter they are investigating. Research philosophy can be scientific or social. It enables me to choose the position from which he or she is able to view the phenomena. According to Staunton (2018), philosophy refers to a person's beliefs about the nature of the world, their place in it, and potential interactions within it. Thomas Kuhn's 1962 book, "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" introduced the concept of research paradigms, which revolutionised the understanding of scientific inquiry. Kuhn argued that scientific progress is not a gradual accumulation of knowledge, but rather a series of paradigm shifts where dominant theories and practices are replaced by new ones. A research paradigm represents a shared framework of beliefs, values and practices that shape how researchers approach a field of study. Kuhn's work highlighted that paradigms are not objective or absolute, but rather historically and socially constructed, influencing what questions are asked, methods used and findings interpreted (Gomez-Diago, 2019). This concept has had a profound impact on various fields including social sciences, philosophy and education, and continues to shape research practices and methodologies.

Researchers can comprehend the nature of the world using either positivist or interpretivist epistemological techniques. A research paradigm, according to Guba (1990), is primarily distinguished by its ontological, epistemological, and methodological tendencies. Reality's ontology is what makes it what it is (Hudson & Ozane, 1988). It is concerned with the identification of the overall nature of a particular phenomenon's existence and what can be known about it (Richards, 2003). Thus, ontological beliefs, dictate the epistemological beliefs. Therefore, based on the above definition of ontology I was concerned with identifying and knowing the nature of contextual factors in schools, as they were explained by the participants who were the school principals. On the other hand, epistemology is concerned about how knowledge is gathered and from which sources. This approach looks at the relationship between the researcher and the reality or how this reality is captured or known (Carson et al., 2001). In order to create a management strategy for the principals to encourage development in the schools, I needed to determine the true impact of contextual factors on the schools in the district in Marondera. Therefore, to get the deeper understanding of the contextual factors and their impact on schools, I had to settle on an appropriate methodology. Methodology refers to the philosophies that influence how knowledge should be gathered. Kneevies (1997) claims that the term "methodology" is a general term used to describe the research design, methods, approaches, and procedures employed in a well-thought-out study. In other terms, it is the systematic discovery and analysis of knowledge. In this research, interviews were held in order to gather data supplied by the principals of the selected schools, who participated in the research.

In order to choose the appropriate research paradigm for this study, I needed to be aware of the distinctions between positivist and interpretivist paradigms. Rehman and Alhart (2016) define a paradigm as a core theoretical framework and belief system that renders conclusions on 1) ontology, 2) epistemology, 3) methodology, and 4) methods. Rehman and Alhart (2016) further explain that paradigm is the researcher's understanding of the world and how he or she studies it. Thus, from the above description, I can deduce that, paradigm, are the beliefs, values and methods which helped me as researcher, to decide the standpoint from where I had to work, to answer the research questions.

Positivist paradigm is an approach by researchers to study the society using evidence such as experiments and statistics, to understand the true nature and operations of the society and thus, emphasises quantitative data. Contrary to that, the interpretivist paradigm employs a naturalist approach where interviews and observations are used to collect data. Stainton (2018)

argues that positivist researchers use only data that is verifiable and allows objective results to be generalised whilst creating general laws. With a positivist approach, figures, calculations and equations are at the order of the research. On the other hand, interpretivist researchers oppose the above view by positivists, by arguing that studying a society that is facing problems and to understand how and why one feels and behaves cannot be achieved through the analysis of numbers. Instead, they contend that it can only be accomplished by means of a careful examination of one's words, deeds, and behaviours. According to interpretivist scholars, reality and the person who observes it are inextricably linked because it is the individual who uses qualitative approaches to form society. The viewpoint presented above is the polar opposite of positivist theory.

Therefore, with the above descriptions of positivist and interpretivist paradigms, my research question which sought to get an insight into the influence of contextual factors that were affecting the secondary schools in the Marondera District, perfectly identified with the interpretivist approach. I adopted an interpretivist approach as it involved working with qualitative data that reflected the views and experiences of the participants who took part in this social research in accordance with the stated question and purpose in chapter one (par.1.4.2 & 1.4.3). The assumption is that human phenomena are fundamentally distinct from natural phenomena, which implies that, I aimed at interpreting and to gain insight into human behaviour in a context-specific situation, rather than explaining or predicting it (Babbie & Mouton, 2008).

The research was conducted with the goal of creating a management strategy for principals as school leaders to support high-quality teaching and learning. After highlighting the research philosophy that I adopted in this researcher, the next section describes the research design and methodology used to assist me in understanding the impact of contextual factors on schools in the district of Marondera.

4.2 Research design and methodology

A research design is the structure and foundation of a study that assists in determining the answers to the proposed research questions and connects them to the information to be gathered and the conclusions to be formed (Maxwell, 2013). The adoption of an interpretivist approach in this study provided a chance to go beyond the known and enter into the world of the participants thereby, creating an opportunity for me to bond with the participants at a human level. Qualitative research, according to Wong (2008), depends on direct communication with the

participants in the research and often allows researchers to unearth unforeseen or unanticipated facts, which is impossible with the quantitative methods. I conducted this study with the intention of interacting with Marondera District school principals and learning more about the impact of contextual elements in order to help them create a management strategy that would encourage educational improvement. For me to achieve the above goal, I had to choose an appropriate research design which was perfectly guided by the interpretivist approach, which works with qualitative data. My aim was to acquire the actual experiences that were being lived by the research participants in their different situations. In support, Saiti (2012) argues that comprehending the true nature of a phenomenon means grasping it in its actual, everyday experience, as it is directly encountered and lived by individuals. Hence, with phenomenology, there is no room for guesses. I also found it fit to employ the phenomenology design in this research because its purpose is to describe a specific phenomenon and the appearance of things as lived experiences (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). Understanding the lived experiences indicates phenomenology as a philosophy as well as an approach (Abdulai & Owusu-Ansah, 2014). Since the purpose of this research was to find a management strategy for the Marondera District principals as school leaders, the phenomenological research design was used and the in-depth dialogues with the principals at their workplaces gave me the opportunity to understand the meaning of their experiences as they were lived by them. In other words, I wanted to capture their experiences and examine how they made sense of those experiences (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). I believed that the principals had gone through something that they had to share with me, thus, phenomenological research design was suitable to be used in this research to understand the deeper meaning of the participants' experiences.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2008), phenomenology is the study of how people interpret, construct, define, justify, and otherwise explain their behaviour in order to make sense of their experiences and acts. Theorists who supported a phenomenological approach, question the validity of postulations from those who are supporting a positivist position and assert that human behaviour and actions cannot fully be understood by only positivist methods (UKEssays, 2018). This indicates that it would have been difficult for me to conduct this research using a quantitative approach and scientific data to understand the experiences, viewpoints and perceptions of school principals regarding the influence of contextual factors on quality teaching on secondary schools in the Marondera District. The qualitative data with its significance lying in the ability to interpret social reality and describe explicitly the real experiences of human beings in their natural environments, aided in the understanding of the principals' views in my research.

The foundation of qualitative research is the idea that first-hand knowledge and experiences offer the most insightful information and help researchers understand participant circumstances from their point of view (Leedy, 1993). The basic assumption is that people attribute meaning in situations and circumstances that is continuously constructed by people's interpretations of the situations they are in (Punch, 2014). To fully understand the deep structures that underlie the conscious thinking, feeling and behaviour of the studied participants were considered. Bhattacharjee (2012) cautions researchers who use phenomenological inquiry to set aside any prior assumptions and personal biases, empathise with participants, and tune into existential dimensions of that situation. Abdulai and Owusu-Ansah (2014) argue that the researcher has to conceal his or her experiences to understand those of the participants in the research. In this research, I was conscious about that requirement noted by Bhattacharjee (2012) and Abdulai and Ansah (2014), as I did not divulge any of my own experiences and challenges that I was facing at my own workplace as a school leader. That allowed the participants in the research, to dig deeper into their situations and describe them openly and clearly, without being given leads or hints by me as the interviewer.

Thus, based on the preceding exposition, I adopted the qualitative research methodology, based on interpretivism and phenomenological principles. The adoption of the qualitative research methodology helped me to select the proper data generation strategy which is discussed in the following section.

4.3 Data generation

In order to find solutions to the research problem and assess the findings, a researcher must first collect data from all relevant sources (Dudovskiy, 2018). The methodology used to collect the data for this study closely matched the nature of qualitative social science research which examines oral and written accounts as well as records of human experiences (Barbour, 2014). However, Creswell (as cited in Hickman, 2015) noted a disadvantage for researchers who employ a phenomenological research, that of the plentiful amount of data that has to be analysed. Also, since qualitative data requires the interpretation of the researcher, it was possible for me to get the wrong meaning of the data. Thus, to avoid that challenge in this research, I had to ask the participant to explain further on the description of meaning and experience which I would not have understood. I made sure to fully understand the situation before moving forward. The sample process and participant selection, as well as the data generation method, are two important components of the data generation strategy.

4.3.1 Sampling and selection of participants

According to De Vos et al. (2005), sampling is the process of choosing a piece of a subset from a clearly defined population with the goal of accurately portraying the particular community. Units (such as persons or organisations) are picked from an interested community such that results from examining the sample can be fairly extrapolated to the group from which they were selected (Trochim, 2007). This study's objective was not to generalise the findings to a particular group of people; rather it was to determine how contextual factors manifested in the Marondera District's schools and what impact they had in order to assist school principals in developing strategies for promoting high-quality instruction. Transferability is not always an objective of qualitative research. According to Drisko (2005), some qualitative research are purposefully context-dependent. Bell (2005) makes the argument that while qualitative research is better suited for small samples, it is dangerous to assume the findings represent the views of a larger community. The school principals in Zimbabwe's Marondera District were my research's sole target group as they offered pertinent data that influenced how their individual schools were run. The research questions were addressed using the acquired data (par. 1.4.1 & 1.4.2).

Although some of the Marondera District principals who did not take part were eligible to participate in the research and provide rich data as well, it was impossible to include everyone due to time and financial constraints. Marondera District secondary schools have thirty-two male principals and eight female principals. Thus, only a sample of the principals in Marondera District Secondary schools was chosen. There is a considerable body of research which suggests that qualitative data gives volumes of quality data from a small sample size of about five to twenty-five people (Creswell, 2013). On the other hand, Morse (1994) suggests at least six participants to represent a sample. Therefore, this research's sample size was guided by the above assertion which led to the adoption of a non-probability and purposive sampling procedure that helped me to identify the sample schools for the research.

The following section describes a non-probability and purposive sampling and the motivation behind its selection for this qualitative research.

4.3.2 Non-probability and purposive sampling

In this study, purposive sampling which is classified as a non-probability procedure was used. I chose the sample participants using non-probability procedures based on my subjective

assessment (Babbie & Mouton, 2001) and participants were purposefully chosen with the help of officials at the Marondera District Office, based on their capacity to explain a certain phenomenon (Robinson, 2014). Participants in possession of the best knowledge about the research topic are chosen to be included in a purposive sample for a qualitative research (Kyngas et al., 2011). In approval, Creswell (2013) emphasises that for a study to be effective, it is crucial that all participants share a common, first-hand experience of the phenomenon being investigated, ensuring a deep understanding and shared perspective. The purposeful selection helped me to concentrate only on those participants who had the relevant information to answer this research problem. All the sample members had similar characteristics, for example, their occupation and level of their position (Dudovskiy, 2018). Although non-probability sampling has some limitations due to its subjective nature (Etikan et al., 2016), it helped me to save the limited resources that I had, for example, time and money. Also, though an excess amount of data was generated, it was useful in its raw form. The purposive sample was therefore judged ideal because I did not wish to generalise my findings to a bigger population.

Like in quantitative analysis, a sufficient sample size tends to raise the level of trust in the findings of qualitative research (Thietart, 2007). A comparable rise in time is the disadvantage. In order to have a reasonable level of trust in the results, the ideal size should be ascertained (Thietart, 2007). The two principles of replication and saturation as provided by Thietart (2007) were accepted and applied to determine the number of cases for this research.

4.3.2.1 Replication

In this study, replication was used. I discovered that the easiest way to validate the findings of this study was through replication. Polit and Beck (2010) state that:

Confidence in their validity will be strengthened if concepts and relationships, patterns and successful interventions can be confirmed in multiple contexts, varied times, and with different types of people (p. 142).

Replication in this research provided me with data from different participants in the research sample, thereby, building confidence and validity in the yielded results. Though there were a few unusual cases (outliers), they did not have any impact on the overall results. This was attributed to the appropriate sample size with enough interviews which aided in reducing some disparities found in the results because information was gathered from the different participants in the selected sample. Each instance was chosen either because similar outcomes

were anticipated (literal replication) or because it was most likely to produce unexpected outcomes (theoretical replication). The potential number of theoretical replications increased along with the number of conditions, which also raised the research's internal validity (Thietart, 2007). Since the influence of contextual factors was undeniable and assumed to be certain, the number of schools included in this research was decided at nine. I expected that by the time I got to the ninth interviewee, I would have reached data saturation.

4.3.2.2 Saturation

Data saturation is another goal of qualitative research. According to Batchman and Schutt (2011), saturation is reached when little new data is gathered from any more participants, and it occurs when adding more participants yields no new data. The rule of diminishing returns which states that each subsequent unit of information will yield progressively less new information than the one before it, until the amount of new information is zero, is the basis of the principle (Thietart, 2007). It was up to me to determine when I would have had enough data. A key component of the systematic, confirming evidence was saturation, which served as a signal to me that the study issue had been well answered (Polit & Beck, 2010). In support, Leppink (2017) asserts that saturation calls for researchers to decide when they have collected enough data to answer their research question. As a researcher, I was alert and vigilant for the manifestation of saturation. Thus, in this research, as determined by saturation, the total number of participants was nine. Therefore, based on the preceding framework by Thietart (2017) about the number of cases and types of secondary schools in the Marondera District, three schools for each type of the forty secondary schools were selected namely from public, private and mission schools. Thus, a total of nine schools formed part of this research. All the schools were accessible for me.

4.4 Research participants

The participants for this research comprised school principals as the education leaders of their respective schools. According to Barbour (2014), it is crucial that participants have first-hand knowledge of the topic being studied and should be subject matter experts. The participants of this research were chosen because of their relationship with the phenomena under study and their adequate working experience which was relevant. The participants' years of working experience ranged from five to thirty years (cf. table 5.4). They were also selected in conformity with their knowledge, relationships and expertise concerning the research subject

(Freedman et al., 2007). Additionally, it was crucial for me to choose individuals who could explain their thoughts and experiences in a thoughtful, eloquent and reflective way (American Journal of Applied Statistics, 2016). All sample participants were fluent in English language. Participants had to be knowledgeable about the topic of investigation and therefore, the preliminary criteria for the selection of schools were:

- The school principal demonstrated an understanding of the influence of the contextual factors on the functioning of the school
- Some best practices were evident in the dealing with the influence of contextual factors on the school
- Qualities to deal effectively with the influence of contextual factors were demonstrated by the school principal
- Policies directives were followed to account for the influence of contextual factors in the school
- A strategy to account for the influence of contextual factors was implemented.

Thus, based on the statements by (Barbour (2014) and Freedman et al. (2007), the school principals as participants in this research were *ex officio*, regarded as educational leaders with expertise and experience in the education profession and they fulfilled a key role within the researched phenomenon and were therefore selected as participants.

To come up with a suitable sample, I approached the education authority (Marondera District Schools Inspector) for assistance in the identification of the specific schools for inclusion in the purposive sample of schools. An approval letter by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of North-West University as shown in appendix 2, was given to the District Schools Inspector (DSI) who directed me to the human resources department. The human resources department helped with the list of all the forty schools in the Marondera District and grouped the schools according to their types, that is, public, private and mission. Three schools were selected from each type, following the above-mentioned selection criteria for the participants. The different types of schools were selected in order to get a wide range of views and opinions, as all the Marondera District schools were represented. The total number of schools selected as my sample was nine and all the schools were accessible for me. That helped me to save time and transport costs. The DSI wrote a permission letter, see Appendix 2, to all the principals in the sample, to allow me to have interviews with them and collect data. The human resources department supplied me with the contact mobile phone numbers for all the participants so that I could phone and book for appointments with them. I also noted the importance of availability and

willingness of the participants to take part in the research. All the participants agreed to be interviewed.

Before the interview date, I visited the participants at their respective schools in order for me to familiarise with the interview venues and to know each other, personally. On the day of familiarisation, I asked the participants to choose appropriate venues for the interview where there would be no disturbances. Selection of the venue in advance saved time because the participants did not run around on the day, wasting time, looking for convenient places. They were prepared on the day. They also had ample time to decide whether they wanted to participate in the interview or not. The data generation method that I followed is highlighted in the following section.

4.5 Data generation method

The methodology and research design chosen determines the data generation methods that can be used. This research used the qualitative approach which employed the phenomenology research design, and I chose to employ the interview method for the generation of data. Since phenomenology design involves the researcher giving a detailed interpretation of lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon, I found interviews to be a suitable method that could help me to get deeper into the participants' experiences, through face-to-face dialoguing with them. It was the research question and purpose of this research that determined the type of interview structure that was adopted. Strong conceptual foundations support the qualitative phenomenological design used in this study, which typically entails conducting interviews (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). Fox (2009) argues that an interview is a data gathering method that entails verbal communication between researcher and participant. Thus, an interview is a communication process between two people, where one person asks the question (interviewer) and the other one gives a response (interviewee).

There are three types of interviews that researchers can utilise in an interview, that is, structured, semi-structured and unstructured and knowing the characteristics of these three different types helped me to select the one that suited my research needs. An interview guide with semi-structured questions was prepared for each of the participants, shown in Appendix 1. The semi-structured interview guide was delivered to the participants, one week before the interview, on the day of familiarisation. This was done so that the participants would also familiarise with the interview questions and getting ready for the interview.

Structured interviews are rigid and they leave no room for the researcher to ask any further question beyond the response given by the participant. Structured interviews usually fall under the quantitative research (MacLeod, 2014), which is characterised by the use of facts and figures. Participants are asked the same questions, which follow the same order (Fontana & Frey, 2005) and they are characterised by yes or no answers. Therefore, the above description of structured interview method did not match with this research's question. My research question and purpose needed me to inquire on the lived experiences of the principals about the influence of contextual factors on secondary schools in the district of Marondera in order to promote quality teaching. Then a strategy that would help the principals to promote quality teaching would be developed.

The unstructured interview method does not have predetermined questions and structured questions usually do not have a place in this type of interview. The questions are asked as the interview progresses (Parton, 2002).

That means the interviews are informal and encourage a social interaction. I could not employ this type of interview because of the absence of prepared questions and the lack of an interview guide. Without an interview guide both researcher and participant can easily lose direction of the interview touching on areas which are irrelevant to the research question. If I had used this method, it was going to be difficult for me to compare and contrast the different responses from the participants because different questions would have been generated from the different interviews, thus, yielding different information.

A mix of closed and open-ended, pre-planned, and pre-decided questions are used in semi-structured interviews, which fall under the qualitative method. For semi-structured interviews, the researcher must be sufficiently knowledgeable about the subject under investigation. According to Fylan (2005), semi-structured interviews are interactions where the researcher is aware of the topics he or she wishes to discuss and has a list of questions and a supporting body of knowledge to help direct the conversation. The semi-structured interview method was used in this study to generate data. I used the semi-structured interviews because I did not have another chance to interview the participants. It was a once-off process for me thus, I had to go into depth with the interview questions and capture detailed responses. These types of interviews are held only once with a participant where the interview duration is approximately thirty minutes to more than an hour (DiCicco & Crabtree, 2006). The duration of the interviews in this research was forty to sixty minutes and it was an agreement between me and the participants.

The use of predetermined questions provided uniformity in the interviews and the participants' responses were not limited to the set of the predetermined answers (see Appendix 1). That allowed the participants to have a conversation in depth, in their own words (MacLeod, 2014) and in a flexible manner. According to Drever (1995), the semi-structured interview provides some fair degree of freedom to the participant where the participant decides on what to talk about and how to express it. In this research, all the questions were the same and only differed when a participant gave a response which I probed, following up the given answer. In a semi-structured interview, the researcher is also free to probe the interviewee for elaboration on the initial response (Mathers, et al., 1998). The follow up questions in this research were useful because they allowed the participants to discuss and raise issues that I had not initially considered. As a result, valuable information from the context of the participants' experiences was provided. According to Cohen (2006), educating researchers to follow pertinent subjects that may deviate from the interview guide and providing open-ended questions give the researcher an opportunity to find fresh perspectives on the subject at hand.

Although I settled on the semi-structured interview method because of its characteristics which are in line with the research problem, some limitations of this technique can be noted during the interviews. The semi-structured interviews are time consuming (Fox, 2009 & McGrath, 2019). I had planned to spend about an hour on every interview, but I noticed that most of the nine interviews took more than an hour because of the participants' long in-depth descriptions of the phenomenon. Another limitation was noted by (Drever, 1995) who contends that the use of semi-structured interviews is a drawback for studies which involve large numbers of participants. However, this limitation did not apply to my research because it had a small sample of nine participants. A possibility to ask leading questions which can bias the interview can be another disadvantage of semi-structured interviews (Hawksworth, 2016). For this limitation, I was conscious about it, and I asked two independent colleagues to review the interview guide for me, before the actual interviews, to establish validity of the questions. Errors made were corrected.

Semi-structured interview method was employed in this research because of its array of advantages which made it the best choice among the three interview methods, structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Knowing some of the limitations of semi-structured interviews helped me to avoid them during the interview process. But first, a pilot test was conducted to determine whether the semi-structured interview method was feasible before I began utilising it to generate data. As a result, the next section discusses the pilot test that I employed in this study.

4.5.1 Pilot test

Prior to the interviews with the research participants, a pilot test was carried out in this research. According to Baker (1994), a pilot study is when a researcher tries out a particular research instrument to test its suitability. It is a trial run groundwork done for the major study (Polit et al., 2001). In other words, the pilot testing was a rehearsal for me before getting into the field. Thus, the pilot study was essential and valuable in providing the foundation in this research project (Abu-Hasan et al., 2006). In this research, the aim was to test the practicality of the selected data generation method, the semi-structured interview.

As the interviewer, I wanted to find out whether the interview guide posed any challenges to the participants and check on the amount of time spent interviewing a participant. I made the required corrections before embarking on the actual interviews. The pilot test was a quality control measure of the semi-structured interview, which was selected as the research instrument. In support, Teijlingen and Hundley (2002) assert that conducting a pilot test might give warning to the researcher about when the research might fail or whether the proposed methods or instruments are unsuitable. Therefore, as the interviewer, I did not want to take any risk by being stuck in the middle of the interview when participants failed to understand the intention of the question.

The pilot test included two participants in the Marondera District who were school principals and had similar characteristics as the research participants but were not part of the research sample. I first contacted the participants through the phone and explained to them the purpose of the study. I also indicated to them that their selection was due to their accessibility to me, only six and eleven kilometres respectively, away from my workplace and that they had the same characteristics as those of the research participants. The participants were given time to evaluate whether they wanted to participate or not. Participants were notified about being recorded during the interview. They were told about their right to withdraw from the interview, if they so wished. The interviews were done in two days at the participants' convenient time and place. Both participants demonstrated their willingness to participate in the pilot test. On the day of the interview, the participants signed a consent form to show their agreement to participate in the pilot test. Both interviews took between forty and sixty minutes.

At the end of the interview, I replayed the recorded interview while the participants listened to the conversation before the transcription process. De Vaus (1993) advises

researchers not to take risk by not pilot testing first. Breen (2006) contends that a pilot study helps the researcher to go over the question structure and choose whether more needs to be incorporated or erased. Therefore, in the pilot test, questions which posed some challenges to the participants were restructured and other corrections were made to suit my intentions in accordance with the research aims.

However, the pilot testing did not go without limitations. I noted that because the participants knew that it was a pilot test, they did not contribute fully by expressing all the opinions in depth. The pilot test took two days and that delayed the start of the actual research interviews. However, besides the weaknesses, it was a worthwhile exercise because as a researcher, I got an experience before conducting the actual research. My fear and anxiety were reduced, thereby increasing my efficiency. After the pilot test, I was ready to start the process of collecting data. The data generation process in this research is contained in the discussion below.

4.5.2 Data generation process

I contacted all the participants a day before carrying out the interviews in order to confirm the time of the interviews and the participants' availability at their workstations (Laforest, 2009). In addition, I prepared a checklist to serve as a reminder of everything that was supposed to be done on the day. I made sure that I familiarised with the interview guide to enhance the flow of the interview questions and the probes. The participants were encouraged to choose a quiet place for the interview in order to minimise interruptions.

I thanked and appreciated the participants for agreeing to be interviewed by me and being part of the research. I introduced myself to the participant and explained the reasons why the interview was being carried out. As the researcher, I wanted to understand the experiences, views and opinions of the participants on the nature of contextual factors in schools and how they were influencing the quality of teaching in their respective schools. The purpose of this research was to find a strategy for the principals, as school leaders, to promote quality of teaching in the schools of Marondera District. Thus, as experts with the knowledge in the field of education and school leadership in particular, the principals were selected as participants to provide the wanted rich data. The clarification helped in building trust and confidence in the participants. Participants were informed about the duration of the interview that it would take between forty and sixty minutes. The starting time was determined by the participant. As the

interviewer, I emphasised on confidentiality and anonymity in research that everything discussed was going to be between me and the participant. I was conscious about the rich descriptions that might be sensitive, given by participants in qualitative studies (Kaiser, 2009), thus, I was alert not to divulge any name of school and participant in this research. Participants were told about their right to withdraw from the interview, any time they wished to do so. Participants were told that code switching was allowed during the interview to allow the participants to express their opinions freely and confidently. Code switching is when a speaker deliberately changes from using one language to another in a conversation or a situation where a speaker mixes two languages (Myres & Scotton, 2006), for example, in this research, participants would change from using English to using Shona, trying to put emphasis on their descriptions. I accepted that since I understood and spoke Shona. I did the interpretation of the Shona words during the data transcription. Participant confidence was increased by telling them that all their answers were going to be put to use and that false answers did not exist in the research. This developed rapport between me and the participant.

Participants were told about their answers being audio-recorded throughout the interview using the researcher's mobile phone and why their voices were being recorded. According to Fox (2009), a tape recorder can be used to record responses or they can be written down. I also used a notebook to write down the answers which I felt needed to be probed further. The participants were audio-recorded so that when analysing the data, no information would be left out. Cook (2016) asserts that electronic recording is increasingly used because it is a more precise, efficient, and transparent way of information collection than conventional approaches. In contrast, Sullivan (2010) argues that an audio or visual record of the interview gives a fair and accurate account of the conversation and gives a more complete picture of the issue. This enabled me to concentrate more on the person, their tone and body language, as well as the questions. Sullivan goes on to say that audio recordings provide a much more objective account of what happened and can be easily shared or used by other people working on the project or investigation without raising any doubts about the accuracy of the material contained. Audio-recording also helped me in the data analysis because some participants' responses needed to be written verbatim. A consent document was completed by the participant after I explained everything to them, proving that they were not forced to participate in the interview.

The interview started with a general question, where the participants were asked to clarify what they understood by contextual factors. The question was not a challenge in the interview because all the participants showed knowledge of the term. To me, that signalled the presence

of contextual factors in the secondary schools of Marondera District. As the interview progressed, I gave a summary and checked, at intervals, the responses given by the participant. I would ask questions where the response from a particular participant was unclear. Participants were asked questions that directed them towards solutions, for example, participants were asked what they could do in their schools to mitigate the challenges posed by contextual factors in their schools.

When all the questions were exhausted, then I summarised all that had taken place and replayed the recorded interview whilst the participant listened. This was to allow the participant to confirm whether what I had recorded and written down was a true reflection of what had transpired in the interview. The participants were thanked and I promised them that I would not disclose any information that I had acquired to anybody after the interview. Maintaining confidentiality helps safeguard an organisation's sensitive information and assets from unlawful access or disclosure by individuals who should not have it (Kaiser, 2012). Additionally, participants were promised that the data would be kept in a lockable cabinet to which only I had access. Data would be kept on my personal computer with password protection as a backup. I thanked the participants for their time spent in the interview. After the data transcription process, participants were given an opportunity to read the transcripts in order to check whether the data interpretation had not changed the meaning. Participants were told that it was their right to get access to the research findings upon their request. When data were generated and transcribed from the audio recordings, the data analysis was the next process to be done. The following section discusses how the data were analysed in this research.

4.6 Data analysis

The analysis of data in qualitative research is a systematic search and arrangement of the interview scripts that the researcher gathers to increase the understanding of the phenomenon (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The data had to be reduced to a manageable level so that I could effectively work with it because in this qualitative research I had produced a significant amount of data from the semi-structured interviews. The analysis of data, according to Patton (2002), entails lowering the number of raw data, identifying noteworthy patterns, and eventually inferring meaning from the data before constructing a strong chain of evidence. As a researcher, I took care not to lose the context and significance of the data, though.

I analysed the generated interview data manually. I had initially considered using the *Atlas TI* software program, but unfortunately, I did not get the opportunity to be trained on how to use the package. The cost of the training and the software package were the challenges.

However, as was already mentioned, I found Barbour's (2014) argument to be particularly persuasive in this study. He claims that whether performing manual or computer analysis, the "conceptual journey" is the same, and that the main takeaway is that computer-assisted analysis is not always more rigorous than manual analysis. Thus, it was me who made sure the analysis was methodical and comprehensive, not the analysis medium. The research design of the current study aimed at describing a phenomenon which is, the principals' understanding of the influence of contextual factors in schools in order to promote quality teaching. Therefore, a conventional qualitative content analysis method for data analysis was adopted. A conventional qualitative content analysis as described by Henning (2004) and Barbour (2014) is adopted for this research as the most suitable analysis approach in order to reduce the volume of data to more manageable themes and categories in accordance with the research problem. The significance of content analysis is that data can be reduced to ideas that represent the research topic. Content analysis is one of the many qualitative methods for assessing and interpreting the meaning of data (Schreier, 2012). The study question, which aimed at comprehending how contextual factors affected schools in Zimbabwe's district of Marondera, assisted me in choosing the concepts that were developed during the research analysis.

During the process of data analysis, guided by the content analysis, I went through all the interview transcripts, making notes about the first impressions that I got from the data. Interview transcripts were reread several times to understand the participants' opinions and ideas, in order to derive codes, for example, words which denoted actions and emotions shown by participants during the interviews, short phrases and sentences, or anything that I thought was relevant (Schreier, 2012). The process was called coding which was a form of writing something in brief, eliminating unnecessary data but being careful to maintain the crucial points. Because during the data generation process I had told participants that there was no false answer, everything was taken down, including information that was unrelated to the research question. Thus, it was during coding of the data that all the irrelevant information was discarded. To avoid losing the meaning of the data, I divided the codes into categories and sub categories (Strauss & Corbin, 2015).

Differentiation was made between pre-determined codes derived from the literature and theoretical framework (deductively) and *open-codes*, which naturally emerged from the data

during collection, analysis and interpretation (inductively) (Henning, 2004; Barbour, 2014). The importance was to bring out the nature and meaning of the data that was provided by the participants. Strauss and Corbin (2015) claim that codes play a vital role of summarising, combining and sorting observations made from the data.

However, most researchers (e.g. Henning, 2004; Barbour, 2014; Schreier, 2012) in the field agree that codes be written down alongside the interview process, since codes are derived from conversations with the participants, I was able to confirm the meaning immediately. Since in this research, I was a participant who took part in the interviews that allowed me to see situations through the lens of the participants; I was able to identify with them, through my own personal experiences. That helped me to pick some of the words, phrases and sentences that were repeatedly emphasised by the participants in the interviews and I was able to draw associations among them.

The repeated data coding in this research, ended up with 'polished' data which later resulted in patterns and themes which were used as the topics and themes in the discussions which led to the end results of the research. At the end of my data analysis, I made decisions about what was relevant to the research problem by synthesising the data for inclusion in the final write-up of the report to elucidate my findings and recommendations (Brundett & Rhodes, 2014).

Having discussed how the data was analysed in this research, it was important to look at the role that a researcher plays in a research. The section which follows highlights my role as the researcher in this study.

4.7 The role of the researcher

I was interested in the research question because I had an experience with the challenges of operating in an environment where the influence of contextual factors hampered the development and success of education. Thus, being a teacher for fourteen years and a school leader for ten years in the district of Marondera in Zimbabwe, I felt I had to carry out a research study to understand the influence of the contextual factors in the schools for the principals, as school leaders, to promote quality teaching and learning. Most schools in the district were not spared from the effects of the contextual factors. Through this research, a management strategy was recommended for the principals in the district of Marondera to promote development in the schools. Therefore, I chose the school principals as my participants

because they had the information which helped me to deal with the research problem, which was to look into the influence of contextual factors for principals to promote quality teaching in the district of Marondera in Zimbabwe. I also identified with the research participants. The rapport that I created with the participants allowed me to come out with first-hand information because of the face-to-face interviews and that helped me to disapprove some of my biased ideas due to the direct contact.

Hence, to be able to collect the wanted data in this qualitative research, I had to take on the role of being a participant as observer (Merriam, 2009) because as researcher, I participated as interviewer in close interaction with the selected interviewees. That resulted in me being an instrument of data generation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The information collected was conveyed to the intended readers through me. To be able to collect enough, rich and relevant data from the participants, I had to build trust with them in their own settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Besides audio-recording the interviews, I also had a notebook which I used for writing field notes objectively (Zhao & Ji, 2014). The built trust played an important role for the participants to share their experiences and opinions in a relaxed setting (Guba, 1981). That also led to research findings which were dependable. During the interview process, I asked questions which I kept probing so that the participants would disclose the information that helped me to ensure a trustworthy data generation process (Korstiens & Moser, 2018).

As researcher, I wanted to access the opinions, views and feelings of the participants, thus, I had an obligation to protect them and their information (Sutton & Austine, 2015). The participants were made aware of the interview data's secrecy and the fact that no one would be granted access to it. I communicated to the participants about the disposal of the data after a period of about three years. I took all these measures because some information and experiences disclosed and discussed in the interviews were private, confidential and political (Sutton & Austine, 2015).

My additional responsibility in this study was to lessen the likelihood of research bias. Being reflexive as a researcher required me to be aware of and embrace my involvement in the study (Finlay, 1998). Reflexivity, according to Fook (2002), is a social science concept that emphasises the impact of the researcher on both research and practice. Thus, knowing that my beliefs, judgments and experiences in education leadership might jeopardise the credibility of this research, I had to stand back and withhold my opinions of reality and let those of the participants prevail. In short, it meant that I had to separate my thoughts about the data, from that information supplied by the participants, what I knew from what the participants expressed to me.

In light of the aforementioned description of the researcher's involvement in this qualitative research, the succeeding discussion reports on how trustworthiness was used as a tool to validate this research and the criteria employed.

4.8 Trustworthiness

In order to evaluate this qualitative study, the term "trustworthiness" from Denzin and Lincoln (2005) was used. According to Denzin and Lincoln, a qualitative study's credibility depends on how reliable its results are. In order to evaluate qualitative research, they suggested using the following criteria: credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability, and authenticity. As researcher, I had to make sure that this qualitative research to the reader is believable and trustworthy in order for it to be credible. To establish credibility in this research, I identified the participants purposefully and described them accurately and they later helped with sound judgment of the findings. I made sure that the research participants selected were experienced personnel with a deep understanding of the phenomena under research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The semi-structured interview method was used to ensure the credibility of content analysis method used for data analysis (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). After the interpretation and transcription of interview data, I gave the participants my analyses of the data to check whether they agreed with the data interpretations and conclusions. All misinterpretations were immediately corrected to suit the participants' intentions and additional data was included (Polit & Beck, 2012).

Triangulation of data sources was also used to increase credibility in the research. The triangulation of data sources is encouraged in qualitative research by Patton (1999) in order to acquire a thorough grasp of phenomena. I implemented the triangulation of data using the same method of data generation (interview) from three different types of schools as the sources in the district of Marondera in Zimbabwe, public, private and mission schools. Reaching data saturation in this research also helped with credibility of the research because enough and rich data to answer the research question were generated.

Consistency and reliability of the research findings is what Polit et al. (2006) term as dependability. They argue that if the way the research procedures are documented, allow an independent person to follow, audit and critique the research process, then the research is dependable. In other words, if the same measures can be repeated in a different setting and producing same results, the research is dependable. For dependability in this research, I

discussed in detail, the research design, the methodology and the methods adopted for this research. I adhered to the research protocol for the gathering, analysing and reporting of data under different conditions and any reader of this research can assess the extent to which appropriate research practices were followed (Shenton, 2004). This would also make it easy for any researcher to follow steps that were used if any replication of this research is to be done. Dependability was also achieved when I did a self-assessment of her partiality in this research. My knowledge of reflexivity, played a pivotal role in reducing biases in this research by being transparent with the research process, hence, increasing dependability of the research (Guba, 1981).

The degree to which the research's findings could be substantiated by other researchers is referred to as confirmability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In their 2018 argument, Korstjens and Moser claim that confirmability involves the establishment of whether the research interpretation and findings are genuine and not fabrications of the researcher's thoughts.

Understanding the participants' intentions during data generation helped me to transcribe and code the raw data properly thereby increasing confirmability. I also gave the transcripts to the research participants to check whether there was any false information that had been added.

Maximising objectivity and uniformity between two or more independent people regarding the accuracy, applicability, or significance of the facts also boosted confirmability (Polit & Beck, 2012). Although this research was context dependent, I was aware that some other researchers might want to transfer it to similar settings. Thus, for the transferability of this research, I described explicitly, the characteristics of the research participants (principals) and their contexts or environments where this research was conducted. The clear clarification of the participants and their environments would aid in the judgment of this research's findings' applicability to other different situations where the participants would be of the same traits as those in this research.

Lastly, I assured authenticity in this research by conducting the whole of the research process in a fair and just manner. Authenticity in research involves not only exploring a significant and valuable research question, but also considering how the findings can positively impact society and contribute to the greater good (James, 2008). Thus, in this research, authenticity refers to how I showed the feelings and emotions expressed by the participants in the interviews. The actual words that were said by the participants were quoted under the different themes mentioned during the data analysis. The inclusion of excerpts shows authenticity of the findings. The findings which indicated the presence of contextual factors in schools in the district of Marondera led to the development of a management strategy for the school principals to

promote quality teaching in the district's schools. Thus, the trustworthiness of this research was based on the gathering, interpreting and reporting of rich, appropriate and saturated data. The section which follows discusses and highlights the research ethics that were considered in this research.

4.8.1 Ethical considerations

When human beings are involved as participants in research, there are some research ethics that must be considered by the researcher. Researchers should be aware that the ethical requirements of any research are universal and in connection with a specific situation (Brynard & Hanekom, 2010). Research ethics deals with what is "right" and "wrong" when performing a study. Researchers have two significant ethical obligations to uphold: first, a duty of care to individuals who contribute to a project; and second, a duty of transparency and accuracy in the reporting of research to the scientific community (De Vos et al., 2005).

In this research, the ethical requirements of the NWU and faculty of education were adhered to in a strict manner. To conduct this research, I received approval from the pertinent educational authorities, school governors, and participants (principals) of the chosen schools. The right to withdraw from the research at any time and at any stage of the research process was made clear to participants, who were also informed that their participation in the interviews was voluntary. They were also informed that no harm would be done to them in the event that they decide to abandon their participation in the middle of data generation process and a consent form, showing their agreement to participate in the research, was given to them to sign. Before signing, I clearly explained to the participants why I was carrying out the research and all the procedures that the research had to go through as well as the potential risks and benefits of their participation. Manti & Licari (2018) whom I support strongly assert that it is not about signing a simple form but a process which has to be followed, where the participant has to understand the research and its risks. That information allowed the participants to make informed decisions, whether to take part or not in the research. All the participants in this research consented willingly without any coercion, to take part in the research.

I was also aware of the participants' right to anonymity and confidentiality in all the stages of this research. To achieve that no names of the participants were identified as well as the names of the schools involved in the research. The interviews were also held in privacy, in the places that were chosen by the participants, away from any disturbances and from unconcerned

people. The privacy and confidentiality enabled the participants to divulge some sensitive information without any fear of harm.

As expected by research ethics, the works by other authors that I used in this research were acknowledged, using the APA referencing system provided in the NWU Handbook. By doing that, adherence to the rules of academic honesty and honouring them was shown (Swales, 2004). Plagiarism was also avoided in this research, through direct quotations and paraphrasing (Roig, 2001). The findings of this research were made publicly accessible so that all participants could learn more about them. In order to ensure that all research processes were carried out with the utmost care, accuracy, and integrity to assure the legitimacy of the results, the research was conducted and reported in an ethically acceptable manner (De Vos et al., 2005; Cohen et al., 2001; Brynard & Hanekom, 2014).

All the data generated in this research were secured on my computer and flash disk which were protected with my password. Hard copies were also produced as back-up and were placed in a lockable safe cabinet which was only accessible to me. Transcribed data and recorded interviews were also locked up in a safe place and all the data would be destroyed after three years, after which they would no longer be needed. Having discussed the research ethics considered in this research, the following section summarises the whole chapter four.

4.9 Summary

This study used a phenomenological design and a qualitative research methodology. An interview guide with semi-structured questions was used in the generation of data. Nine school principals from the Zimbabwean district of Marondera were chosen as research participants, using a non-probability purposive sampling technique. The people selected were knowledgeable about education and had first-hand knowledge of the topic being studied. All of the participants were made aware of the advantages of the research findings for both themselves and the community at large. A consent form had to be signed by participants to show their approval to take part in the study. The appropriate educational authorities, school governors, school development committees and participants (principals) of the chosen schools all gave their consent for the research to be conducted in the selected schools. Before participant data was gathered, a pilot test was conducted to assess the suitability of the study methodology. For the manual analysis and coding of the data in this study, the content analysis method was used. In

order to access the opinions, deep feelings and experiences of the participants, I had to take on the role of being a participant as observer. That created a deep relationship between me and the participants which resulted in the participants sharing some of the sensitive information with me. The participants' rights to anonymity and confidentiality were respected in all the stages of the research. The following chapter five discusses the findings of this research which came out through the use of the research methods explained in chapter four.

CHAPTER 5: QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5. INTRODUCTION

The research methods and research strategy used in this study were covered in the previous chapter 4. This chapter contains a detailed presentation and discussion of the data analysis and interpretation, which were guided by the content analysis process that was embraced for use in this research. The use of the content analysis method, led to the findings of this exploration. The study's results were discussed, and references to the literature found in chapters 2 and 3 of this research were made in the discussion. This chapter also includes a section on the participants in the research's biographies. The goal of this study was to create a plan for school leaders in Zimbabwe's Marondera District to boost academic performance. Thus, a contextual factors strategy was developed in this chapter for school leaders to account for the contextual factors in their respective schools, in order to promote quality teaching.

The key elements of the previous chapter 4, for example, the problem statement and aims, the data generation procedures and trustworthiness measures, as well as the two theoretical chapters, serve as basis and reference for this chapter, namely data analysis and interpretation. The following segment describes the steps that were followed to analyse the transcribed interviews in this research, using the conventional qualitative content analysis process (cf. par. 4.6).

5.1 The content analysis process

Being guided by the qualitative content analysis, a set of questions by Henning et al. (2004) were considered and the questions helped me to identify and ascertain how themes and patterns from the collected data were related, basing on the different developed categories. The questions were as follows:

- How did the meanings of the various categories relate to one another?
- What can be inferred from all of the categories together?
- What significance was lacking?
- What was the analysis' foregrounding?
- What was pushed to the side, or what is no longer required or important?

- What other reasons might there be?
- How did the different categories address the objectives of the research?

I was able to transcribe, verbatim, all the participant interviews personally. Personal transcription of the data gave me a deeper understanding of the experiences and meaning of the participant responses. My initial step was an attempt at meaning-making and the interpretation of the data because transcription is a step in the analytical process (Roulston, 2017). I did this by carefully listening to what the participants said during the interviews and in naturally occurring contexts. As a researcher, I was able to gain a deep understanding of the data by appreciating this stage of the study process and performing meticulous, detailed transcription. Data coding followed the transcription of the raw data.

5.2 Data coding

Data coding is the process of categorising and arranging qualitative data to find various themes and their connections (cf. par. 4.6). Guided by the content analysis process, I went through all the interview transcripts making notes about the first impressions that I got from the data. The same procedure was also described by Vosloo (2014), who wrote that before beginning the abstraction process of coding, where meaning units are identified or labelled, the entire transcribed text and field notes are thoroughly read to get an overall and comprehensive impression of the content and context. Abstraction is described by Elo and Kyngas (2014) as a process of selecting data from a larger pool, to show only relevant details of the object to the user. All the interview transcripts were reread several times to understand the participants' opinions and ideas, in order to derive codes, for example, words which denoted actions and emotions shown by participants during the interviews, short phrases and sentences, or anything that I thought was relevant and related. I was being careful to maintain the fundamental points of the responses from the transcriptions. Everything was taken down including the information that was not directly related to the research question, since the researcher had told the participants during the data generation that there was no incorrect response (cf. par 4.6). Nevertheless, it was during the coding process that all the irrelevant information in relation to the research focus was discarded. To avoid losing the meaning of the data, I divided codes into categories and sub-categories. Differentiation was made between pre-determined codes derived from the literature and theoretical framework (deductively) and open-codes, which naturally emerged from the data during collection, analysis and interpretation (inductively), (Henning, 2004; Barbour, 2004). According to Vosloo (2014), open-coding entailed the identification and naming of meaning-

bearing sections from the field notes and transcripts in relation to the research topic. Assorted highlighter colour pens were used for the disconnected parts of data (codes) for easy identification. The open-coding was followed by **axial coding** (Henning, 2004) which involved the identification of the most essential codes, from those already labelled in the open-coding. The selected codes were separated, established and later raised to create categories. Relations or linkages were drawn between the codes.

After the axial coding, I had created a number of categories which included the identified codes. **Selective coding** (Henning, 2004) was the final stage that I followed in the data analysis procedure. The categories that were developed from axial coding were then connected or linked in order to develop one main category. As part of the process, each category that had been defined was chosen and scanned for comparison, contrast and links to the research topic as well as for a central theme or "key linkage" that might emerge (Vosloo, 2014).

Since in this research I was participant observer who took part in the interviews that allowed me to see situations through the lens of the participants, I was able to identify with them through my own personal experiences. That helped me to pick some of the words, phrases and sentences that were repeatedly emphasised by the participants in the interviews, and I was able to draw associations among them. The repeated data coding in this research, ended with accepted data which later resulted in patterns and themes which were used as the topics and themes in the discussions which led to the end results of this research. At the end of my data analysis, I made decisions about what was relevant to the research problem. This was done by synthesising the data for inclusion in the final write-up of the report to elucidate my findings and recommendations (cf. par. 4.6). The final list of topics and categories which were systematically labelled in accordance with the information from the literature study (cf. par. 3.2) are shown in the next section.

5.2.1 Identified categories

- An understanding of leadership in general
- An understanding of leadership in a school context
- Relationship between leadership and school effectiveness
- Leadership styles for school leaders
- Micro-contextual factors
- Meso-contextual factors
- Macro-contextual factors

- Strategy for school leaders

The final themes/categories were created by systematically assigning to them the associated meaning units from the notes and transcripts, along with a frequency indication that was displayed in table form. Not for qualitative analysis, but to demonstrate the presence of connected replies, it was important to provide the frequency. Before the presentation of the analysis of the identified categories, it was imperative to show the method that was followed to analyse the data, using the qualitative.

5.2.2 The content analysis process

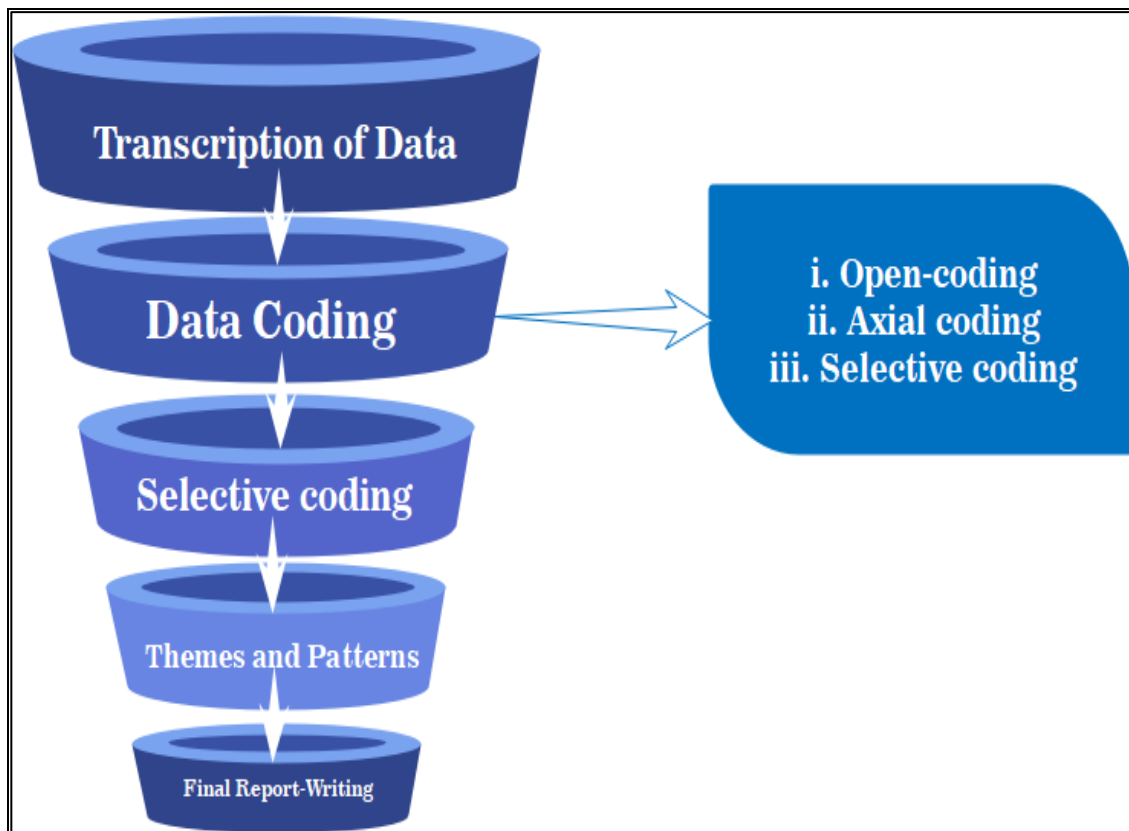


Fig. 5.1 An outline of the qualitative content analysis procedure

Using the content analysis approach as a guide, the aforementioned simple steps were carried out during the data analysis procedure for this study. The content analysis process makes it simpler to organise the material and draw valid conclusions from it (Polit & Beck, 2006). The phases can be adapted to different situations depending on the requirements of the

research problem. In other words, the content analysis process is flexible. I was trying to dig deeper into the participants' statements about the subject, hence the selection of the content analysis approach, which helped me in interpreting the underlying meaning of the text (words and phrases) (Berg, 2001). A different analysis technique would have produced inappropriate results that would hinder the truthfulness of the research and creating unfitting outcomes. As a result, it was significant that I carefully chose the content analysis method to ensure that my findings were comprehensible and capable of being acted on. Other researchers can simply repeat the content analysis process in a systematic way, producing results with great dependability (Luo, 2021). The process of content analysis can be carried out at anytime, anywhere, and with little expense. For this research, what I needed was access to appropriate sources. I was able to access all the participants in the Marondera District, without any challenges.

Although the qualitative data content analysis was the suitable method for the analysis of data collected in this study, the challenges faced by me as the researcher through using this mode, cannot go unmentioned. Firstly, the process was laborious and time-consuming especially considering that I coded my data manually. The procedure was iterative, which means that, it required lots of reading and re-reading of the interview transcripts in order to acquaint myself with the content of the data. However, for completely relying on the subjective information that I gathered from the participants, the genuineness of the collected data (through interviews), being compromised by subjectivity, could not be ruled out. Nonetheless, I guaranteed confidentiality to the participants' shared information and to avoid subjectivity, interviews were held in environments where there were no disturbances from unconcerned people (cf. par. 4.5.2). The biographical information of the participants is described in the following section.

5.2.3 Participants' biographical information

Before the interview began, participants were asked to complete a form with their biographical information as part of the data generation process (appendix 6). Age, race, employment, education, and other socioeconomic factors were all included in demographic analysis, which is the study of a population based on that information (Hayes, 2021). The biographical data in this research were of paramount importance because it helped me to understand the profile of participants and to analyse the findings in order to formulate appropriate recommendations for a strategy for the Marondera District school principals to promote quality teaching.

For researchers to do a study replication, it is important to understand the participant characteristics (Hamer, 2011). The findings may also be of important value and applicability for schools in similar situations and contexts. Thus, it could be difficult for those in similar school situations and contexts to relate to the relevance of the researcher's data to them, when they are not able to identify with the participants in the research.

The biographical information for this study included the participant's name, gender, age, professional qualifications, work experience, school enrolment and the type of school. The information was presented in tabular form. The table 5.1 below shows the research participants' information on gender.

Table 5.1: Gender

Gender	Frequency
Male	6
Female	3
Total	9

The data reveals that male principals made up the majority of the research participants (six), while female principals made up the minority (three). The majority of the findings were based on the viewpoint of the male principals, despite the fact that both males and females were represented in the research. As indicated before, Marondera District has a total number of forty secondary schools. Thirty-two of them are led by male principals and eight are led by female principals. This also reflects the gender disparity in the school leadership (principals) in the selected schools of interest. Therefore, this area can also be looked into and can be recommended as a topic of interest for research in the district of Marondera and maybe in the bigger picture of the country where males dominate the positions of school leadership.

The following table 5.2 indicates the participants' ages.

Table 5.2: Age

Age	Frequency
31-40	0
41-50	1
51-60	6
61-70	2
Total	9

The information indicates that only one principal was at the age group of 41-50, while the majority of the participants were in the range of 51-60 years. The age group of 61-70 years was equally represented by two (2 principals). However, the 31-40 age group was not represented, indicating that school principals in the district of Marondera are actually promoted at a late age. It can be deduced that the collected data are from experienced school leaders with ample life experience.

Table 5.3: Highest professional qualification

Qualifications	Frequency
Only CE , Dip Ed	0
CE or Dip Ed + BA, B Ed, BSC	3
MA, MEd, MSC	6
PhD	0
Total	9

The findings demonstrate that three (3) principals were professionally qualified, with a Bachelor's degree as the highest qualification. The bulk of the principals, six (6) had a Master's degree as the highest level of their education. The results suggest that most of the principals in the Marondera District Schools are highly qualified, possessing either a first degree or a second degree, with the majority of principals holding a postgraduate degree. Other participants were still on the road to acquiring Master's degrees. It's significant to highlight that every participant is a licensed educator. However, none of the principals in the sample had a PhD degree but through the interview discussions with some of those with Masters Degrees, indicated plans to start on studies for PhD degrees. In conclusion, it can be deduced that the participants in this research are adequately qualified to highly qualified for their positions as school leaders.

Table 5.4: Years of appointment/experience

Experience/Appointment	Frequency
1-5	2
6-10	2
11-15	3
16-20	0
21-30	2
31-40	0
Total	9

The aforementioned data shows that two (2) participants had 1-5 years of experience in the position of principal whereas the same number (2), had 6-10 years of experience in the same position. The 11-15 years of experience group, had three (3) principals while that of 16--20 years did not have any principal. There were two principals in the 21-30 years of experience category while those above 31 years of experience were none.

Therefore, the above findings reflect that, the school principals who participated in the investigation were experienced, having been in the post for 5 years and above. This is seen as a very important characteristic in leadership. A leader's education level and experience have been described as yielding the much-needed maturity in leadership. Maturity has been clearly

expounded in literature, as an individual's ability in carrying out a job and that ability determines a leader's actions (cf. par. 2.2.1). Therefore, the above findings indicate that the respondents were all experienced and mature, which is in coherence with the requirements as indicated in the literature.

Table 5.5: Number of years at the school

Years at the Station	Frequency
1-5	3
6-10	2
11-15	0
16-20	4
21-30	0
Total	9

Table 5.5 reveals that three (3) principals have been at their workstations between 1-5 years while two (2) principals have stayed at their schools for 6-10 years. There were no participants in the 11-15 years' classification while four (4) principals indicated that they had been at the schools, ranging from 16-20 years and no participant was at the station more than 21 years.

In view of the above findings, it reflects that the principals stay at their workplaces for long periods without transferring to other schools. In relation to school effectiveness, it helps principals to establish rapport with teachers, learners and parents as well. Principals get to understand better the school culture. The long stay also helps principals to have a sense of belonging and therefore desire to do the best for the school. Most importantly, principals can be able to set up long term strategic plans and see them through. Thus, in relation to these findings, literature confirms the advantages of a principal staying at a place for at least 5 to 7 years in order to have a beneficial bearing on the school (cf. par.2.4.5 & 3.5.1). The principals in this research had been at their workplaces for five years and above, which is one of the characteristics expected from school principals in order to attain school success according to literature.

However, being at the same school for a long period can be disadvantageous to principals in different ways. One may get limited exposure to variety work experiences and environments. Chances of acquiring new skills which are beneficial to school achievement are limited. Another disadvantage is that a principal may take advantage of any loopholes in the system and use them to run the institution down which results in poor school performance. Therefore, principals need to experience different schooling contexts to be able to understand the nature of contextual factors that influence school effectiveness and be prepared to deal with any type of contextual factor in any school community.

Table 5.6: School enrolments

Enrolment	Frequency
201-400	2
401-600	2
601-800	1
801-1000	2
1001-1200	2
1201-1400	0
Total	9

The data shows that two (2) principals were leading small schools, with enrolments of between 200 and 400 learners. Both institutions were private schools. Three (3) of the respondents were heads of medium-sized institutions with student bodies ranging from 400 to 800. One of the schools in this class was a private school and the other two schools were mission. However, it should be noted that, one of the two mission schools, in that category was a single sex (girls) school. Two responders were heads of large institutions with enrolments ranging from 800 to 1000 students. One was a mission school and the other being a public school. Two of the 9 participant schools (public) were exceedingly large schools, with above 1000 learners. As a result, the findings show that private schools, which are owned by entities, have lower school enrolments than mission schools. On the other hand, mission schools, owned

by churches, have lower school enrolments than public schools, which are fully controlled by the government.

The comments provided by the research participants thus represented the views and practical knowledge of principals from all kinds and sizes of schools. Additionally, it provided a picture of the schools in the Marondera District.

Table 5.7: Number of teachers in the schools

Number of teachers	Frequency
10-20	2
21-40	3
41-60	3
61-80	1
Total	9

Two (2) principals reported that they had a staff of 10-20 teachers per school, while three stated that they had 21-40 teachers at their schools. Three principals reported a staff consisting of 41-60 teachers and only one school had a figure of above 61 teachers. The findings indicate that private schools have low learner enrolments and are well-staffed with enough teachers. Mission schools and public schools, which have high figures of learner enrolments, reported a shortfall of teachers due to over-enrolment of learners in classes as compared to private schools. These findings reflect the challenges that are faced by school principals due to school over-enrolment. Over-enrolment leads to scarcity of human resources and material resources which leads to poor school performance. In line with these findings, related literature indicates that the education system in Zimbabwe has failed to maintain the one teacher to forty learners ratio as most teachers have to handle huge classes of an average of sixty learners (cf. par 3.3). In relation to school effectiveness, the unrealistic big classes lead to poor school results. It is therefore essential for school principals to find ways to deal with situations of over enrolments in order for quality teaching and learning to take place in schools.

5.2.4 Summary

According to the participants' biographical information, six of the respondents made up the majority of the sample, while three respondents were women. As a result, it was clear that the recorded responses primarily reflected the opinions of male school principals. The majority eight (8) of the participants were also above the age of 50, showing that principals are promoted at a late age. The participants who were highly qualified with vast experience as well had all stayed at their schools for five years and above. The principals were a representative of schools of various sizes and the three types of schools chosen for the purpose of this research, to develop a strategy for the principals in the Marondera District, in order to promote quality teaching. Having described the biographical information of the research participants, it is also important to discuss in the section below, the list of observations that were considered before, during and after the interviews.

5.2.5 Observation

Vosloo (2014) welcomes the advice to use an observation list throughout the interview process made by Huberman and Miles (2002), Henning et al. (2004), Thietart (2007) and Coleman (2012). According to Marshal and Roseman (1989), observation is the methodical description of social events, behaviour, and artefacts. As a result, in my work as a qualitative researcher, I looked at the participants' non-verbal and vocal communication as well as what they said regarding the topic under discussion (Anderson, 2010). Observation was ideal because observing the environment where the particular event occurred, helped to understand the phenomenon under evaluation and that also led to a better understanding of the participants and their workplaces, particularly their' experiences. Therefore, the following was included on the observation list:

- the environment setup, that is, whether the surroundings or venue was inviting, well-organised or noisy
- the mood, tone and culture of the school, that is, whether the school was generally calm, busy or chaotic
- also whether the learners and teachers appeared happy, respectful or engaged

The three selected private schools as observed were located less than five kilometres from town and next to low density suburbs while two public (government) schools were located in the midst of high-density suburbs and the third one in a rural location. On the other hand, the

three selected mission schools were located about twenty to thirty kilometres from town and built on vast farmlands. The private and mission schools' environments were well-organized, busy and quiet, with both respectful staff and learners. Visits to the libraries and exchange of greetings among staff and learners could be observed, indicating respect for each other. Both private and mission schools indicated Christian-based environments with Christian norms and values. I observed that, their mission statements endeavoured to transform the lives of the school community through all-inclusive approaches, grounded in spiritual principles. This seemed to help to foster well-behaved learners. On the other hand, at the three public (government) schools, learners could be observed moving around all over the premises, with no greetings to visitors, an indication of lack of respect and orderliness. The neighbourhood around the public schools was clearly underprivileged, whereas the situation in the private and mission communities was more or less indicative of a socioeconomic standing that ranged from less disadvantaged to more prosperous. Public schools showed a lack of adequate facilities, for example, classrooms, libraries and both computer and science laboratories, while private and mission schools from the study sample showed facilities that ranged from functional to state of the art. At public schools, learners could be seen carrying out lessons under the sheds, a sign of lack of classrooms.

Hence, the aim of the observation for the data gathering process was to obtain a deeper sense of the environmental and social setting as well as to report on the interaction experience with the participants. The overall purpose of my observation notes was to add to the description of the context and the background of the data gathering process to ultimately enrich the trustworthiness of the research. The notes were also of value in the explanation of some of the identified contextual factors that influence school effectiveness and as a result, a strategy was developed for the principal in the district of Marondera to promote quality teaching and learning.

The following section presents the presentation and discussion of the interview data. The findings are organized according to the research aims, in line with the research focus. Verbatim quotes were used in the discussion, in order to support the interpretations or arguments. A transcript reference system (cf. appendix 8) is used in the discussion to indicate the specific interview transcript and the line numbers for example, (Int 1: 62-63) as proof of authenticity and trustworthiness.

5.3 Data presentation and discussion

5.3.1 An understanding of leadership in general

The replies categorised under this heading reflected the respondents' perspectives and impressions of the idea of leadership in general and are shown in the table 5.8. Take note that the abbreviation *Int* refers to a specific interview of this research.

Table 5.8: An understanding of leadership in general

AN UNDERSTANDING OF LEADERSHIP IN GENERAL	<i>F</i>
Leadership refers to the ability to influence followers	7
Leadership refers to having a vision	5
Leadership concerns accountability	3
Leadership encompasses communication	2

5.3.1.1 Ability to influence followers

This category's responses were all in some way connected to the interview question asking how well the respondents understood the idea of leadership in general. Influence, as defined in the preceding chapter of the literature review (cf. par. 2.1 and 2.3), is the capacity to persuade people to take actions they do not want to take but ultimately find enjoyable. Most of the responses that were recorded, regarded leadership as being the ability of a leader to influence people in order to achieve the organizational goals ($f=7$): *"So, if you are a leader, you should be therefore be able to influence people to the desired results."* (Int 6:13-14). *"You need to influence people, to implement strategies."* (Int 8:21). The respondents' understanding of leadership as the ability to influence people, relates well, with the reviewed literature (cf. par. 2.1 & 2.3.1). Thus, the participants' responses point to the significance of a school leader's ability to influence followers in promoting the quality of teaching and learning in response to the influence of school contextual factors. The responses indicate that a school leader should have the influence and authority to cause followers to work hard for school success without being forced. However, it should be understood that influence calls for the school leader to make available the

purpose, motivation and route in order to bring about quality teaching and learning in a school, following the effect of contextual factors.

5.3.1.2 Having vision

Other conspicuous recorded responses on leadership in general, explained that leadership refers to having a **vision** and working towards its attainment (f=5). The exemplars to support this view are, *“Leadership can be generally about making decisions, creating and articulating a clear vision that needs to be achieved. You know, when you have an organization, you have to have a vision, a mission and mandate that must be attained. When you are a leader, you have goals that you expect to be achieved.”* (Int 8: 15-19). *“Leadership is all about vision, you look into the future of your organization and see where you want to be with your company. Then you work towards that. A leader must work with a vision to be successful,”* (Int 1: 16-17) and *“In leadership we deal with visions where one’s vision determines one’s achievement. An organization functions well through a vision where you state your achievable objectives.”* (Int 5:14-17). In line with these responses, literature also argues in support of leaders who motivate associates to commit to the vision of the organization in order to achieve the set objectives of the organisation (cf. par. 2.3.1 & par. 2.4.1). These responses therefore indicate that commitment to the school vision by school leaders and the whole school community promotes quality teaching and learning in regards to the impact of contextual factors. Leaders who are committed to their school visions are able to achieve school effectiveness.

5.3.1.3 Accountability

Responses were also recorded that viewed leadership, in general, as concerning **accountability** (f=3). *“It refers to being an accounting officer of a particular organization. You are the one who is responsible for anything which happens in the organization on daily basis.”*(Int 1: 15-16). Another related response: *“I understand leadership as to be accountable. To be accountable means you need to be ready as leader to accept all the blames because that is where we fail as leaders. We only want to be associated with good. Who then should be responsible for the disaster? It’s the leader.”* (Int 7: 16-19). Literature also argues that, where there is success or failure in an organization, each person is accountable (cf. par. 2.4.3). In some ways, the replies also matched the ontological perspective on leadership that was articulated in the literature review (see par. 2.1.iii). As can be deduced from the responses given in this category, participants understand their role as school leaders and this cements the appropriate

selection of this research's participants (cf. par. 4.3.1). Accountability is accordingly seen as a school leadership aspect that supports school effectiveness in response to school contextual factors.

5.3.1.4 Communication

Some respondents, as indicated in the table, also agreed on leadership as encompassing **communication** (f=2). Noted responses were, *"Leaders communicate frequently with subordinates and make everyone aware, in terms of dealings in the organization. Some of the staff may be ready to advise leadership with better ideas."* (Int 2:17-18). One also said: *"Leadership is about honest communication. Your intentions and objectives must be stressed to all individuals so that you operate on the same platform. Don't let your staff have guess-work."* (Int 7:21-22). These responses connect well with literature reviewed where the exchange of purpose is expressed, that, dialoguing at every level helps leaders to articulate issues (cf. par. 2.1. i) and (cf. par. 2.3.1). From these responses it can be said that communication is instrumental in promoting quality teaching and learning in a school with regards to the effect of contextual factors.

The responses in this category imply that the principals understood leadership as a practice that necessitates capabilities and scenarios to affect the actions of others, as a result, leading to progressive organizational outcomes. The responses show an appropriate selection of the research participants. This is shown by the high number of respondents who regard the process of leadership as being able to influence followers. However, the few responses given (2) in the table on communication, indicate that, most respondents do not give value to the importance of communication in the process of leadership. Thus, as researcher, I see it fit to recommend possible research (cf. par. 6.3) on the importance of communication for school leaders (principals) in secondary schools in the Marondera District to promote effective teaching and learning. The explanation of the second research-identified category, an understanding of leadership in a school context, is presented in the section that follows.

5.3.2 An understanding of leadership in a school context

The responses in this category reflected the participants' opinions and judgments of how they understood leadership in the context of a school. It was important in this category to see whether the respondents understood what leadership entails, in a school situation. The table 5.9 below presents the different responses given by the participants.

Table 5.9: An understanding of leadership in a school context

AN UNDERSTANDING OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN A SCHOOL	<i>F</i>
School leadership involves setting of a clear school vision, clear goals, high standards and working towards achieving them	8
School leadership refers to having positive relationships with the community	6
School leadership involves creating a positive culture and environment which develop learners' talents	6
School leadership looks at professional development	3

The replies in this area are rather consistent with those in the prior category in terms of comprehending leadership in general, according to a review of the responses. However, in this category, it is the specification of the context (school), which makes the responses distinctive and in line with the research focus, the influence of contextual factors for principals to promote quality teaching and learning. Thus, the respondents were supposed to describe what they understood by the process of leadership in an education setup. The responses showed an understanding of the concept and in one way or another; participants were putting it into practice in their schools. That leadership concept appreciation by the participants helped in the identification of the contextual factors that impacted the teaching and learning in schools. It also aided in developing a strategy to promote effective teaching and learning in schools.

5.3.2.1 School vision, goals and standards

The responses about an understanding of leadership in a school setting, which recorded the highest number of respondents regarded school leadership as setting a school vision, goals, high standards and working towards their attainment (f=8): *“Leadership in an educational organization takes the principal, being able to set a clear school vision, clear standards and goals, which through hard work, should at the end be achieved.”* (Int 9:15-17). *“With all the vision well-set, with all the set goals, all those being achieved, automatically, it’s good quality of*

teaching and learning which will be expected.” (Int 8: 37-39). The respondent, (Int 3: 35-36) also had this to say, *“You can always tell the difference between two schools by looking at the goals or standards set by any given school and that will reflect the principal’s vision,”*

It seemed from these responses that an effective school operates on and is guided by a vision, set goals and expectation of high standards laid down by school principals, which they should strive to attain. Thus, being able to attain a school vision and school set goals gave the impression of the characteristic of school leadership. Literature also supported these responses (cf. par. 2.4.1). What it means is that, operating on a clear vision, clear goals and clear standards will help school leaders and their followers to choose and access the proper teaching and learning materials which will lead to the promotion of quality teaching and learning in response to the impact of contextual factors. The vision, goals and standards help to control the attitude and actions of the school leader and followers to be focused towards the direction and path of attainment of quality teaching and learning. A clear school vision makes it possible for challenges to be identified easily allowing school leaders to make informed decisions for corrections and adjustments quickly. Successes are also easily identified which allow the school leaders to maintain or increase the effort.

Although literature has not raised the effects of not having a school vision, goals and standards, it is imperative for school leaders to understand that working without a clear vision, clear goals and clear standards makes it difficult to create planned goals. Without a vision a school cannot sustain because there will be reduction in productivity and performance among teachers and learners. There will not be any direction towards promotion of school effectiveness and no preference of assignments. Delegation of tasks and management of time by school leaders will also be difficult as they tend to disregard interests of followers. All these factors which are caused by lack of a clear vision and standards hamper the promotion of quality teaching and learning with regards to the influence of contextual factors.

5.3.2.2 School culture and environment

The responses that regarded school leadership as involving the creation of a positive culture and environment that develop students’ talents were (f=6). Some exemplars in support are, *“School leadership creates a positive culture and environment that develop students’ talents”* (Int 5:19-20), *“It is the principal who should create that conducive and inviting environment as well as instilling a culture which allows both teachers and learners to do their work without any*

challenges” (Int 9: 22-24) and *“Leadership should foster that positive and conducive climate for a successful teaching and learning environment,”* (Int 7: 28-29). These responses are also in line with literature, which encourages school leaders to create positive school culture and conducive school environments in order to create school effectiveness in response to the effect of contextual factors (cf. par. 3.3.3).

However, the participants’ responses are silent on the importance of school leaders creating conducive environments for cultural diversity where different learners from different cultural backgrounds can co-exist for school effectiveness as indicated by literature (cf. par. 3.3.3), with regards to the influence of contextual factors. School leaders need to understand that culture and environments which embrace learner diversity promote quality teaching and learning in response to contextual factors. However, the positive culture and conducive environments can only be promoted by school leaders who inspire their teachers and learners through effectively managing both human and material resources to enhance vital instructional practices which promote quality teaching and learning in response to influence of contextual factors.

5.3.2.3 School community relations

Other respondents articulated an association between school leadership and the school community relations (f=6). Some noted responses which articulated that view were; *“He is the one who sets the pace or tone in terms of the school behaviour of the pupils, the relationship with parents in the community that the school exists as well as how he relates himself with the teachers and the students, in a way that is not to be feared by his subjects”* (Int 3: 16-19). *“If you relate well, consult and ask them how they feel, creating that close relationship, even if you want them to do what you think is best for them, that interaction, that involvement, it makes them feel they are also part of it.”* Int 4: 62-64) and *“Also, what is important is the relationship between the leader and the subordinates. We usually maintain that positive relationship. Where we have differences, where we see things not moving well, with a good approach, we always sit, discuss and address those things.”* (Int 8: 132-135).

These responses relate soundly with literature where relationships are regarded as the foundation of the educative endeavour and that good leadership improves both teacher motivation and working settings (cf. 2.1.ii & 2.4.2). All what the responses point at, is that school success thrives where the principal allows all stakeholders to relate well with each other for the promotion of quality teaching and learning in dealing with the impact of contextual factors.

Learning chances are increased and all-encompassing learning environments are created, making it possible to stimulate quality teaching and learning with regards to the influence of contextual factors. Positive relationships with teachers, learners and parents generate a sense of belonging and answerability which are significant in promoting school effectiveness in reaction to the influence of contextual factors. In response to the influence of contextual factors, the finest school leaders create cultures of trust, respect, caring, and compassion, as stated by Connors (2000), since strong connections are at the core of what makes a school exceptional.

5.3.2.4 Professional development in schools

There were also responses which described school leadership as being there to support professional development in schools (f=3). Some of the responses were; *“Yes, we are trying by all means to have staff-development workshops whereby when I sometimes see a teacher not being competent or not being knowledgeable, we try to send him or her to a refresher course or to a school which is doing well in order to tape for ideas or how we can also do things,”* (Int 5: 209-211). *“You capitalize on those strengths by sending those teachers for training workshops to develop those skills. We also sometimes invite facilitators to train the teachers here,”* (Int 9: 83-84). Arguing along the same line, one respondent said that; *“After every class visit for supervision, I sit down with the teacher to discuss all areas that needed improvement and also give a pat on the back to appreciate the work being done well. All this effort is to develop the teacher professionally,”* (Int 1: 37-39). The three responses that were recorded seem to agree with literature (cf. par. 2.4.4) which identifies practices like keeping track of teachers’ professional development needs, monitoring teachers’ work in the classroom and monitoring students’ progress as significant in providing the teacher with growth opportunities to learn which are helpful in the promotion of quality of teaching and learning in response to contextual factors in schools.

However, a point to note on staff development is that the only three participants who appeared to understand the importance of professional development were only focusing on the development and improvement of job skills. None of them mentioned about encouraging the teachers to personally develop themselves in terms of furthering their education which is a characteristic which promotes quality teaching and learning in response to the influence of contextual factors. As supported by literature, the principal’s other responsibility is to encourage the teachers to learn and grow the way that learners also learn and grow (Barth, 1991). Similarly, Shatzer et al. (2014) argues that transformation school principals create a culture of learning and

encourage staff members to undertake professional development. In line with the purpose of this research professional development is regarded as invaluable in promoting quality teaching and learning in order to deal with the impact of contextual factors in schools. Teachers need to continue to develop themselves in order to strengthen their moral and work performance which are also significant in improving quality of teaching with regards to the influence of contextual factors.

Thus, the identified descriptions and principles of school leadership in this category served as fundamental guidelines on how school leaders should deal with school community, especially, teachers, learners and parents in a school situation so as to promote school effectiveness in line with the effect of contextual factors. The responses give the impression that school leadership requires the principal to be involved in curricular and instructional issues that directly affect student achievement. The school principal needs to be an educational visionary who offers direction and expertise to ensure quality teaching and learning in reaction to the influence of contextual factors. The subsequent category comprises responses that were recorded on the relationship between leadership and school effectiveness.

5.3.3 Relationship between school leadership and school effectiveness

This category characterised the participants' views and thoughts about how they perceived the relationship between leadership and school effectiveness. This category, which relates to the research sub question 1, helped bring out the common contextual factors that influenced quality teaching and learning in schools thereby, displaying the closeness which exists between the school leadership and school achievement. The realisation of these contextual factors' influence, led to the development of a strategy for principals to promote school effectiveness in the demarcated district of Marondera in Zimbabwe.

Table 5.10: Relationship between school leadership and school effectiveness

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS	F
Leadership ensures a school vision	7
Leadership ensures school resource allocation	6
Leadership ensures quality teaching and learning	5
Leadership is responsible for professional development	2

5.3.3.1 School vision

A motivating outcome in the above category revealed all the (9) participants agreeing that indeed, the two variables have a close link. For example, one participant said; *“Yes, the relationship is intricate in that, these two are dovetailed, they are interfaced, and they work in relation. The quality of leadership in an institution, also determines the quality of teaching and learning and the results,”* (Int 9: 24-25). In support, another participant also said; *“Yes, because there is this kind of reflection of a leader on whatever activities that are done in the school. So, I really feel there is a link,”* (Int 7: 24- 27). These reactions from the participants do validate the comprehension of school leadership and its association with school effectiveness.

Most recorded responses indicated that, for school effectiveness, leadership should ensure a school vision (f=7). An effective school vision is described by SHRM (2012) as a communication of what the school hopes to achieve and it is inspirational (cf. par. 2.4.1). Some noted responses were; *“We say that, the school leadership sets goals. It gives the school vision which is supposed to be followed in the classroom.”* (Int 5: 23-24). Another participant (principal) at a private school, had this to say; *“They have their vision. When they started this school, they had something which they had in their mind. So, me being a leader in such a school, I’m simply running with their vision. I’m implementing their vision. I adopt it and I run with it,”* (Int 6: 22-25).

The responses seem to suggest that a school vision gives guidance and direction towards school effectiveness, thus, it is important for principals to ensure a school vision as a positive contextual factor to promote quality teaching and learning in schools. However, some rigidity might be noted in some of the participants’ responses from private schools, where a principal might not make any changes on the already laid down school vision, which is a situation which makes it difficult for a school leader to run a school towards the intended goal of promoting quality teaching and learning (cf. Int 6: 22-25). Literature argues in support of principals drafting the school vision in collaboration with staff members by asking for contribution from them about what is valued by the community (cf. par. 2.4.1) with the aim of improving quality teaching and learning.

5.3.3.2 Resources allocation

Other eminent responses from this category which supported the relationship between school leadership and school effectiveness viewed leadership as ensuring school resource

allocation for school success (f=6). The recorded answers were; *“We are also looking at the needs of the school, the books, the stationery and the text books. Uuumm, we are also looking at the other resources like ICT materials. The principal has to look into that,”* (Int 2: 55-56). *“Failure to mobilize resources, there will be no effective teaching in the classrooms,”* (Int 5: 24-25). *“He is the one responsible for the provision of the learning and teaching materials, that is the resources in general,”* (Int 1: 28-29). Jerkins (2009) supports the link which exists between school leadership and allocation of resources, which then leads to the attainment of learners’ outcomes (cf. par. 2.4). The recorded responses indicate that the availability of resources leads to school success. It is therefore, important for the school principals to mobilize resources to ensure school effectiveness in response to the impact of contextual factors.

5.3.3.3 Teaching and learning

Responses which also accepted the relationship between leadership and school effectiveness, regarded leadership as ensuring quality teaching and learning for school achievement (f=5). The participants’ responses show that quality teaching and learning is achieved by school leaders through supervision. *“That can only be achieved through the supervision of the learners and teachers,”* (Int 9: 28-29). *“He is also in charge of supervision of teaching and learning. He is the one who goes into the classroom, observing lessons, even inspecting the professional documents of the teachers,”* (Int 1: 29-31). *“What I simply do as the leader is to check on what is being done by these people in different departments,”* (Int 6: 46-47). The connection between supervision and quality teaching and learning was also consistent with literature which encourages principals to monitor teachers’ work in the classroom, conducting in-class observations and monitoring students’ progress (cf. par. 2.4.4) for the promotion of quality teaching in reaction to the influence of contextual factors.

The given responses point to the importance of supervision by school principals as a tool in improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Supervision also appears to give the teachers opportunities to correct their teaching faults, becoming more effective in the classroom which leads to positive results in the school with regards to the effect of contextual factors found in schools.

5.3.3.4 Professional development

Some participants connected the relationship between school leadership and school effectiveness with professional development. A minority of the responses were recorded in this category which viewed school leadership and professional development as a foundation for school effectiveness (f=2). *“Education is all about behaviour change. When they do things right, I see the change in behaviour. Sometimes I don’t have to say, give me the scheme book, because I am seeing the desired change that I want to. I am seeing the learner passing the exams.”* (Int 6: 50-52). *“You are looking at what the teachers need. Teachers need to develop their talents and the principal is in charge of that, to provide assistance, so that these teachers add value to the performance of learners,”* (Int 2: 65-67). In line with these responses, improvement of instruction is one of the goals that principals should accomplish in schools and it is through staff professional development that school success is attained in response to the influence of contextual factors.

As noted with the responses, only two participants gave responses which associated school leadership and school effectiveness, with professional development, an indication that few principals are aware of the significance of school professional development. As also noted in table 5.9, there were three participants who understood professional development as part of school leadership. Thus, to promote quality teaching and learning in the Marondera District schools, it is important to consider further research on the importance of professional development for school effectiveness. This will help principals to understand the important role that professional development as a positive contextual factor, plays in the improvement of results in schools.

Since the participants’ responses showed an understanding of that symbiotic relationship between school leadership and school effectiveness, they needed to expound on the leadership styles that they found applicable and useful in their schools, in order to promote quality teaching and learning. It was anticipated that the principals would choose the leadership styles that were most applicable to them in dealing with the different contextual factors in their different environments. The next category picked up these styles as they were described by the participants.

5.3.4 Leadership styles

Responses of this category displayed the participants' opinions about and experiences with the different leadership styles that they employed when they discharged their leadership duties in their respective schools. The responses are presented in the table 5.11. Participants' views and perceptions in this category seemed to indicate that certain leadership styles, if adopted by school principals, might help them to account for both internal and external school contextual factors, leading to the achievement of school effectiveness.

Table 5.11: Leadership styles

LEADERSHIP STYLES	<i>F</i>
Democratic leadership style	9
Autocratic leadership style	8
Laissez-faire leadership style	3
Transformational leadership style	2
Instructional leadership	2

Responses in this category indicated that participants were aware that leadership involves different styles that needed to be embraced when a leader delivers his/her duties in an organization. However, some participants showed that they were not familiar with other leadership styles that could be employed by principals in schools, specifically in the district of Marondera, to promote quality teaching and learning. This was evidenced by the leadership styles that the principals said they used while carrying out their work (cf. table 5.11). Most participants in this research regarded leadership styles as situational, that is, being able to adjust or change their leadership styles to suit the situation at their work places in order to improve quality teaching and learning in their schools (cf. par. 2.2.1), for example; *"So, there is no specific way of leadership style anyway, it depends on the situation and the leader,"* (Int 3: 51-52). *"Right, uumm, in fact, there are many leadership styles which can be used and they vary according to the situation of the environment,"* (Int 1: 40-41). Related literature also raised the impression that, there is no one approach which suits different situations. Principals ought to use different

leadership styles within their reach to the advantage of their team members, relating to the situation and the followers' needs, hence, the situational leadership theory (cf. par. 2.2.1). As such, participants identified different leadership styles that school leaders could employ in schools in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning in response to school contextual factors.

5.3.4.1 *The democratic leadership style*

The democratic or participative leadership style proved common with the participants (f=9) because of its effectiveness which is brought about by the principal's involvement of every school stakeholder in school activities. Some of the responses were; *"I can say that, the first one is democratic, which can also be called participative. It involves every team member in decision-making,"* (Int 8: 55-56). *"Democratic style, is the style which involves everybody in decision – making. They would be part and parcel of the running of the school, every stakeholder, from teachers, students, SDC, workers, they will also help in the running of the school,"* (Int 5: 29-31). *"So, democracy at times pays dividends because in return, they also tend to work in collaboration with the administration,"* (Int 3: 60-61). The connection of the democratic leadership style and stakeholder involvement in decision-making was consistent with the viewpoint from literature that emphasizes on a leader to involve and encourage everyone to participate and work as a team, in the process of decision-making because engagement and collaboration of members and leader yield the expected results (cf. par. 2.2.2 & 2.2.3). The participants' responses imply that teamwork improves school efficiency and instils a sense of responsibility in all stakeholders in a school in reaction to contextual factors. However, teamwork could also be risky, because there might be a tendency of laxity from other members of the team, hence the importance of supervision of the members by the principal being taken seriously, in order to make sure that every member is working.

5.3.4.2 *The autocratic leadership style*

Participants' responses also linked the process of leadership with the autocratic leadership style (f=8). The autocratic leadership style is regarded as the telling leadership style where the leader directly tells the follower or member what to do and the way the task should be done (cf. par. 2.2.2), making it a one-way communication style. Participants who aligned their leadership styles with autocracy argued that; *"I believe autocracy works in education. You don't*

have to be democratic too much but punctuate autocracy with democracy,” (Int 6: 58-60). “In discharging my duties, at times there are situations when you can be dictatorial,” (Int 3: 41-42). “It’s not something that is used regularly but here and there, as a leader, you find that it may be beneficial in some instances when decisions need to be made quickly,” (Int 4: 105-107).

Responses of this category indicate that the autocratic leadership style was common among the participants although they had some reservations with the style because stakeholders are not involved in decision-making. In coherence with literature, as stated (cf. par. 2.2.2 & par. 2.2.3), the followers have to simply follow the instructions as given and fulfil the leader’s will.

Most participants indicated the importance of autocracy when it came to the implementation of educational policies (f=6); *“Yes, we mostly use this when there are some issues which do not need debate, for example, we have policies and we have circulars. There is no need of going to a meeting, then say, let’s discuss this circular. It’s, you have to follow this,”* (Int 5: 44-46). Responses also indicated the usefulness of autocracy with incompetent and problematic teachers in schools. In support of that, literature encourages leaders to aggressively weed out individuals who do not show the capacity to grow. Though it might appear cruel to some teachers, if principals do not take the radical decisions most schools will be sinking ships (cf. 2.4.5 & Wallace Foundation, 2013).

As shown by responses from the autocratic leadership style, one can conclude that, this leadership style might be used in situations where principals feel they might face resistance from teachers and also when they want to implement educational policies to which they might also have no answers, if any questions were to be asked from them. However, somewhere in literature, leaders were encouraged to persuade followers, indicating to them that the changes were in their best interest, rather than just telling them what to do (cf. par. 2.3). Thus, democratic leadership style, with regards to the influence of contextual factors, can be useful in promoting quality teaching and learning.

5.3.4.3 Laissez-faire leadership style

Responses were also recorded which regarded the laissez-faire leadership style which is identified in the reviewed literature as delegating leadership style. It is described by Hersey et al. (2001) as one of the leadership styles that, if adopted by school leaders, might help with the achievement of school performance (f=3). Kelly (2013), describes it as a “hands-off” approach because of its nature where the subordinates are left to make most of the decisions (cf. par.

2.2.2). Some of the responses were; *“Personally, eehh, the laissez-faire approach is better. If a person works autonomously, usually the person is an expert. He can also perform up to his or her maximum and there is not too much pushing,”* (Int 3: 53-55). *“We have the laissez-faire, which is also called delegative, whereby, as a leader I delegate duties. You can’t do things alone.”* (Int 8: 46-47). Another participant also argued in support of the leader, needing to be flexible and giving the experienced teachers room to excel, being comfortable and doing their work without the supervisor breathing behind their necks (cf. Int 2: 143). Literature, however, highlighted the importance of delegation of responsibilities to members by leaders and then monitoring of the progress of the work (cf. par. 2.2.2). Nonetheless, most participants were silent about the laissez-faire leadership style (f=5) and only one participant who just mentioned it and indicated knowledge of its existence, disproved its usage, citing its unaccountability; *“Basically laissez-faire type of leadership in schools, no, it’s non-existent. If you do it, the school will collapse. That’s why you find other schools definitely don’t get the results, no one is held accountable,”* (Int 6: 73-75). This response related well with the concept of leadership which was described as concerning accountability (cf. table 5.8).

One other negative aspect that could be inferred from the responses was that the laissez-faire leadership style seemed to benefit those teachers who were already experienced at work, at the expense of the inexperienced ones, who still needed more time to learn. The laissez-faire leadership style also appeared to work well with those teachers who were self-motivated at work, hence its unpopularity with participants. Hence, school leaders need to make well-informed decisions when they choose to employ the laissez-faire leadership style in the promotion of quality teaching and learning in response to contextual factors. The next section looked at the transformational leadership.

5.3.4.4 Transformational leadership style

Responses that regarded the transformational leadership style as useful in schools were (f=2): *“I personally use transformational leadership because it focuses on change. It promotes change in the institution and in all individuals,”* (Int 9: 37-38). *“As a leader you should constantly develop the teachers and change them, to improve performance in the school.”* (Int 6: 119-121). These responses were consistent with the earlier descriptions about the relationship between school leadership and staff development for school effectiveness (cf. par. 5.3.3). Literature also specified that transformational leadership is a root that changes and transforms individuals,

causing valuable and progressive change in followers and social structures (cf. par. 2.3 & par. 2.3.1).

The responses show the importance of transformational leadership style, if adopted for use by principals, would help to deal with the influence of contextual factors found in schools. Though with low frequency (f=2), this leadership style is of paramount importance in the transformation of schools in terms of both infrastructure and staff.

5.3.4.5 Instructional leadership style

Responses in connection with instructional leadership style were (f=2). *“Yes, this one, I want to call it instructional leadership. That has something to do with teaching, whereby, as the principal, I work alongside teachers, to provide support and guidance to establish best practices that produce positive results in teaching and learning,”* (Int 4: 67-69). *“You are taking your teachers and learners aboard, so that they are part of the teaching and learning process in the school,”* (Int 9:58-60). These particular responses were supported in literature which backed the understanding by school principals, of the five key roles which instructional leaders should perform in order to become effective leaders who will achieve their school goals (cf. par. 2.4). The significance of instructional leadership is that it puts emphasis on the quality of teaching and the quality of learning.

Thus, looking through the lens of instructional leadership, its characteristics, as recorded in the responses from the participants, would connect well with the purpose of this research, to develop a strategy for school leaders in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe to promote school effectiveness in response to the influence of contextual factors. Some of the contextual factors that have an effect on schools were identified in chapter 3 and thus, instructional leadership style was acknowledged as one of the applicable leadership styles that might be beneficial, if employed by school principals to promote school success in reaction to school contextual factors.

5.3.4.6 Pragmatic leadership style

Although pragmatic leadership style was not raised in literature review one participant considered its impact with regards to school success. The response was; *“Yes, besides the traditional democratic, authoritarian and laissez-faire, yes we make use of them here and there but looking at my own institution, I have developed my own style that will make sure that the*

work that I have to do here is actually achieved. I feel that I have to be very pragmatic. Looking at things, see how you can go around but still without losing the focus,” (Int 7: 30-34). A definition of a pragmatic approach taken from online Collins Advanced Dictionary (2022) describes a pragmatic way of dealing with something as based on practical considerations, rather than theoretical ones. A pragmatic person deals with things in a practical way. It seems the argument in the participant’s response, in line with the definition of a pragmatic leader indicates that, principals as school leaders should be practically on the ground, being exemplary, working together with teachers and learners, showing them and seeing how things are done. That leadership approach will promote quality teaching and learning in schools. In support of this, one interviewee raised this opinion, for example; *“I am there to show you how things are done and eventually people get used to such a system and then we run,”* (Int 7: 87-88). Therefore, school principals should also consider employing the pragmatic leadership style in their duties in order to promote quality teaching and learning in response to the influence of contextual factors.

The importance of the responses of this category, for the development of a strategy for principals to promote effectiveness in schools, was to avoid a constricted and limited focus on one type of leadership style and for principals to be aware of these different styles and utilize them appropriately, in different situations. Principals need to be flexible and choose the appropriate leadership style which suits the need. Different contextual factors can be accounted for, using different leadership styles. The significance of involving parents (SDC) and non-teaching staff (workers) besides teachers and students was also inferred by some of the responses in the section. This research aimed to develop a strategy for the principals to account for different contextual factors in their schools, in order to promote quality teaching and thus, this category gives an opportunity for principals to have a wider choice of leadership styles that support school effectiveness in response to contextual factors.

In the following section, contextual factors that have an influence on the quality of teaching and learning will be discussed. The contextual factors are grouped according to, micro, meso and macro factors, i) micro contextual factors which comprise factors that are found within the school boundary and they influence the quality of teaching and learning, ii) meso contextual factors which comprise social factors that are close to the school and indirectly influence the quality of teaching and learning and iii) macro contextual factors which influence the quality of teaching and learning from outside the school boundary. The three classes of the contextual factors are important for an appreciation of the relationship and association among them. Definitions of the terms are given in chapters 1 and 3.

5.4 Contextual factors that influence the quality of teaching and learning

Participants' opinions and views of the contextual elements that have an impact on teaching and learning in schools were reflected in the responses allocated to this category. It is also reported, in relation to those contextual factors that were identified in the literature review and according to the contextual forces framework (cf. par. 3.1).

This category links closely with category 5.3.3, which gives the views of participants about the relationship between school leadership and school effectiveness. This indicates the inseparable status of leadership and contextual factors found within and outside the school boundary that influence school achievement. The contextual factors were categorised as, micro, meso and macro factors (cf. par. 3.2; 3.3; 3.4 & 3.5). There is not a single case of transforming a school into a learning community for excellence in the absence of competent leadership (Leithwood, Aitken, & Jantzi, 2006), so school leaders should be aware of contextual factors that influence success and development in their school communities in response to contextual factors. The participants' responses were in line with research aim number two of this research, to identify and describe the contextual factors that have an influence on school effectiveness. The identification of the contextual factors within and outside school borders, helped to develop a strategy for school principals to achieve school success.

5.4.1 Micro contextual factors in school

Micro contextual factors are found within the school boundaries (cf. par. 3.2) and they influence the learning and teaching in schools.

Table 5.12: Micro contextual factors that influence quality teaching and learning

MICRO CONTEXTUAL FACTORS ON QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING	<i>F</i>
Infrastructure and resources	9
Curriculum	6
School Culture	4
Social integration	0

Teachers' competence	4
Intrinsic motivation	4
Religious values	4
Status of the school	2

5.4.1.1 Infrastructure and resources

The replies given by participants in this category acknowledged the contextual elements that have an impact on the general calibre of teaching and learning in schools. Most participants indicated infrastructure and resources as contextual factors that have an influence on teaching and learning in schools, which lead to school achievement (f=9). For the benefit of this research, infrastructure refers to physical buildings (e.g. classrooms). Resources refer to human resources (teachers), financial or capital resources (money) and other resources like, books, electricity and internet. Examples which indicated responses for importance of infrastructure and resource were: *"Where you have resources, yes, you also have quality education. Learners are motivated, teachers are motivated, resources are there,"* (Int 2: 197-198). *"Resources, financially, human resources, capital resources, all these things, they contribute to pass rates of kids,"* (Int 8: 92-93). However, literature indicates that human resources is a critical area in school effectiveness (cf. par. 2.4), but the goal is sometimes far from being achievable in schools because principals are faced with lack of qualified teachers, who have been seen as an effective instrument towards achieving quality teaching (cf. par. 3.3.3 & 3.3.4). Participants expressed the importance of teachers on imparting knowledge on learners but because of lack of material resources, teachers and learners are demotivated; and they have negative attitudes towards teaching and learning (Int 8: 94-95). One participant was frank to mention the consequences of a lack of resources in schools; *"So, resources like textbooks can be a challenge for some schools and then, when you have those poor resources, good teachers will move away, certainly. They would not stay there, where they are also strained,"* (Int 2: 175-177).

Other participant replies revealed that financial resources are essential to the growth of schools, while a shortage of funding makes it difficult for leadership to manage the institutions. As indicated by some participants' responses, schools get their financial support from school fees payment by parents and if the parents fail to pay, schools will fail. Examples; *"People from poverty-stricken backgrounds fail to pay school fees, so the leadership will have problems in*

running the school. It totally affects the results, no financial support,” (Int 5: 56-58). *“Financially, our parents today struggle to raise fees and if a school just depends on fees, if the parent fails to pay, then, the school cannot run,”* (Int 7: 67-68).

Thus, the interpretation from participants’ responses is that most activities that take place in schools depend on the availability of money, hence the significance of the role of school leadership in ensuring resource allocation for school effectiveness (cf. par. 5.3.3.2). According to the literature, poor physical infrastructure and high learner-to-teacher ratios are caused by financial difficulties in schools in developing nations (Wolhuter et al., 2016). Additionally, the majority of rural schools in Zimbabwe lack enough classroom space, poor facilities for offering athletic, cultural, and artistic activities, and uninhabitable teacher housing (Parliamentary Portfolio Committee Report, 2012). Thus, the responses in this section cement the inseparable relationship which is there between the availability of resources which promote teaching and learning in response to the influence of contextual factors. The understanding of the presence of contextual factors in schools was the motivation for carrying out this research, in order to develop a strategy for principals, as school leaders, to promote quality teaching and learning.

5.4.1.2 Curriculum

Responses which regarded a school curriculum as a contextual factor that impacts on school effectiveness were also recorded, with participants indicating challenges which accompany the implementation of a curriculum (f=6). Some of the examples were; *“Like now, we have embarked on the new curriculum but the new curriculum has not been explained to teachers, so .in that instance, it might be difficult to teach whatever might be in the new curriculum and be able to make their students pass,”* (Int 4: 163-165). *“The teachers did not know how to go about it because of lack of training. That compromises standards,”* (Int 1: 126-128). *“We also need teachers, learners and parents who are conscious of the new curriculum. So, we need to make sure that our teachers understand the syllabus and the curriculum but because it is new, we are also handicapped by lack of knowledge, so we need resources that are aligned to the new curriculum,”* (Int 9: 119-121), (cf. par. 3.3.3) for impact of lack of resources on curriculum implementation in schools. As indicated before, in this chapter, school curriculum encompasses everything that is taught to the learner by the teacher and also includes other programmes that take place within the school boundary (cf. par. 3.3.1). As a result, a school curriculum should equip students with the skills necessary to compete in the workplace once they have completed their basic education (Rose, 2008). It therefore means that, a school

curriculum should be supported by the availability of enough material resources and competent human resources (teachers).

With the indicated responses from the research participants, it denotes that school achievement will be a failure, if proper planning lacks. What can also be deduced from the above responses is that an introduction of a curriculum should be timeous, that is, planned and introduced in time. All the stakeholders and implementers (principals and teachers) should be made aware of any curriculum innovation and should receive enough training to prepare them for the implementation without any challenges. It is therefore important for school principals and education officers to understand that the lack of preparation on the side of the teachers and lack of resources are deterrent factors for qualified and experienced teachers. This also brings in the factor of the importance of training on the part of teachers. Literature confirms that, most school reforms come through the principal, who then passes it on to the teachers and thus, principals have a key role in curriculum management, goal-setting, resource allocation, lesson plan monitoring, and assessment as instructional leaders (cf. par. 2.4). Hence the emphasis on the bottom-up implementation approach which encourages those who plan on reforms on school curricula, to include principals and teachers because they are the ones who face the challenges in schools. It brings in the already mentioned fact that principals should also make sure that teachers in their schools are staff developed (cf. par. 5.3.3.4) for the promotion of quality teaching and learning in reaction to the influence of school contextual factors.

It is therefore the duty of the principal to see to it that the school curriculum sails through successfully, with its aims and objectives being achieved, hence the purpose of this research, for school leaders to account for the contextual factors and develop an approach for them to support successful teaching and learning in their schools.

5.4.1.3 School culture

Participants also regarded school culture and climate as a contextual factor that influences effective teaching and learning in schools ($f=4$). A school culture, as described in chapter three, comprises routines, expectations and interactions that occur in a place and attending to these issues in a way that reveals the mission and values of the community in and outside the classroom, promote a healthy culture (cf. par. 3.5.2). So, what it means here is that all activities that take place within the school's jurisdiction, should determine a school culture which leads to school effectiveness. Participants regarded the importance of collaborative

relationships in the school, among teachers and learners, as part of school culture that promotes school achievement.

Some of the responses were; *“So in a team, you will find that people work and produce results in a different manner but teaching is an art made up of different people, individuals, who, when brought together, they work to produce results,”* (Int 6: 118-120). *“So, relations are very important, positive relations. That will also help people feel loved and motivated,”* (Int 8: 135-136). *“So, in the end, as a leader you need to analyse the impact of teamwork and working together as a school. Remember, the mighty deserts are built through the coming together of the granites of sand and the mighty branches are made because of the coming together of leaves,”* (Int 9: 66-69). Literature has also made the case that without the cooperation of teachers and learners, leaders cannot guarantee effective instruction (cf. par. 3.5.3; Ibrahim et al., 2016). The interpretation here is that, having a culture of unity in a school through working together as a team aids in achieving school purpose. School principals need to account for school culture as a contextual factor that promotes development in their schools.

5.4.1.4 School social integration

Being a significant micro contextual factor in schools, school social integration, was raised in literature review (cf. par. 3.4) but not mentioned in participants' responses (f=0). Thus, it is important for school principals to account for social integration in school communities to achieve school success. A working definition for this research looks at social integration in a school context as the incorporation of minority groups such as newcomers into the school society (Scholarly Community Encyclopaedia, 2022). According to a literature review, schools can play a significant role in fostering social integration by offering opportunities for all students to share common experiences, such as sporting activities and adventure camps (cf. par. 3.4). It is thus important for school principals to create school environments which accommodate different learners from different cultures for school effectiveness.

This research may also help principals to have a positive view about different learners from different cultures who come to join their schools. For example, one participant said; *“And we are also surrounded by farms which are dominated by other people from different cultures, like people from Malawi, those were people who were taken into farms to work, ehhh, and when they mix with Shona people, there is **culture appropriation** that takes place,”* (Int 8: 157-159). As explained online by MasterClass (2022), cultural appropriation occurs when a leading cultural

group embraces elements of another minority group's tradition or cultural structure. In this case, the dominant cultural group is the Shona people. Thus, instead of viewing the mixture of diverse cultures in schools with a negative perspective, as indicated by the above participant's response, principals should regard social integration as a way to solve differences like social classes, race and language that may bring challenges to effective teaching and learning. In fact, school social integration appears to reduce racial isolation and serves as a union between ranges of curricular disciplines. In order to encourage high-quality teaching and learning in response to the influence of contextual elements, school principals should be aware of this crucial feature, endeavour to embrace various cultural groups, and permit social integration to rule in schools.

5.4.1.5 Religious values

Also observed from the sample schools, is that a culture that is guided by **religious values** also supports a happy atmosphere and unity among all individuals in both private and mission schools. This improves school success. Responses from mission schools (f=3) and from a private school (f=1) were in support of religious values as an important factor that impacts school development. Examples of responses were; *"As a mission school, we are driven by Christian ethos and ethics. As a principal of this institution, I have tried to work within those dictates of the ministry and especially the church and therefore, the happy Christian atmosphere that prevails in our institutions, which is centred on Christian values,"* (Int 9: 150-154). *"Ok, I was looking at, within school boundaries, where we are saying, the Christian environment is one that makes us tick,"* (Int 7: 133-134). From the responses given here, it looks like, religion allows for peaceful environments and a culture where people respect each other, leading to loyalty to those in positions of authority. From the school observations, religious values bind school organizations together. It therefore appears to be the reason why private and mission schools perform better than public schools. Thus, it is important to consider religious values as a positive contextual factor which promotes quality teaching and learning with regards to the influence of contextual factors in schools. The Marondera schools ranking order (MOPSE Marondera District, 2019), shown to me as the researcher, supported that inclination.

5.4.1.6 Teachers' lack of interest

Another micro contextual factor that came up from the interviews and not mentioned in the related research literature in chapters two and three, which principals should account for,

was a **lack of interest** in the profession on the part of teachers (f=4). One response, for example was; *“So, what I think is the major challenge is, despite looking at shortage of resources and whatever, it’s simply because people no longer want to teach. It’s very unfortunate because I believe teaching is fulfilling and when teaching learners, you are doing that as a duty and calling,”* (Int 6: 125-128). On the same note, another participant talked about teachers just having negative attitude, *“So they have negative attitudes, especially when we have schools that motivate their staff like boarding schools, they sometimes give them food hampers, but there are schools which cannot afford to give even a pen to a teacher, so the teachers have negative attitude towards this. They don’t teach and you cannot expect where they are not teaching to pass,”* (Int 8: 95-98).

From these participant responses, it can be inferred that intrinsic motivation and passion on the part of a teacher, plays a crucial role in learners’ achievement. A teacher maximizes his or her effort when that internal motivation is present. It is, therefore, the duty of school principals to find ways to persuade teachers to be self-motivated, so that quality teaching and learning are promoted in schools, for example, before joining a school, principals should clearly spell-out the need for teacher’s self-motivation and passion to the teaching job. In other words, principals should take all new teachers for a job orientation before starting the job in schools and that will help teachers to understand their reasons for being in schools. Thus, the inspiration for this research was to develop a strategy for school leaders to promote school effectiveness in response to the influence of contextual factors.

Other responses from participants viewed teachers’ competence as a contextual factor that needs to be looked at, for school effectiveness and should also be accounted for by school principals (f=3). Responses were; *“Ok, one, it’s about incompetent teachers, sometimes who are not knowledgeable in their subject areas,”* (Int 5: 53-54). *“Some of the teachers don’t know how they teach.”* (Int 6: 141). On the same note, one response indicated the challenge of syllabus interpretation as the cause for poor performance by teachers, for instance; *“Some schools have the syllabus but they don’t know the essence of the syllabus that it is a prerequisite document for teaching and that it serves to outline the basic elements of the course.”* (Int 9: 124-126). These responses, therefore, imply the need for competent teachers for the achievement of teaching and learning in schools with regards to the influence of contextual factors. Teachers need to be informed about the importance of syllabus understanding and interpretation. Literature has also emphasised the need for instructors to keep learning in order to apply the most effective teaching strategies and achieve success (cf. par. 3.5). It is therefore, the responsibility of school leaders to

give direction and empower teachers. There is a need for more research on the effects of staff development at both the school and district levels, as was previously highlighted in this study.

Another factor that affected how well learners were receiving instruction and acquiring knowledge in schools was the status of the institution. Related responses from the interviews were noted and discussed in the next section.

5.4.1.7 School status

Responses were also recorded which regarded school status (private, mission, public) as a contextual factor which influences the achievement of a school ($f=2$). Examples were; *"It then means that there are different levels between the schools. The better the status of a school, the better the results are because learning still goes on even if children are away from school,"* (Int 7: 82-84). *"In fact, we are a private school, a high fee-paying school and you realise that parents should realise the value of their monies. So, when they send their children to our school, we want them to appreciate the services that we are providing through the teachers. Our setting, our context, is different from rural schools which may not have access to electronic learning,"* (Int 3: 83-87). The availability of resources can be deduced from these responses, especially, from private schools, for example, financial resources and e-learning. These comments validated academic research that found public school children learn at a lower level than their private school counterparts. Additionally, according to the literature, instructors' classroom management skills may contribute to children in private schools achieving higher academic standards (see par. 3.5.4).

From the responses of the participants, it suggests that those schools which are private perform better academically because their fees are higher than those of public schools. This allows the private as well as mission schools an opportunity to have a sound financial position, which allows them to be able to acquire the necessary resources. With resources, teachers are motivated and they give maximum effort, which leads to school success. Thus, school principals of public schools and the education officers in Marondera District need to be aware of strategies that may see public schools operating at the same level with both private and mission schools and also yielding similar results. In light of the importance of contextual factors, the aim of this research was to provide a plan for principals of schools to support school effectiveness. The responses of participants about the influence of meso contextual elements on the standard of teaching and learning in schools are examined in the following section.

5.4.2 Meso contextual factors in schools

The social factors in the meso context are those that are close to the school and have an indirect impact on the standard of instruction. In response to the influence of contextual elements, participants selected some of the key contextual factors that support school effectiveness. This category's responses are shown in table 5.13.

Table 5.13: Meso contextual factors that influence quality teaching and learning

MESO CONTEXTUAL FACTORS ON QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING	F
Parent involvement	6
Schools psychological support services	4
Poverty	4

5.4.2.1 Parent involvement

Participants perceived meso contextual factors as having an impact on teaching and learning in schools. According to responses, parent involvement is one of the major elements that affect students' academic success ($f=6$). Some exemplars were; *"The other effort should come from parents themselves. They need to support teachers by buying any materials that teachers ask for, especially parents with children at government schools. I have also seen parents doing some manual work which is equivalent to the amount of school fees which they are supposed to pay,"* (Int 6: 178-182). *"Families where these learners come from also need to work together with the school in order to receive good results from the learners. Most schools hold parents' days where the parents will have the opportunity to discuss their children's performance. Through these discussions parents can ask how they can help their sons and daughters at home,"* (Int 9: 136-139). *"At times school development committees encourage other parents to make sure that they buy complete school uniforms which are also a motivating factor to the child who will improve in his schoolwork. These parents have also created committees amongst themselves, which look into projects to raise some funds for the school,"* (Int 5: 63-66). These participant replies were in line with the argument made in the literature that parents should be involved in their children's education because they can have a big impact on how well their youngsters do in school by supporting their learning at home (cf. par. 3.4.2). The importance of parent involvement was further highlighted as inducement for students in demonstrating higher

aspirations and other positive school behaviours (cf. par. 3.5.3). According to this research, parental participation is therefore seen as a good component that supports high-quality teaching and learning in response to the influence of contextual circumstances.

5.4.2.2 Schools psychological support services

Responses of this section regarded the schools psychological services as an indispensable contextual factor that school principals should consider in order to promote school effectiveness (f=4). Some responses were, *“The presence of schools psychological support services in schools is a recipe to the production of quality results because every child with potential and in need, is given the chance and aid that they deserve by the Ministry of Education”* (Int 3:131-133). *“Some disciplinary issues in schools do warrant the services of some experts from the district offices to come and help schools so that teaching and learning are not disturbed,”* Int 8: 109-112). *“When a learner misbehaves in school, the principal should not just quickly expel him, it is important to find avenues to try and help the child to correct the wrong behaviour. With this world full of child drug abusers and addicts, schools should be seen in the forefront to help these children,”* (Int 5: 77-80). These responses were coherent with literature which highlighted the need for school-based mental health professionals (psychologists) to look into learners’ behavioural issues like delinquency, attention difficulties and substance abuse in schools (cf. par. 3.4.3). An implication of these responses was to ensure security and safety of learners and schools through guidance and counselling from psychologists. Challenges of indiscipline and mental health are real in schools and they affect school performance, so the school principals and the district education officers should work together and find ways to mitigate the problems. The purpose of this study is to create a plan for the principals of the schools in the Zimbabwean district of Marondera to encourage academic performance. The participants’ responses also suggest that schools should be environments where learners with mental health issues can get assistance. In order to respond to the influence of contextual circumstances, the issue of school psychological services is important in the promotion of high-quality teaching and learning. The fundamental nature of school psychological services could be a possible topic for further research investigation in the district of Marondera.

5.4.2.3 Poverty

Some responses from participants also considered poverty as a meso contextual factor which has some impact on school achievement (f=4). Responses were: *"Then sometimes it's about poverty which affects schools. People from poverty- stricken backgrounds fail to pay fees and this totally affects the results. They have no financial power to support whatever is happening at the school,"* (Int 5: 58-61). *"Then economic hardships again, have turned many parents into destitute. Food is not on the table, so a hungry kid cannot learn anything, it also affects the brains. So, there are quite a number of dropouts and failures that take place,"* (Int 8: 102-104). *"The humble backgrounds of learners, the homes where they come from, if they cannot even afford food, then how about textbooks? It's a sad situation that affects,"* (Int 2: 191-192). These replies are in line with literature that argues that a country's economy has a significant influence on a school, particularly given the prevalence of widespread poverty in many developing nations (cf. par. 3.4.1). Substandard housing, inadequate medical treatment, and poor nutrition, which could alter the rate of childhood diseases, were other aspects of poverty that had an impact on academic achievement that were mentioned in the research. As indicated by Wolhuter et al. (2016) that FCE schools took up feeding schemes as way to combat the challenges of malnutrition and lack of food experienced by learners as a result of family poverty. A participant also indicated that a survey carried in their school showed that a quarter of all their learners came to school without having food (Int 8: 173-175), as a result, food had to be prepared for them in the school. This shows how important it is for school leaders to always find ways to help learners for the promotion of school effectiveness. Literature also pointed out that, poverty also affects learners' literacy and language development because of lack of physical and material resources. Principals should account for these meso contextual factors, as most public schools in Marondera District do have learners who come from poverty-stricken homes, as mentioned by the participants' responses in this section. I also noted (see par. 5.3.2) the socioeconomic background of the students likewise reflected the poverty.

The participants' responses seem to suggest is that poverty undermines the educational goals, leads to under-resourced schools, which then results in failure of academic performance of schools. Therefore, in order to support high-quality teaching and learning, school administrators should be able to come up with strategies for dealing with students from underprivileged backgrounds. The understanding of meso contextual factors will help school principals to equip themselves with the suitable strategy in their effort to promote school effectiveness. The following category describes the macro contextual factors in schools, according to the contextual forces framework.

5.4.3 Macro contextual factors in schools

Outside of the walls of schools, macro contextual factors influence the standard of instruction and learning in classrooms. Thus, in order to encourage high-quality teaching and learning, school administrators should be able to take these macro contextual elements into account. The macro contextual elements that school administrators believed to have an impact on the standard of teaching and learning in schools were mentioned in responses from this category. Table 5.14 illustrates the contextual variables.

Table 5.14: Macro contextual factors that influence teaching and learning

MACRO CONTEXTUAL FACTORS ON TEACHING AND LERNING	F
National policies influence school practices	6
ICT in schools in response to globalization	5
Teachers' remuneration influence quality of teaching and learning	3
Unions and political parties	2

5.4.3.1 National school policies

The aspect of national policies was mentioned by some participants who indicated that the policies guide schools on how they should be run to promote school effectiveness in response to the impact of contextual factors (f=6). To substantiate that literature (cf. par. 3.3) indicates and explains some of the national policies which are applicable to Zimbabwe's education and school principals need to embrace them, for example, Zimbabwe Education Act (Chapter 25:04), Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19), Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No.20) Act, 2013 and Statutory Instrument 1 of 2000 (SI 1 of 2000). These policies help to create standards in schools, supporting structures and functions which are necessary to provide educational needs of learners in response to the effect of contextual factors. Participants revealed the importance of the education for all policy which gives the right to education for all children although they cited its challenges of over-enrolment in schools which led to scarcity of human, financial and material resources especially in public schools (cf. table 5.6 & par. 3.3). Responses were: *"Right, ummm, the challenge of classrooms, which are not stretchable. Policies force us to continue enrolling, despite the large classes."* (Int 1: 116-117). *"The very big classes are just unbearable to teachers,"* (Int 2: 175-176). *"Schools are over enrolled and principals*

always need to make plan B, which may be learning under trees,” (Int 8: 146-147). However, principals need to stick to the government policy of teacher-learner ratio of 1 teacher to forty learners, (Parliamentary Committee Report, 2012) in response to the impact of the environment.

Responses also showed that the state policies had some influence on school curricula. Participants expressed positive viewpoints about the compulsory inclusion of technical-vocational subjects in the school curricula, for equipping learners with life skills (f=3); *“We are grooming small entrepreneurs who will not find it difficult in the world,”* (Int 5: 84-85). *“The tech-voc subjects introduced in these schools will help learners with practical competences which are essential for life,”* (Int 9: 122-123). These comments were consistent with the literature's strong endorsement of technical-vocational topics, which indicated that developing countries should place an emphasis on localising the school curricula to fit their requirements and situations (cf. par. 3.3.1 & 3.3.2). However, participants also cited their expectations and challenges that accompany the introduction of any new policy in their schools (f=3): *“Therefore, we need learners and teachers who are conscious of the new curriculum. We also need parents who are conscious of the new curriculum because it is new; we are handicapped by lack of knowledge, we need resources that are aligned to the new curriculum,”* (Int 9: 119-121). Responses were also consistent with descriptions about school curriculum being a contextual factor which influences school effectiveness (cf. par. 5.4.1.2). Recorded responses of this section, matched with literature which advocates for the participation in policy making, of those who are directly involved with policy implementation for development and maintenance of effective educational programmes within their schools (cf. par. 3.3.2).

What can be concluded from this section is that, though some challenges may accompany national policies, they are significant in schools because they call for uniformity in school programmes. What is being done by school A, school B is also doing that. State policies embrace and take every school on board. Effects may be the same but private schools might be at an advantage due to their low learner enrolments and adequate resources (cf. table 5.6; 5.7 & par. 5.3.3.2). For the purpose of promoting high-quality teaching and learning, it is crucial to design a management strategy for school administrators to deal with the effects of national policies in schools.

5.4.3.2 Information Communication Technology (ICT).

Because the majority of teaching and learning resources are made available in electronic format, participants praised the significance of ICT teaching and learning in schools. Responses that viewed the teaching and study of ICT in schools as an inevitable necessity and a reaction to globalisation were noted (f=5). For globalisation definition (cf. par. 3.3.5). Examples of responses were: *"These days you cannot leave ICT among the subjects that are done in your school because we are now living in a computerised world,"* (Int 1: 167-168). *"Government is also encouraging ICT in schools because most job interviews are being done online and if offered the job, you may be asked to do it online. So, the solution is the introduction of ICT teaching in schools,"* (Int 5: 82-85). These responses are related to academic work that pushes school systems to incorporate ICT into routine educational activities in order to comprehend how technologies function and how they could influence people's lives around the world (cf. par. 3.3.5). Participants also raised challenges faced by schools due to unreliable electricity, lack of financial and human resources (f=3): *"Some schools do not have money to buy even one computer for the principal,"* (Int 7:97). *"ICT is impossible without electricity. We need to ensure that we have electricity and we have generators running. Now and then, we have power outages,"* (Int 6: 270-272). *"So, the main challenge we have is for a qualified Computer Science teacher,"* (Int 1:68). These responses were connected with literature which showed the efforts of schools to integrate ICT in teaching and learning, being thwarted by lack of adequate resources (cf. par. 3.3.5.1). Thus, it implies that principals should find ways to reduce the challenges by installing generators and solar systems to alleviate challenges of electricity outages. In light of the impact of contextual factors, comments in this section suggest the significance of ICT as a factor in schools that determines the quality of teaching and learning. The enhancement of quality of education and human life through ICT is also implicated by the responses.

5.4.3.3 Teachers' remuneration

Responses regarded the matter on teachers' remuneration as a macro contextual factor which affects all public school teachers and it increases the standard of instruction and learning in classrooms (f=3): *"You would find out that the well to do schools are able to incentivise their teachers, therefore, making them put a little more effort than a teacher who is only waiting for the government salary, which is inadequate,"* (Int 7: 84-86). *"Like these days with the meagre salaries, we need our leaders or those at the top to look into the issue, so that everybody gets motivated to work,"* (Int 5: 67-68). *"The low morale of teachers and basically due to low salaries,*

of late, we found that some teachers have not been going to work and have not been teaching,” (Int 4: 148-150). In substantiation of these responses, literature indicates that remuneration is regarded as a motivator by employees and managers as well (Shields et al., 2015) and offering competitive salaries is one of the most effective methods for motivating employees (HRM Handbook, 2021).

From the participants’ responses, one can deduce the importance of adequate salaries as drive for teachers to perform well in schools which then leads to the promotion of quality teaching and learning in response to the influence of contextual factors. Thus, as indicated (Int 5:67-68), school principals and the government need to find ways to deal with the issue of salaries to promote school success. The response also shows that public schools are the most affected. From a personal view, teaching for some teachers has ceased to be “a calling,” as indicated in one participant’s response (Int 4: 148-150) where some teachers stopped going to work because of low salaries, at the expense of the learner’s education.

5.4.3.4 Unionism and politics

Responses that regarded teachers’ unions and political parties as macro contextual factors that influence school effectiveness negatively were (f=2); *“Sometimes the teachers’ unions call for their members to be on strike, where they say teachers are incapacitated because they have got no money to board buses to work, and so, they stay at home. So, these unions are doing more harm than good. There is no progress in the classroom and as a result when they write public exams, they fail,”* (Int 4: 152-154; 158). *“Politically, our kids are affected when teachers are involved in being voter educators and election officers during school days,”* (Int 8: 113-115). Literature that harshly decried the disruptive consequences of unionism and politics on the overall operation of the educational system and on student learning backed these specific responses (cf. par. 3.3.7).

These comments highlighted a few issues that the principals of some schools in the Marondera District have no control over and that only require the assistance and intervention of the government to prevent from hindering teaching and learning. The development of a strategy in this research might help principals to deal with the issues and promote quality teaching and learning in schools.

The responses of the participants to research aim (iii) are described in the following section, to identify and elucidate contextual factors that affect school effectiveness in schools in

the Marondera District in Zimbabwe. Thus, as noted in literature, educational leadership ought to take these contextual factors into account to ensure school achievement (cf. par. 3.2). The participants were from the nine selected schools in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe.

The general contextual elements were crucial for the research's goal, which was to create a plan for Marondera's principals that would increase school effectiveness in response to the influence of contextual factors. In order to foster high standards of teaching and learning in their institutions, school leaders must identify strategies for dealing with contextual issues. Therefore, the general contextual factors are listed below. As mentioned before, what the principals reflected on, depended on their unique situations in their schools, although most situations in the participants' schools were related, as noted during the interviews.

5.4.4 General identified contextual factors with specific reference to school effectiveness

- Enrolment of learners, leading to large classes affects school effectiveness
- Ministry of Education's policy, "No child shall be expelled for failure to pay school fees." is retrogressive to school development
- Non-payment of school fees by parents makes it difficult to acquire resources for successful instruction and learning
- High teacher turnover of teachers in sciences and commercials departments, due to low salaries
- You cannot make any decision without consulting the responsible authority first; this leads to some restriction on decision-making on the part of the principal
- Abuse of alcohol, drugs and involvement in pre-marital sex by learners leads to loss of concentration and school failure
- Prolonged school closure due to COVID 19 pandemic and the social distance regulation which led to the creation of extra classes to decongest the classes, leading to the challenge of lack of teachers for the extra classes.
- Economic status of Zimbabwe led to high rate of unemployed parents and many school dropouts due to failure to pay school fees by parents
- The centralised recruitment of teachers by the Ministry of Education leads to slow replacement of vacant posts which affects school success
- Lack of ICT resources, internet connectivity and electricity power cuts

- Teachers' unions call for their members to go on strike for salary increments during school term, leading to loss of teaching time and poor school results.

School leaders would be better able to support high-quality teaching and learning in response to the influence of contextual variables if they were aware of the previously mentioned contextual elements. The responses were crucial in helping to establish a plan for school leaders to boost academic performance. However, it should be understood that schools as unique entities, they need to take a departure from their distinctive circumstances (cf. par. 3.2.2). School leaders need to use different leadership styles in their school operations (cf. par. 5.3.4) and a leadership style that works for a certain school leader, may not work for the other (cf. par. 2.2.1).

The following section discusses the participants' response on the practices implemented by those responsible for the development of schools. These are principals, Ministry of Education, school development committee, school management, responsible authority and community leaders, to manage the influence of contextual factors in schools.

5.4.5 Principals' practices to manage school contextual factors

Responses of this category referred to the practices implemented in schools by principals to manage the influence of contextual factors in the district of Marondera in Zimbabwe.

Table 5.15: Practices by school principals to manage school contextual factors

PRACTICES BY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TO MANAGE CONTEXTUAL FACTORS	
Provide resources for quality teaching and learning	8
Involve teachers and learners in running of the school	7
Work in partnership with business organisations for donations	5
Encourage teamwork	5
Supervise teachers for effectiveness	4
Being transparent	2
Have a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis for teachers and help them to grow	1

Use persuasive language when you want to make any change	1
Be visible and running in the forefront doing things and leading by example	1

Most of the responses in this category were related to specific contextual factors which influence school effectiveness (cf. par. 5.4) although these responses referred to practices employed by principals in particular. Provision of resources was the common practice presented by the principals which ensures quality teaching and learning (f=8). Exemplars were: *"We are also trying our best to provide resources within our means, which are in line with the new curriculum,"* (Int 9: 216). *"It is my duty to make sure that resources are in place,"* (Int 8:309). The frequency of responses to the aspect of resources shows the necessity of the provision of resources on education. The emphasis of the responses also indicates the indispensability of resources' provision by principals in school achievement. Involvement of teachers and learners in school decision-making was also raised as an important practice for school effectiveness (f=7): *"Involve each and everybody in the running of the school, so that they take responsibility on whatever actions they will make,"* (Int 5: 288-289). *"Another strategy is teacher-learner involvement. We also involve our learners in decisions, they are represented by prefects,"* (Int 9: 230-231). An important reason given by one principal for involving teachers and learners was that, *"So that we make sure everyone is accountable and responsible for the results and whatever happens at the end of the day,"* (Int 9: 89-90). The involvement of all stakeholders by school principals, especially teachers, learners and parents, was noted in literature, as indispensable in any reforms for schools to be effective (cf. par. 3.5.2). The practice indicates that learners are also highly regarded in administrative decisions, hence, should not be left out. Principals do not exist in isolation and the involvement of subordinates' decisions leads to school success and there will not be any blame-shifting. Instead, there will be joint accountability (cf. par. 2.1.iii). In addition to that practice; *"There is need for continuous dialoguing with teachers and learners for them to have a positive mind,"* (Int 7: 295).

Another famous practice used by principals was to work in partnership with business organizations for donations (f=5): *"We also work in partnership with different business organizations to help us,"* (Int 9: 221). *"You need to run around and ask around through interaction, explaining your situation and being clear about it, has helped us,"* (Int 2: 555-556). These responses relate well with macro contextual factors, particularly, being connected with school alumni and non-governmental organizations to help with educational materials for the

promotion of quality teaching and learning (cf. par. 5.4.5). These responses imply the importance for principals to be in relationships with business fraternity in order to get aid on educational materials. Teamwork was also mentioned as a practice that some principals have adopted for school effectiveness (f-5): *"We have taken teamwork as one big way of managing challenges that may affect us. Where ever we go, we are saying, we need to have a backup of each one of us,"* (Int 2: 551-553). *"The regular consultations and meetings that we normally have with senior teachers and the whole staff, so that we work as a team,"* (Int 4: 415-416). Responses indicate that teamwork brings positive results and quality teaching and learning in response to the influence of contextual factors. Literature also regarded the encouragement of team spirit as one of the qualities of transformational leadership which promote school effectiveness (cf. par. 2.3.1).

Supervision of teachers by principals was also highlighted as an important practice in school achievement (f-4): *"As a principal, one of my duties is to carry out supervision of teachers, with the help of the deputy principal,"* (Int 9: 227-228). Another response also indicated the significance of supervision, even after delegation of the work, for example, *"Then, the other thing if you are a leader, delegate the work and then, later on, supervise,"* (Int 5: 295-296). These responses indicate that a leader needs to spot check, in order to make sure that there is high level of performance by subordinates. Supervision prevents workers from reluctance. The value of supervision by school leaders was raised in literature as an activity that principals are required to undertake (cf. par. 3.3.3 & par. 2.4.4). Along the same line, one participant (Int 8:306-318) brought up an interesting method of supervision that he employs, the use of conferencing supervision. According to the participant, at the end of every school term, subject teachers hold a meeting where they would spell out their subject percentage (%) set targets. If the results were below the set target, the teacher would explain (i) the contributory factors towards the failure and (ii) the action plan and recommendations to improve. The participant went on to say that the teacher would write down the plan and recommendations where both the teacher and the principal would sign. Part of the recommendations included, (i) creation of a social media Whatsapp platform which includes the teacher, learner and parent, where homework would be sent and (ii) asking the school to buy particular textbooks. Also, if the set target was met, the teacher would explain how she/he did it and would also explain the action plan to surpass the set target. As researcher, I was fortunate to be shown some of the information. This supervision practice was effective, in line with the promotion of quality teaching and learning and would be a guideline to developing a strategy for principals to promote school effectiveness.

Other responses regarded transparency as an efficient practice which promotes success (f=2): *“You need to be very transparent; you don’t have to hide anything from everyone,”* (Int8:302). In support of transparency another response recorded submitted the issue of being open with all important information, *“But most importantly, be open with all important information,”* (Int 3: 258). Transparency and openness should be considered as helpful to principals to promote school development. One response confirmed the use of SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis as helpful when discharging duties, for example; *“In other words, when I am working with a teacher, my responsibility is to have a SWOT analysis. Give me your strengths, weaknesses and then from there we train you,”* (Int 6: 114-115). What is implied by SWOT analysis here is a constant development of change. This response implies that, as a leader, the principal should identify the weaknesses and strengths of teachers and staff develop them based on the identified needy areas for performance improvement. Another practice recorded from one response was the use of persuasive language for any development: *“When you feel like making a change, don’t just dictate. You have to explain so that people see the sense of what you will be suggesting. Then after winning those people and speaking with the same voice, you find your things moving,”* (Int 3: 254). The inference of this response is the importance of a principal being able to influence people to be on your side, to do the job willingly and effectively. Leadership, which is hinted at in literature, entails the capacity to persuade others to do things they do not want to do but nonetheless find enjoyable in the end (cf. par. 2.1). Followers need to be respected and talked to politely for them to work efficiently.

The practice of visibility and running in the forefront doing work was regarded as a helpful practice for school success (f=1); *“I believe that when you are leading you are in the fore-front. You are the general. You should be able to strategise, not using one technique but use different methods. I have to be visible, doing things,”* (Int 6: 343-344). This response brings out the characteristic of courage and bravery that school leaders should possess, hence, leading from the forefront. The idea of being a general and leading from the forefront helps to understand a leader who leads by example. The response is also supported by the situational leadership theory where a leader should possess different leadership styles and be able to adjust to an appropriate style to suit the circumstances, taking note that there is no one leadership approach which suits all different situations (cf. par. 2.2.1). Leadership styles (cf. par. 5.3.4) vary and should be employed according to the context.

Some of the practises in this category were brought up by one participant (cf. table 5.14); however, they were included because of their significance for educational leadership and, more

specifically, for this study's goal of promoting high-quality teaching and learning in response to the influence of contextual circumstances. The practises used by the school management team in Zimbabwe's Marondera region to increase school effectiveness are described in the section that follows.

5.4.5.1 Practices implemented by the school management team.

The participants (school principals) listed a number of approaches used by the school management team in their own schools to boost academic performance. The management team in schools comprised the principal, deputy principal, two senior teachers (female and male) and heads of departments (learning areas). The practices are presented in the table 5.16.

Table 5.16: Practices implemented by the school management team

PRACTICES BY THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM	F
Help to instil discipline in the school	6
Supervision of teachers	5
Inviting parents for consultation	4
Creation of school committees which involve learners	4
Taking new learners for orientation	2

In order to foster high-quality teaching and learning, responses in this category described the strategies used by the school administration team to control the influence of contextual elements in the classroom. The responses were related to the practices that were employed by the principals (cf. par. 5.4.5). As indicated by the responses, the help to instil discipline by the management team was a popular practice with school management team (f=6): *“Learners’ discipline also falls under the management team. They help to maintain order in the school,”* (Int 5: 322-223). Another response, still on discipline, gave the measure that is taken when learners misbehave, *“When learners misbehave, we also reprimand them. Zero tolerance to bullying,”* (Int 6: 212-213), an indication that discipline among learners in schools promote school achievement, hence, due to the influence of contextual circumstances, the school management team should

have procedures in place to deal with discipline in order to enhance quality teaching and learning.

In response to the influence of contextual factors, some replies revealed that the school leadership or management team can also assume supervision roles to help promote quality teaching and learning (f=5); *"They are internal supervisors in the school. They look into various departments to see whether they have adequate equipment and making sure the teaching load for each teacher in that department tallies with the expectations of the ministry of education,"* (Int 1: 335-338). Another response on supervision was recorded, for example; *"We also encourage our heads of departments to supervise their subordinates and teachers are informed about the supervision routines,"* (Int 9: 226-228). The level of teacher supervision was indicated in the literature (cf. par. 2.4.4) that, eventually, it should give the teacher with growth opportunities to learn and interact better, to become more effective in the classroom. This was supported by one participant; *"After book inspection, come up with critiques and intervention measures,"* (Int 6: 362). These responses relate to the responses given in section (cf. par. 5.4.5.1). The relevance of these comments highlights the significance of the management team's division of duties in promoting high-quality teaching and learning in response to the influence of contextual circumstances.

The practice by management which also improves school achievement was invitations of parents to school for consultation (f=4); *"senior teachers and HODs would invite parents for consultation days so that they come and see the work of their children,"* (Int 1: 330-332). *"They invite parents for feedback on their kids' academic performance. You know that occasion is very important in developing the child's academic improvement,"* (Int 3: 263-264). These responses show the importance of consultation days in promoting academic achievement. The interaction creates a triangle symbiotic relationship through consultation among teachers, learners and parents. Creation of school committees by school management and involving school learners was a practice which had recorded responses (f=4); *"Another managerial strategy is that we have committees within the school where we involve learners,"* (Int 9: 236-238). One more response on creation of committees which involve learners; *"Also, we have committees that we have allocated in different places to check where improvement is needed. We involve our learners in some of these activities,"* (Int 8: 321-322). What can be deduced from these responses is the importance of learner involvement in all school activities because they are also custodians of school results. Implied in the responses is that committees can allow for an opportunity to convey numerous views and opinions and help to serve learners' needs through

interaction. Another efficient practice brought up by participants and employed by management was orientation for all new learners in the school (f=2); *“We take them through an orientation programme where all school rules are clearly spelt out,”* (Int 6: 235-236). Another response supported that response; *“We also have a very strong type of induction for our ‘A’ Level student when they join the school. We take them out and we have a full day’s induction where we discuss school issues and what is expected,”* (Int 4: 413-415). These responses suggest the invaluable role played by an induction and orientation for new learners in a school to familiarize the learners to an unknown school environment. According to the responses, orientation brings new learners to operate from the same footing with everyone in the school thereby promoting quality teaching and learning in relation to the influence of contextual factors.

This research was important for helping to develop a management strategy for school principals to promote school efficiency with regard to the influence of contextual factors, and responses in this category were significant. The next section describes the practices applied by Marondera District School Development Committees.

5.4.5.2 Practices implemented by school development committees for school effectiveness.

Participants presented responses on practices implemented by school development committees (SDCs) in the district of Marondera in Zimbabwe for school effectiveness. These practices are presented in the next table 5.17.

Table 5.17: Practices implemented by school development committees

PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED BY SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES	F
Infrastructure and projects for school development	8
Incentivizing teachers	7
Encouraging parents to pay school fees	5
Hold regular meetings with administration	4

Some responses showed that school development committees (SDCs) were leading in the development of infrastructure and projects as a practice to promote effectiveness in schools

(f=7). Examples were; *“The school development committee is mostly spearheading most of the projects that we do in the school. It’s on the ground,”* (Int 4: 421). *“Repair of infrastructure and do projects, all those are looked at, by the school development committee,”* (Int 1: 358-359). As indicated by the extent of the responses, it seems the main function of SDCs in schools is to develop school infrastructure, through projects. One participant, in support argued; *“SDC is another arm that is very useful, they meet from time to time, looking at the side of fundraising for the development of the school,”* (Int 7: 315-316). As inferred by these responses, the importance of the projects was to fundraise in order to develop school infrastructure. Provision of school infrastructure helps to improve school effectiveness in response to the effect of contextual factors (cf. par. 5.4.1.1).

Incentivising teachers was another practice applied by the SDCs in Marondera District for principals to promote school efficiency (f=7). Some noted responses were; *“Our SDC is motivating teachers through incentives and it has also worked,”* (Int 9: 243). *“They initiated the paying of \$5 usd to the teacher, for every distinction that a learner gets at ‘O’ level and \$10 usd at ‘A’ level, in the subject taught by the teacher. If all your learners get distinctions, they will pay. So, they are focusing at distinctions, which add on to quality teaching being focused at,”* (Int 8: 335-338). Responses also showed that the incentives for teachers were also received in kind, for example; *“They also help with some groceries for teachers as incentive and that promotes a happy atmosphere in the school,”* (Int 9: 206). These responses suggest that incentivizing teachers in cash or in kind, increases their performance and promotes a happy working environment which promotes quality teaching and learning with regards to the influence of contextual factors. Incentives, according to the responses, actually get the teachers do their job. Therefore, it is crucial that principals of schools take into account the advantages of teacher incentives for academic success in response to the influence of contextual circumstances.

The practice of encouraging parents to pay school fees during parent-teacher conferences was also cited as a key way to enhance the standard of instruction (f=5); *“They encourage other parents to pay fees so that learning materials are available,”* (Int 9: 244-245). *“Mostly, they have to meet parents in meetings and disseminate information about fees. They are the ones who try to make sure that parents agree to certain fees structure. Without them, we won’t have any fees approval by the ministry.”* (Int 5: 326-328). Responses for this practice demonstrated the importance of parents in school decisions, for example, as indicated by their crucial role in the outcome of fees structures. This also indicates the indispensable positive community relationships which principals should create with parents for school success in

relation to the effect of contextual factors (cf. par. 2.4.2 & 5.3.2.3). The practice by SDCs, of holding regular meetings with school administration was also recorded as significant in dealing with the influence of contextual factors for promotion of school effectiveness (f=4). Responses were; *“Right, as I have said earlier on, they meet with administration at least once per month and almost, most of these meetings are trying to promote teaching and learning in the school,”* (Int 1:356-358). *They represent parents and we often meet so that we discuss school issues on development of the school,”* (Int 4: 420-421). The importance of SDC being the link between school administration and parents is being raised in the responses and that the meetings should be held regularly so that parents are kept abreast with what is happening in the school so that contextual factors are accounted for and quality teaching and learning are promoted. For example; *“There duty is to take up what we have shared with them to the parents’ body to show the exactly what we are doing and where we are. So, in other words, they are intermediate people who link us with the parents,”* (Int 6: 374-377). The administration and parents developed trust via open communication and dealing with the effects of contextual circumstances, which enhances the quality of teaching and learning.

The responses about the practices implemented by school development committees of this category were important in dealing with the influence of contextual factors and developing a strategy for school principals in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe in order to promote school achievement. The following section describes the practices applied by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Marondera District.

5.4.5.3 Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education applied practices

Responses in this category presented practices that were being applied by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education with the aim of mitigating the influence of contextual factors and promote school effectiveness in schools in the district of Marondera and they relate to responses given in section (cf. par. 5.4.6). Table 5.18 presents the practices.

Table5.18: Practices implemented by Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED BY MINISTRY OF EDUCATION	F
Provision of national school policies	7
the provision of educational resources	7

Supervision and inspection of schools	5
Hold workshops for teachers and principal	3
Pay school fees for the underprivileged learners	2
Provision of qualified teachers	1

The majority of responses suggested that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education was implementing the practise of providing national school policies to ensure that schools were run in accordance with the same policies in order to account for the impact of contextual factors and for school achievement (f=7). Examples of responses were; *“They set up policies. They want everything followed by the book. You know, without that, everyone would do things their own way,”* (Int 7: 322-324). *“We work in liaison with the ministry. We are guided by the ministry, the government and by policies. So, if you are guided, then you need to work within the limits,”* (Int 9: 142-143). What can be inferred from these responses is the importance of national school policies for schools to operate at the same footing in terms of school operations. Although national policies are of significant value in the running of schools, a mistake which might need rectification was noted about the policy-making, that is, the actual people on the ground, school principals, were being left out (cf. par. 3.3.2). Sometimes they meet challenges on the ground, for example, *“Yes, it’s a government policy which was introduced but sometimes based on political grounds. They don’t know the real effect of that policy,”* (Int 5: 112-113). It is hoped that the officials in the education ministry would consider that problem of implementers’ exclusion in policy-making if schools are to function efficiently to promote school success and take into account how contextual elements affect results.

Provision of teaching and learning material was also identified as a practice being employed by the ministry in promoting quality teaching in the district of Marondera (f=7). *“Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education provides us with some teaching materials, for example, the textbooks for the learners and Maths and English Teachers’ Guides,”* (Int 4: 433-435). *“In fact, the first batch of books which had been donated, we were left out, until I had to go to the provincial office to see the director and surely, we got the books,”* (Int 3: 273-275). It will According to responses, one of the duties of the education ministry, which supports high-quality teaching and learning in response to contextual conditions, is to provide teaching and learning materials to schools. It will also lessen the challenge of a lack of resources faced by principals in

schools (cf. par. 5.4.1.1) and improves school achievement with regards to the impact of contextual factors.

Supervision and inspection of schools was also mentioned as one of the practices by education officials to promote school achievement (f=5): *"We have inspectors who come to inspect the school and do supervisions, both at district and provincial levels, once per year. The few visits are caused by transport challenges due to economic hardships,"* (Int 9:196-198). *"Teams from different levels, the head office, the province and the district, I can give an example of our school. We were visited three times,"* (Int 8: 270-271).

The visits by education officials from higher offices show the importance and benefits of school inspections and supervisions in promoting school effectiveness. Segeovanni and Starrat (2006) contend that in order to support high-quality teaching in terms of the influence of contextual elements, teacher supervision must eventually give the teacher growth opportunities to learn and cooperate better. This suggests that supervisions and inspections in schools must not be misconstrued as witch-hunting, but should be seen as promoting both teacher and school development in order to account for the influence of contextual factors.

The responses also revealed that hosting workshops for school principals and teachers was a strategy used to advance the calibre of instruction in Marondera District schools. Responses included were; *"They organize workshops to train teachers in certain areas, for example, of late they have been calling for the training of CALA (Continuous Assessment Activities),"* (Int 5: 333-334). *"Workshops are held by the government to help the leaders to do their duties and empower them to lead in the environment,"* (Int 2: 263-264). As indicated by the responses, workshops enhance teacher performance through training and also empower school leaders with practical skills for leadership roles. Literature also supports the benefits of workshops to both principals and teachers (cf. par. 3.5) in promoting school effectiveness in relation to the effect of contextual factors.

The Ministry of Education also pays school fees for the underprivileged learners (f=3); *"Yes, they sometimes help some of the less privileged learners by paying their fees. Some of our learners are assisted by BEAM to pay fees,"* (Int 5: 285-287). *"We also have the government coming in to pay fees through the BEAM,"* (Int 2: 248-249). Responses indicate the value of education that government puts on learners through provision of programmes which payment fees for the disadvantaged and orphaned children, for example; *"Government has provided the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM that helps families with difficulties in paying fees,"* (Int 2: 259-260). This move by the government relates well with the Education for All Policy which

most developing countries adopted and it declares that every individual has a right to education (Wolhuter et al., 2016). It is therefore, important for the Ministry of Education to help learners that come from poor backgrounds with school fees in support of quality teaching and learning in response to the influence of contextual factors.

Another practice by the ministry which led to school effectiveness in response to the influence of contextual factors in Marondera District schools was the provision of qualified teachers (f=1); *“Yes, like I said earlier on, provision of qualified teaching staff,”* (Int 7: 321). Though one response regarded provision of qualified teachers as a crucial practice in school achievement, the response was vital in this research which aimed at developing a strategy for school principals to promote quality teaching in schools in the Marondera District. However, other participants noted the ministry's delays in replacing those instructors who may have left their posts for a variety of reasons as a barrier to schools' performance, for example; *“We also have three teachers who transferred last year and these three have not yet been replaced. The learners are going without teachers and they are missing,”* (Int 4: 264-266). According to the comments, it is necessary to promptly hire skilled teachers to fill open teaching positions in order to provide high-quality instruction and learning under the influence of contextual circumstances.

As part of the development of a strategy for the school principals in the district of Marondera to increase effectiveness in their schools, in response to the influence of contextual factors, responses to the practises by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education have a significant impact on this research. Also highlighted were the actions taken by the school responsible authorities.

5.4.5.4 Practices implemented by responsible authorities to promote school effectiveness

Responses from this category highlight the procedures followed by responsible authorities to take into account the influence of contextual factors and provide for academic success. In respect of this research, responsible authority refers to government (public schools), churches (mission schools) and board of trustees or individuals (private schools). Thus, the responses described practices employed by school responsible authorities of schools in the Marondera District to deal with the manifestation of contextual factors to uphold school achievement. The reactions are shown in table 5.19.

Table 5.19: Practices by responsible authorities to promote school effectiveness

PRACTICES BY RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES FOR SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS	F
Development of infrastructure	7
Incentivising teachers and principals for quality teaching	6
Organizing workshops for teachers and principals	4
Instilling Christian values in staff members and learners	3

The majority of the replies in this category were in relation to the practices in categories 5.4.5.2 and 5.4.5.3 for improving school effectiveness. Responses in relation to the practice of developing infrastructure (f=70): *“From responsible authority in terms of infrastructure that you see here, all the buildings, it is the responsible authority,”* (Int 6: 331-332). *“Yaah, recently, they constructed a new house, the new staff house, a modern one and it motivates people,”* (Int 8:336-337). Responses were also recorded about incentivizing teachers and principals by responsible authority (f=6): *“The school management is also given a responsibility allowance as an incentive and that creates a happy atmosphere in the school,”* (Int 9: 212-213). *“From time to time, they would come up with packages when results come out and teachers would get results-based incentives,”* (Int 7: 211-212). Responses on the organization of workshops were (f=4): *“Recently they had a workshop where they invited all deputy principals and senior teachers. So, they play an important role by inviting personnel in their schools in their schools to go and be capacitated in terms of running the schools,”* (Int 8: 274-277). Some responses were also recorded about the practice of instilling Christian values (f=3): *“We have a pastor who moves around and takes the spiritual aspects with prayers,”* (Int 6: 229-230). *“The happy atmosphere that prevails in our institution is centred on Christian values,”* (Int 9: 165-166).

The relevance of the replies in this category in terms of the creation of a plan to control the impact of contextual factors was that the principals' plan should include the practises in order to encourage school effectiveness in the Marondera District. Schools are faced with a myriad of contextual factors which need to be accounted for by school principals, hence the practices by responsible authorities play a significant role in the achievement of schools. Following are practices by community leaders which are important in mitigating the influence of contextual factors to support quality teaching and learning.

5.4.5.5 Practices by community leaders for school effectiveness

Responses of this category comprise practices for school effectiveness by community leaders in the district of Marondera. These comprise political party leaders, counsellors and chief who dwell in the community. For this category, some participants did not give responses while others just said there was nothing being done by the community leaders. The responses that were given on the practices are presented in table 5.20.

Table 5.20: Practices by community leaders to promote school effectiveness

PRACTICES BY COMMUNITY LEADERS FOR SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS	F
Encourage parents to pay fees	3
Protection of school business from disturbances by political parties	1

Some responses of this category indicated the encouragement given by village chiefs to parents, for them to pay their children's school fees (f=3) and responses on this practice were mostly given by participants from schools in peri-urban areas which are surrounded by villages. For the purpose of this research, Drescher and Laquinta (2000) definition of peri-urban as, rural places with urban consciousness, was adopted. Examples of responses were: *"We are linked to the chiefs, if we have any challenges with non-payment of fees, we engage the chiefs and it really works,"* (Int 2: 638-640). *"Mostly, village heads, they are the people on the ground and they have people at their disposal. When we want to talk about fees, buying of uniforms and textbooks, they deal with the people,"* (Int 8: 355-358). The practice of protecting school business from disturbances by political parties was also raised (f=1): *"They don't want anybody who interferes with school business. If we have any problems with certain groups of youths, we report and they with them and this promote a conducive teaching and learning environment,"* (Int 5: 348-350). Literature has also cited the importance of chiefs in influencing the success of schools (cf. par. 3.3.7). It is thus important for all school stakeholders to embrace the existence of community leaders for the advantage of school achievement in response to the impact of school contextual factors.

Though the responses were few (f=4) for this category, it was important to record the responses for the benefit of a management plan for school principals to account for contextual factors in schools and to promote school efficiency. The implication of these practices by

community leaders is that their inclusion in school activities is fundamental in responding to the influence of contextual factors and the success of schools, especially the peaceful environments that they help to create. The practices bring in the importance for school principals to create positive relationships with communities (cf. par. 5.3.2.2). The following section includes personal opinions by participants on how to handle contextual factors in schools in the district of Marondera in Zimbabwe in promoting quality teaching and learning.

5.4.6 Participants' recommendations about handling contextual factors

Responses from this category indicate the views by participants on how contextual factors can be managed in their schools to support school effectiveness in response to the influence contextual factors. These responses relate well with responses given previously in some sections that help to deal with the influence of contextual factors in order to promote quality teaching and learning (cf. par. 5.4.5.1 & 5.4.5.3). The contextual factors are represented below in table 5.21.

Table 5.21: Participants' recommendations on handling contextual factors in schools

PARTICIPANTS VIEWS ABOUT HANDLING CONTEXTUAL FACTORS	
Provision of e-learning facilities in school by education ministry	8
Remuneration for teachers to be taken seriously	6
Need for timeous placement of qualified teachers	6
Schools to be conscious about teacher/learner ratio	4
Responsible authorities to bond teachers by giving them house stands	1

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should prioritise setting up e-learning facilities in schools to raise the standard of instruction there, according to the majority of replies in this category (f=8); *"Ministry should provide e-learning facilities because the era that we are living in now, requires that we are connected to internet, otherwise things will not move smoothly,"* (Int 4: 450-452). *"Yaah, yes of course, it's still a long way to go because we still need to improve the infrastructure to suit the modern ways. The communication system needs to have optic fibre which is not affected by congestion,"* (Int 8: 361-364). These comments suggest that

the use of ICT for e-learning in schools today is unavoidable and a mitigating factor that enhances information and knowledge sharing among the teachers and supports high-quality teaching and learning in response to contextual influences. ICT also makes it possible for lessons to be participatory, which raises student motivation and increases school effectiveness in reaction to environmental influences. In order to deal with the impact of contextual elements for the promotion of high-quality teaching and learning, it has been stated that even schools that already use ICT for e-learning still need to develop and upgrade it.

Remuneration of teachers was also indicated by participants as having influence on school achievement (f=6). *"I feel our Ministry of Education and the employer, Public Service Commission, and whoever the stakeholders are, should take seriously the issue of teachers' remuneration. That is the key that would open everything that has to do with correct school management. I have no doubt that teachers would be able to discharge their duties as well,"* (Int 7:351-354). *"Improving working conditions of teachers;"* (Int 5: 341). The assumption of these responses shows that teachers and management are motivated by remuneration in order to perform better at work. This is also supported by literature which argues that workers find job-satisfaction through rewards (cf. par. 2.2.3.1).

Responses also regarded timeous replacement of vacant teacher posts as having an impact on school effectiveness (f=6): *"Maybe the most important thing that I would want the ministry to assist with is to ensure that they replace teachers on time so that we don't go without teachers,"* (Int 4: 448-449). *"Sometimes you lose a very good and experienced teacher, or devoted teacher and they are failing to replace those teachers. Let's take an example Physics 'A' level, we just have one teacher for the large numbers here,"* (Int 5: 246-248). These replies highlight the necessity for the Ministry of Education to quickly fill open teaching positions in order to prevent learners from losing their lessons for extended periods of time and to support high-quality teaching and learning in response to the influence of contextual factors. The answers also suggest that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education needs to decentralise teacher hiring to schools for quick replacements in order to address the contextual issue of late teacher hiring and to support high-quality teaching and learning. In order to improve quality teaching and learning in response to the impact of contextual circumstances, it may be possible to share responsibilities with school principals as leaders on the ground to prevent lengthy wait times by schools before teacher replacements are completed.

Participants also regarded a high teacher-learner ratio as a contextual factor that influences the quality of school performance (f=4). Schools should therefore have manageable

teacher-learner ratios to deal with the influence of contextual factors and promote quality teaching in classes. Examples were; *“Also the recruitment of learners, if we could have a ratio of 1:20 teacher-pupil ratio, teachers will have ample time to work on remedial area,”* (Int 8: 367-368). *“Teacher-pupil ratio has affected school effectiveness negatively. At a private school a teacher has a class of twenty students, unlike here, sixty students,”* (Int 5: 229-230). The responses indicate that teachers cannot give individual attention to those learners lagging behind due to big classes hence, a suggestion to have a teacher-learner ratio of 1:20 in order to promote quality teaching in response to the influence of contextual factors. Additionally, it is claimed in the literature that teachers working in rural schools are required to attend classes that often have sixty learners enrolled rather than forty (see par. 3.3). From the comments, it may be inferred that private schools do better because they maintain a teacher-to-learner ratio of 1:20. Thus, in order to respond to the impact of contextual circumstances, schools are advised to have manageable class teacher-learner ratios that enable great teaching and learning. The concern about remediation was also brought up in the literature as a potential intervention strategy to counteract the influence of contextual factors so as to advance effective teaching and learning.

Also, one response suggested that responsible authorities can give teachers house stands as teacher incentive and motivation where the teachers are bonded for ten years (f=1; *“If the responsible authorities bond the teachers by giving them house stands to build their houses and they pay over ten years. This reduces high turnover because teachers need to finish paying before they go, in those ten years, people will deliver,”* (Int 6: 392-394). According to Anderson (2011), who contends that higher turnover was linked to lower learner performance (cf. par. 3.5.1), the response demonstrated the need of having teachers at a station for a long length of time in order to achieve beneficial effects. Therefore, motivation and incentivizing of teachers by school authorities as suggested by the participants’ response is a contextual factor in the school which supports quality teaching and learning in reaction to the impact of contextual factors. This one reaction was crucial in helping school administrators build a management strategy in response to the influence of contextual circumstances.

At the end of the interview, participants were thanked for accepting to be part of the research. In reciprocation, the participants also expressed their appreciation for being chosen to be part of the research will contribute towards the success of school. Some responses were: *“I want to thank you for affording me the opportunity to contribute to your research. I have learnt a lot and I hope the research will improve our efficiency as schools,”* (Int 1: 393-395). *“Not a question as such but to wish you well in your agenda to get this doctorate. It will mean a lot to*

our institution and nation as Zimbabwe and hopefully these responses are going to be read,” (Int 7:358-360). *“I hope my contribution makes sense and will mean something towards changing our education,”* (Int 5: 361-362). The purpose of this research was to develop a strategy for school leaders in the Marondera District to promote school effectiveness in response to the influence of contextual factors. These responses were significant to this research because they accurately reflected a gap regarding contextual factors in schools in the district of Marondera in Zimbabwe.

5.4.7 Interview analysis in conclusion

The analysis of the semi-structured interviews' qualitative data produced findings that were related to the topics from the literature review and the theoretical framework for the management of contextual elements for school performance (cf. par. 2.1). The responses that were given by participants were in line with the questions from the interview schedule (cf. Appendix 1). The use of the semi-structured interviews was appropriate for this qualitative research because as anticipated because supplementary data from the participants were documented.

Responses from participants showed that they understood the notion of leadership, as was expected given the role of leadership (cf. par. 5.3.2), giving a clear distinction with the concept of management. The comments related to the literature review (see paragraph 2.1), which supported a plain comprehension of the concept (leadership) as a starting point for the management of contextual factors for school effectiveness. This information was important because it helped to direct participants towards the intended context of a school. The goal of this study was to provide a plan for administrators of schools to handle contextual elements; as a result, need for an understanding of the concept leadership in general by the participants was unavoidable. The responses were contributory towards a specific action plan to manage school contextual factors.

There was a clear demonstration of an understanding of leadership in a school setup by the responses and as noted, some of the responses were related to those of leadership in general (cf. par. 5.3.1 & par. 5.2.2). According to the research, school leaders should be involved in curricular and instructional matters whose concerns have an immediate impact on a school's effectiveness, for example, setting of a clear school vision, creating positive school community relationships and professional development.

A Link between leadership and school effectiveness was confirmed by most participants (cf. par. 5.3.3). The responses indicated that the effectiveness of leadership in a school influenced the standard of instruction. Ensuring achievement of school vision, resource allocation, staff development and teaching and learning, were indicated as some of the factors which created the bond between school leadership and school effectiveness. The comments indicate that all actions taken both inside and outside the school's boundaries were the outcome of the school leadership's relationship with academic success. However, the issue of rigidity of school vision in private schools was raised. Data from interviews indicated that in some private schools, school vision was laid down by the responsible authority and the principals just followed as it was given to them (cf. par. 5.3.3.1). Contrarily, literature encourages the participation of the school leadership team to foster a sense of ownership and to prevent varying interpretations of the school's vision (cf. par. 2.4.1). The guidelines for the management of contextual elements that were established by this qualitative study benefited greatly from these findings.

Identification of different leadership styles was important in showing that school principals were not restricted to one leadership style but that an array of styles was at their disposal of school leaders. Important to note were responses given by participants, Situational, Transformational, Democratic, Autocratic, Laissez-faire and Instructional leadership styles (cf. par. 5.3.4). This list of leadership styles authenticated what was raised in literature review, Situational leadership theory to be specific, that there is no one leadership approach which suits all different situations but that leaders undertake a situation depending on the context (cf. par. 2.2.1). Although many leadership styles were brought up and related to education, Instructional leadership style was conspicuous due to its unambiguous relationship with school principals and teaching and learning (cf. par. 5.3.4.5 & par. 2.4). Most importantly, this research strongly relied on a theoretical foundation for education leadership by The Wallace Foundation Report (cf. literature review. par. 2.1) which was significant in the management plan to deal with school contextual factors. An additional leadership style came up in the responses, Pragmatic leadership style which called for school leaders to be hands-on. This style indicated that school leaders needed to be more practical where they lead by doing and showing teachers how things should be done. The pragmatic leadership style relates well to the transformational leadership style (cf. par. 2.3.1). The identified leadership styles were invaluable to the management strategy for school principals to promote school effectiveness.

Different micro, meso and macro contextual factors which had a bearing on school effectiveness were indicated to promote school success. It was important to note that, what was

regarded as culture appropriation and negative; in one of the responses (cf. par. 5.4.1.4) it was actually regarded positively in literature as social integration which promoted school effectiveness in response to the impact of the surrounding circumstances. Thus, culture appropriation viewed with social integration lenses (cf. par. 5.4.1.4 and par. 3.4) was a factor which added to the guidelines for a management plan to deal with school contextual factors. Religious values as a micro contextual factor were synonymous in private and mission schools only (cf. par. 5.4.1.5). Interview responses indicated that religious values promoted happy and peaceful school environments and these contributed to school effectiveness in reaction to the impact of contextual factors especially in private and mission schools. This information from the interviews was significant for a particular management strategy for contextual factors in this research. School status was also indicated as a contextual factor which promoted school effectiveness in private and mission schools because their fees are higher than those in public schools, thus having a better financial position (cf. par. 5.4.1.7). A confirmation of this data was stated in the literature evaluation (cf. par. 3.5.4) where type of school was said to have some influence on student achievement. The observation made during the collection of data in the schools, also indicated (cf. par. 5.2.5) the better conditions lived by private as well as mission schools as compared to public schools. As a result of the influence of contextual factors, some various teaching methodologies for instructors were demonstrated to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Gallery walk presentations and panel discussions were highlighted in the interview data as examples of teaching methods for teachers that promoted school achievement in relation to the effect of contextual factors (Int 6: 204) and they were important as part of the guiding principles for a management strategy for principals. According to Int 6: 209-212, learners create pictures, documents or texts which they present to their colleagues to view, sharing their experiences and asking each other questions on the pictures. This helps learners to be involved and participate enthusiastically in lessons. As a result, gallery walks are a teaching strategy that administrators can support to encourage high-quality teaching and learning in classrooms in response to the influence of contextual circumstances.

The provision of paramount practices (cf. par. 5.4.5; 5.4.5.1; 5.4.5.2; 5.4.5.3; 5.4.5.4 & 5.4.5.5) and recommendations on managing contextual factors in schools (cf. par. 5.4.6) was helpful in developing and implementing a management strategy for school principals to promote school success. In order to effectively cope with the influence of contextual factors, a number of practice examples and all-encompassing recommendations were registered for consideration and incorporation into a specific school plan of action. The recognition of wide practices and

recommendations was an imperative noteworthy input to the guiding principle for the administration of contextual factors as determined in this research.

An aspect that was frequently mentioned in responses from the semi-structured interviews was the late replacement of qualified instructors in accordance with the management of school contextual elements. It was apparent that this characteristic was present in the categories of the generally recognised contextual variables (cf. par. 5.4.4) and suggestions for handling contextual factors (cf. par. 5.4.6). In the Marondera District, schools felt it was a setback when the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education took a long time to replace transferred teachers and those who would have quitted. A fresh and deeper understanding of school contextual factors was supplied in this research by the information that identified the general contextual factors (cf. par. 5.4.4) to control school effectiveness.

In conclusion, some of the data from the literature review section were established by the qualitative information acquired through semi-structured interviews, and more information was made possible. The qualitative information also gave more in-depth explanations of related concepts and a more thorough picture of how contextual factors were managed in the study population of schools in the Marondera District. The following section describes the development of a strategy for implementation by school leaders in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe.

5.5 A strategy for school leaders to promote school effectiveness

This section of the research, in line with research aim (iv) of the research describes the data that were gathered in the previous chapters about developing a strategy for school leaders (principals) to promote school effectiveness.

5.5.1 Introduction

Contextual factors have been existent in educational institutions, schools in particular, since immemorial and their existence has always influenced the achievement of school effectiveness. As a result, school leaders should take into account the difficulties presented by contextual elements in their institutions because these factors have a big impact on how they lead and, ultimately, how well their students do (Wolhuter et al., 2016). In view of this, school leaders need to construct a roadmap of how they can manage the contextual factors in their schools for the promotion of school success. The distinctive emergence of contextual factors in

schools calls for the development and execution of a particular context-based strategy that will deal with contextual factors and see a reform in school effectiveness.

Schools in the district of Marondera in Zimbabwe were not spared either, from the influence of contextual factors. In light of this environment; I concluded that it was essential to create a specific approach for school principals in order to manage the contextual forces at play in schools that affected their success. It is essential to note that the 'lens' for the management strategy was based on the five foundation school leadership practices as identified and described by The Wallace Foundation (2013) as well as Waite and Bogotch (2017) which are central for effective school leadership. The foundation leadership practices as indicated (cf. par. 1.2.1; 1.2.2; 1.2.3; 1.2.4; 1.2.5) and chapter two (cf. par. 2.4) are: i) formulating a vision /an inspiring dream, ii) creating an environment or a path that is favourable to education, iii) training others to be leaders by collaboration, iv) enhancing instruction by teamwork and v) directing people, information, and procedures for long-term development.

It is therefore, anticipated that, the management strategy will help school principals and education officers from both the district and provincial departments who have an interest in the effectiveness of schools in the district of Marondera. Thus, this section discusses the creation, application, and assessment of a viable approach to control the influence of contextual elements in order to enhance high-quality teaching and learning in Marondera, in accordance with part (iv) of the research aims.

5.5.2 Procedure for strategy development

The following guideline questions were accepted as a process for the creation of a strategy to manage contextual aspects in regard to research aim four in chapter one (cf. par. 4.3.2):

- What explanation can be drawn up for the concept of strategy?
- What constitutes a strategy development process?
- What management strategy for contextual factors can be devised?

5.5.2.1 Strategy clarification

As explained in chapter one (cf. par. 2.3), the word strategy stems from the Greek *strategos*, which is a compilation of two concepts, *stratos* (army) and *agein* (ancient Greek for

leading). In this sense, *strategos*, indicates the setting of a plan for action (strategy as a key responsibility of a commander or leader. This interpretation is still part of modern language meaning (Rue & Byars, 2005; Dictionary.com, 2018), while the prominent element of leadership is noticeable in the origin of the concept. It is crucial to know that strategy and strategic planning do not have the same. Strategy can be thought of as (Davies, 2003):

- provide a methodical plan of action to address problems or trends
- Address the medium- to long-term operational view as opposed to the short-term perspective.
- Come about as a result of strategic thinking and
- Strategy is used as a benchmark to evaluate how issues and trends are being handled at the moment.

Given the foregoing context, a strategy denotes a course of action that is performed in order to accomplish specific goals. What can also be understood is that a strategy is suggested by those in positions of authority as a carefully considered procedure made up of phases and a defined sequence of actions to handle a particular concern or development. A strategy is sometimes thought of as a medium- to long-term intervention plan with a particular goal of achieving predetermined outcomes in a coordinated manner. It is feasible to define strategy after summarising these differing points of view (Davies, 2003; Bateman & Snell, 2004; Hannagan, 2005; Rue & Byars, 2005). As a process with a pattern of actions over the medium to long-term to attain specified objectives in an organised and coordinated manner, strategy refers to a deliberate and thoroughly designed plan by leaders.

Due to specific effects and processes that occur in all organisations, leaders must participate in strategy procedures (Linstead et al., 2004). On that account, an adoption of a particular strategy for this research was done. A strategy which was in line with the formulated definition was developed for school leaders to account for the influence of contextual factors in schools in accordance with the mentioned theoretical framework from The Wallace Foundation (2013) and Waite and Bogotch (2017) in chapter one (cf. par. 2.1) and literature review chapter two (cf. par. 2.4). The following part describes the process of a strategy.

5.5.3 The process of a strategy

A strategy demonstrates specific activities by those in management and leadership positions who propose the plan, as already stated in the definition (cf. par. 5.5.2.1). The process

comprises a contextual factors policy and different phases of a strategy. The following section indicates the people who can be involved in the development of a contextual factors management strategy.

5.5.3.1 People involved in developing a strategy

According to this research, the individuals who should be seen starting the processes of strategies are the members of the school management team, which comprises the head of school, senior teachers, department heads (cf. par. 3.3.3.1 & par. 5.4.5.1), and SDCs. Ministry of Education officials are also being roped in for guidance and the approval of the strategy. Principals must comprehend the significance of involving the management team in a successful strategy. Asking the relevant parties, reading relevant documents, and keeping an eye on what will be happening in the school should be used to assess the modifications that need to be made (cf. par. 2.4.1). The collaboration of the concerned parties (cf. par. 2.4.1) helps them to identify information in the data that they can use to generate a list of shared principles. Literature also indicated that if school leadership teams are drawn in, it prevents different interpretation thereby escalating dedication and the possibility that the school's vision may come true (PPLC, 2014). As indicated by the empirical data from the interviews, schools in Marondera District are affected by various contextual factors (cf. par. 5.4.4), which thus become a litmus test to the strength of the school leaders and other people in leadership positions. The surrounding circumstances offered school principals a chance to advance, challenge themselves to get better along the way, and prove that they are capable of completing tasks that may initially appear challenging or even impossible (cf. par. 3.2.2). Hence, the motivation for this research was to develop a management strategy that would help the principals to promote school effectiveness in line with the influence of the contextual factors in their schools (cf. research aim four). Therefore, a strategy has to confirm the involved, committed and dedicated people who implement the various strategy phases which have to be accomplished within a precise time frame.

5.5.3.2 A contextual factors policy

A report by Granite School District (2020) indicate that policies put into effect rules and regulations and there are firm procedures for schools on how operations are transmitted down to every small detail so that educators staff and learners recognize what is expected and can act in view of that (Van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012) (cf. par. 3.3). A policy for contextual aspects is

therefore necessary for clarity of what is specifically intended and anticipated from a strategy for the management of contextual factors. Policies have an important role to play as directives or directions for the day-to-day operations of schools (cf. par. 3.3). A statement of goal, justification, and details of those engaged are included in a policy for context-related factors, along with information about how the approach advances the mission and values of the institution. Organisational policies must follow applicable laws and corresponding governmental directives (Rue & Byers, 2005). Hannagan (2005) stated that the legal and policy directives provide the policy limits for all of a strategy's stages, objectives, and action steps (cf. par. 3.3).

5.5.3.3 Phases of a strategy

Strategy development, strategy execution, and strategy evaluation are the three stages that make up an organised process for a strategy. These strategy process phases are also described as sub-processes which deal with a recognized specific need using a designed strategy (Boone, 1985). Particular characteristics are also assigned to these identified phases (sub processes) and they can be described by phase descriptors. Each of the three phases also comprises connected objectives and action steps that mean the participation of particular interested people and the predetermined time frames.

5.5.3.4 Strategy development

Strategies development, is one of the central purposes of management, followed by implementation of strategies, indicating the most dependable and firm management (Thompson & Strickland, 1992). A documented strategy establishes a clear trajectory to take, a roadmap to victory and an organised management plan which helps to reach the projected objectives. A well-managed organisation is judged by its standards, which include developing a strategy that is in line with putting it into practice successfully and conducting evaluations (Thompson & Strickland, 1992). Boone (1985) asserts that strategy formulation provides an explanation and a direction for decisions regarding the allocation of resources and the handling of particular situations. Consequently, implementing a plan aids in boosting organisational performance (Andrews et al., 2009).

Following the adoption of a strategy, situation and need-specific objectives must be created. These must be precise declarations of intent that indicate the main goals or outcomes of the strategy. These strategy objectives require to be SMART, meaning that, they ought to be

specific and clearly articulated, they need to be measurable and agreed upon, they have to be realistic and practical, then most importantly, they have to show clear time frames, that is, showing deadlines. Therefore, strategic objectives specify the result that must be pursued with perseverance, initiative, leadership, and commitment (Bateman & Snell, 2004; Hannagan, 2005). Considering the above, objectives of a strategy help schools align with educational goals and improve decision-making and effectiveness. In order to ensure a unique and valuable strategy that is suited for the situation-specific circumstances of the organisation, it is crucial to include the individuals who will actually implement the plan (Linstead et al., 2004). As guidelines to the development of a strategy, the following attributes from (Meyer & De Wit, 2004; Morden, 2004) are relevant:

- Analysing the circumstances and situation of the organisation
- The selection of goals as anticipated results of the plan
- Creating an action plan that outlines the realistic application of a strategy with precise deadlines
- Making sure that there are mechanisms, organisations, and resources to help people "champion" the approach
- The participation of important stakeholders in the implementation of a strategy
- Developing skills and knowledge to increase capacity for strategy implementation
- Establish performance measures to keep checks on the strategy's execution

Using the qualities of a good approach listed above, it can be said that the usage of a strategy by an organization determines how its resources are distributed and getting the highest impact from its people to accomplish its objectives. According to Thompson and Strickland (1992), strategy creation serves as a roadmap for how an organisation will carry out a certain action plan and how the organisation will accomplish its desired goals. The following section focuses on strategy implementation phase.

5.5.3.5 Strategy implementation

When a strategy has been developed, the next stage will be its implementation. Implementation of a strategy ensures that what was stated in the strategy objectives is put into practice. This is also where the motionless strategy is put into a livelihood process. The process of implementation in itself, is an opportunity to engage stake holders, which can benefit them and the education system overall (Viennet & Pond, 2017) (cf. par. 3.3.2).

The following skills were identified as having a role in successfully implementing a strategy (Davies, 2003; Lucke, 2004; Rue & Byars, 2005):

- **Insight:** the capacity to comprehend associated circumstances that have an effect on the organisation.
- **Concentration:** the capacity to pursue a certain course of action and see the execution phase through.
- **Alignment:** The capacity to bring people and an organisation into line with a strategy. Establishing a chain of command and ensuring that everyone in the organisation is committed to putting the strategy into practice.
- **Evaluation:** of the efficacy of the present organisational structures, policies, and procedures in order to make any necessary adjustments.
- **Execution:** The capacity to quickly and successfully carry out a strategy's various phases.
- **Modelling:** Management must set an example for employees to follow and show dedication to the strategy procedure.

Morden (2004) contends that in addition to the skills listed above, a strategy's success also depends on the management's skill and effectiveness, the capacity of all role participants, and the amount of staff commitment to the advancement of the strategy. Nevertheless, Sioncke and Parmentier (2007) view the successful implementation of a strategy as a bigger management challenge than the strategy itself. The next segment describes the evaluation phase of a strategy.

5.5.3.6 Strategy evaluation

The strategy evaluation process enables the analysis and assessment of the strategy to find out whether it has been well implemented and completely executed. Wright (2022) defines strategy assessment as an internal analytical tool that is utilised as an element of a larger, carefully planned analysis for the organisation when making decisions about the strategy. A strategy's provision of a concrete set of reference points makes it possible for an evaluation phase to track the improvement of strategy implementation (Linstead et al., 2004; Rue & Byars, 2005). Since the steps of the process involved in developing and implementing the strategy are not passive, they must be examined and assessed repeatedly. Boon (1985) defined a strategy

evaluation phase as the process of making decisions based on generally accepted principles and empirical evidence.

Along with other items (Bateman & Snell, 2004; Hannagan, 2005), the next section of a strategy's evaluation phase includes the:

- keeping track of outcomes
- contrasting the standards
- assessing the effectiveness of the procedure
- adjusting for variations; and
- modifying the procedure when required

Boone (1985) provides additional examples of the objectives of a strategy's evaluation phase, which are to determine:

- the accomplishment of the desired outcomes
- the underlying connections between the inputs and outputs of a strategy
- Relationship between the organisational environment and the accomplishment of the strategy objectives

Taking into account the above description, strategy assessment gives an opportunity to change the action course depending on the particular needs and requirements that will allow effectiveness of the organization. Strategy implementation as claimed by Rue and Byars (2005) should be part of a constant repetitive process of strategy evaluation. It is essential to justify the creation of a management strategy for school leaders in the Zimbabwean district of Marondera in relation to the study purpose (cf. par. 1.4.3). This is done after having defined the concept of strategy and outlining the strategy process.

5.6 A contextual factors management strategy

As a well-thought and organized action plan, a contextual factors management strategy for a school should indicate justification for its development. Commitment and dedication to the contextual factors management strategy and clarity about the strategy must be sought. Other requirements for this type of strategy are the responsibilities and roles of the involved people and the specific period (time frames) in respect to the action plan. As instructions for carrying out an action plan for the management of contextual factors, all the aforementioned components of a

management strategy need to be included wholeheartedly in a comprehensive strategy document.

5.6.1 Rationale for a contextual factors management strategy development

It is critical to note that this research justified the establishment of a strategy to control school contextual elements, and there were a number of aspects that made this possible. First of all; it has to do with the importance that academic relevance is receiving and the demand for accountability in schools (cf. par. 2.4). Additionally, the Policy on the South African Standard for Principals (Government Gazette, 2016) expresses unequivocally that school leaders should work to achieve the highest level of achievement in their respective schools for the benefit of the neighbourhood and the nation as a whole (cf. par. 3). The South African Government Gazette (2016) quotes this policy as saying that the professionalism and effectiveness of the leadership will determine how well schools can provide support and carry out transformation and progress. On the other hand, Cunningham and Cordeiro (2009), further emphasise the liability of school leaders for their quick responses, proactive action and alignment of diverse practices to account for the effect of contextual factors on school success as well as achievement. In addition, The Zimbabwe Education Act Chapter (25:04) (cf. par. 3.3), which is clear about compulsory education to everyone and payment of minimum school fees requires school leaders to be aware of manifestation of contextual factors.

Therefore, the aforementioned statements from the Zimbabwe Education Act, the Policy on the South African Standard for Principals, and Cunningham and Cordeiro (2009) that are connected to this research serve as a good justification for the emphasis of this study and are indicative of the need for such research. The defined three phases of a strategy (cf. par.5.5.3.3) and the well-defined pattern of actions which will accompany the strategy, made it appropriate to develop a strategy to address the contextual factors in Marondera District. The presence of school contextual factors noted through the explanation about the situation that surrounded the dilemma on school performance in schools in the district of Marondera (cf. chapter 1. par.1) and the specific contextual factors in schools, indicated by the participants' responses in the semi-structured interviews (cf. par. 5.4.4) are also a good basis to develop a strategy for school leaders.

The justification for the importance of a contextual factors management strategy was further inspired by the 2019 Marondera District Secondary Schools Results Analysis which was shown to me which indicated some schools with zero percent school pass rate, also (cf. chapter

1. par.1). Without school leaders being aware of and ready to respond to contextual problems within and outside the classroom and school fence that could have a significant impact on the general performance of schools, it may be impossible to maximise school effectiveness (Clarke, 2009). In addition, these context-related factors offer school administrators a chance to challenge themselves, grow as a result, and prove to themselves that they are capable of completing tasks that may initially appear difficult or even unattainable (Rabinowitz, 2016). Hence, it was far-sighted to develop a strategy to manage contextual factors for those school leaders who inspired to get to the top.

A strategy, as a well-thought and organized plan, should be devised by those people in management and leadership posts (cf. par. 2.3) because they are the ones on the ground and they are also the implementers. Bottom-up theorists that prioritise the inclusion of the target groups and service providers because policies are developed at the local level (cf. par. 3.3.2) have also backed this up in the literature. Hence, this research also emphasizes on the inclusion of those people in leadership roles in schools because they are the ones on the ground and they have assigned duties with clearly laid-out objectives to guide their organizations towards effectiveness (cf. par. 5.5.3.1). A description for a contextual factors strategy framework follows in the next section.

5.6.2 Strategy framework

The contextual factors strategy framework was intended to make available a structured design that clearly summarised the expected goals and the process for the attainment of the anticipated results within an organization (school). A contextual factors management strategy was aided by the development; implementation, and evaluation strategy stages, as well as the phase descriptors, associated phase objectives, and particular action items (cf. pars. 5.5.3.3 & 5.5.3.4). The Wallace Foundation's Report (2013), which encompasses five core leadership practices was adopted to serve as a foundation to develop a contextual factors management strategy. The phases of the theoretical framework of a strategy were partially established by the empirical data from some sections of this qualitative research, and the initial framework for the management of contextual factors also benefited from new insights and realistic guiding principles (cf. par. 5.6.2 and 5.6.3).

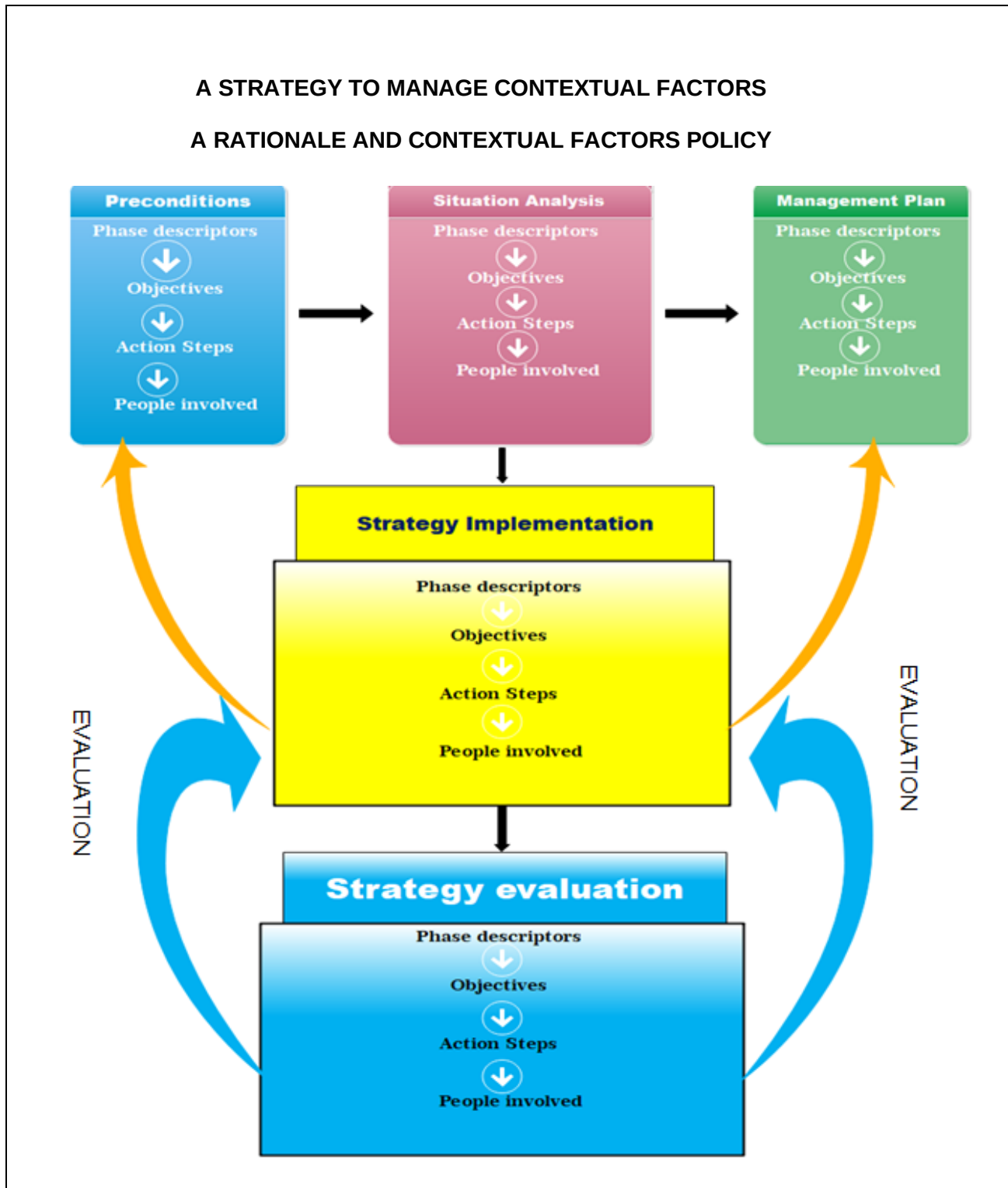
Thus, a strategy to manage school contextual factors was developed according to research aim (iv) and based on the following:

- phases of development, implementation, and assessment, in accordance with related objectives, actions, and the parties involved, as a framework for a strategy to handle contextual issues affecting schools
- the theoretical framework's categories that were determined from the literature investigation (cf. par. 1.2), and
- the numerous qualitative data categories (cf. par. 5.4.1; 5.4.2 & 5.4.3)

As already indicated, (cf. par. 5.5.3.1) the people in leadership positions and with responsibilities that need accomplishment within stipulated time frames are the ones who should be seen in the forefront of a management strategy development because they are the ones on the ground. A well-thought management strategy involves a process of phases which are followed by particular action steps connected to clearly stated objectives. Being that case, it should be noted that schools are unique entities which operate at different levels and experience the influence of contextual factors differently, thus a strategy to manage contextual factors should be developed according to the requirements of a school (cf. par. 3.4.2 & 3.2.2). An approach suitable for one leader may not be appropriate for another (cf. par. 3.4.4).

Therefore, a strategy development framework to manage school contextual factors is shown in figure 5.2 on the next page. The framework includes an explanation of the three distinct **strategy phases**, **strategy objectives**, the **strategy action steps** as well as the **involved persons** as part of strategy development (preconditions and management plan), strategy implementation and finally strategy evaluation as shown in figure 5.2 overleaf.

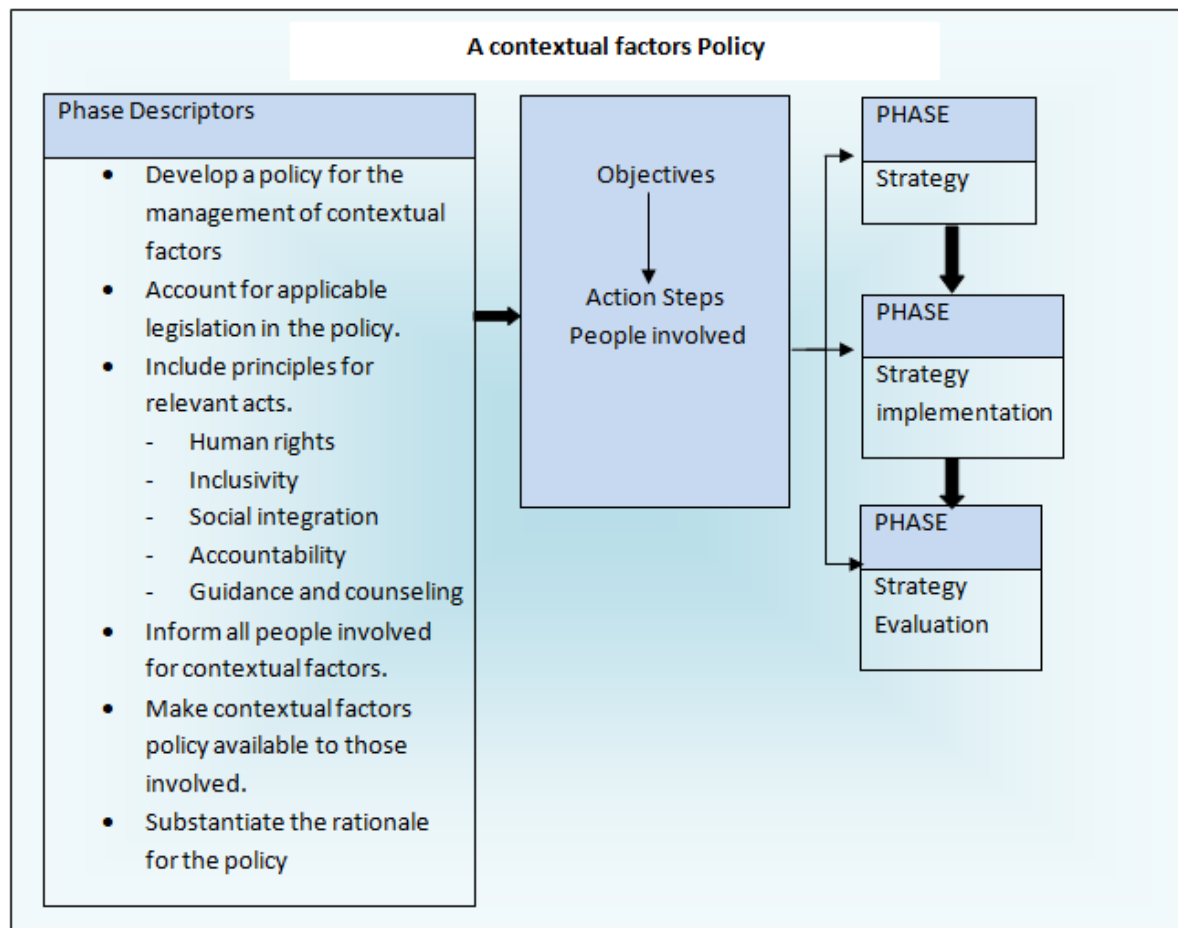
Figure 5.2: A Strategy Development Framework



5.6.3 A contextual factors policy

Figure 5.3 shows a contextual factors policy as a fundamental part of a strategy for the management of contextual factors.

Figure 5.3. A contextual factors policy



The three phases of a strategy to manage contextual variables are guided by a policy for contextual factors (cf. sections 3.3 and 5.5.3.2). As authoritative directives that set the boundaries for a strategy's phases and action steps (cf. par. 5.5.3.3), legislation that is relevant and applicable must be taken into consideration during the formulation and implementation of a strategy. Basic legislation related to the management of contextual factors was mentioned in the literature review which incorporates the Constitution of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Education Act, the Public Finance Management Act and the Statutory Instrument 1 of 200 (cf. par. 3.3).

Fundamental human rights, social justice, inclusivity, acceptance of diversity, control and management of resources, transparency and accountability, are values that are supported by the above acts and instrument (cf. par. 3.3). A policy for contextual factors is not one part of a particular strategy but includes the whole strategy as shown in figure 5.2. The phases are related to appropriate legislation which gives way for the setting of objectives. The people involved in developing a contextual factors management strategy need to make sure that the phases relate to the appropriate legislation and they have to be well-informed about the particular statutes in order for the strategy to be a success.

The relevant legal framework serves as the basis for the creation of a contextual factors policy in schools (see par. 3.3 and 5.5.3.2). Thus, the significant acts, instruments, circulars and documents need to be accessible to the management team and guidance needs to be sought from educational authorities (cf. par. 3.3.3 & 5.5.3.1). A policy for contextual factors management in schools can be developed by people involved as a separate and accepted official clear school document policy or can be part of an already functional school policy document (cf. par. 3.3 & 5.5.3.2).

The subsequent section indicates objectives and action steps collated, with reference to a contextual factors policy (cf. par. 3.3.3, 3.3.3.1 & 5.5.3.2).

Objectives

- To define the boundaries for the contextual factors strategy process.
- To act as a mission statement for the contextual factors strategy process.
- To provide a roadmap for all parties concerned with the strategy procedure.
- To promote ideals and principles that are relevant to policy.

Action Steps

- As guidelines for the contextual factors strategy process, gather and examine all key and associated policy papers.
- Choose the applicable policies' guiding principles and values so they may be incorporated into the strategy.
- All individuals involved in the strategy must have access to all acts, instruments, circulars, and papers included in the contextual factors policy.

- Set up educational opportunities so that everyone involved in the strategy has the information and abilities necessary to understand the meaning and content of the policy.
- Make sure that all of a strategy's phases include appropriate regulations and that everyone who is involved in the strategy is adhering to them.

People involved

- The School Development Committee (SDC) and School Management Team (SMT) accept that they are accountable for the creation and application of the contextual factors policy in all of its components.
- The policy and suggested strategy must be approved by and guided by educational authorities.
- Such a contextual factors management strategy can be developed and monitored by personnel with specific policy experience.

As soon as the rationale, structure and policy of the contextual factors strategy are completed, the development phase which comprises preconditions and their sub processes, an analysis of the situation and a management plan development comes after.

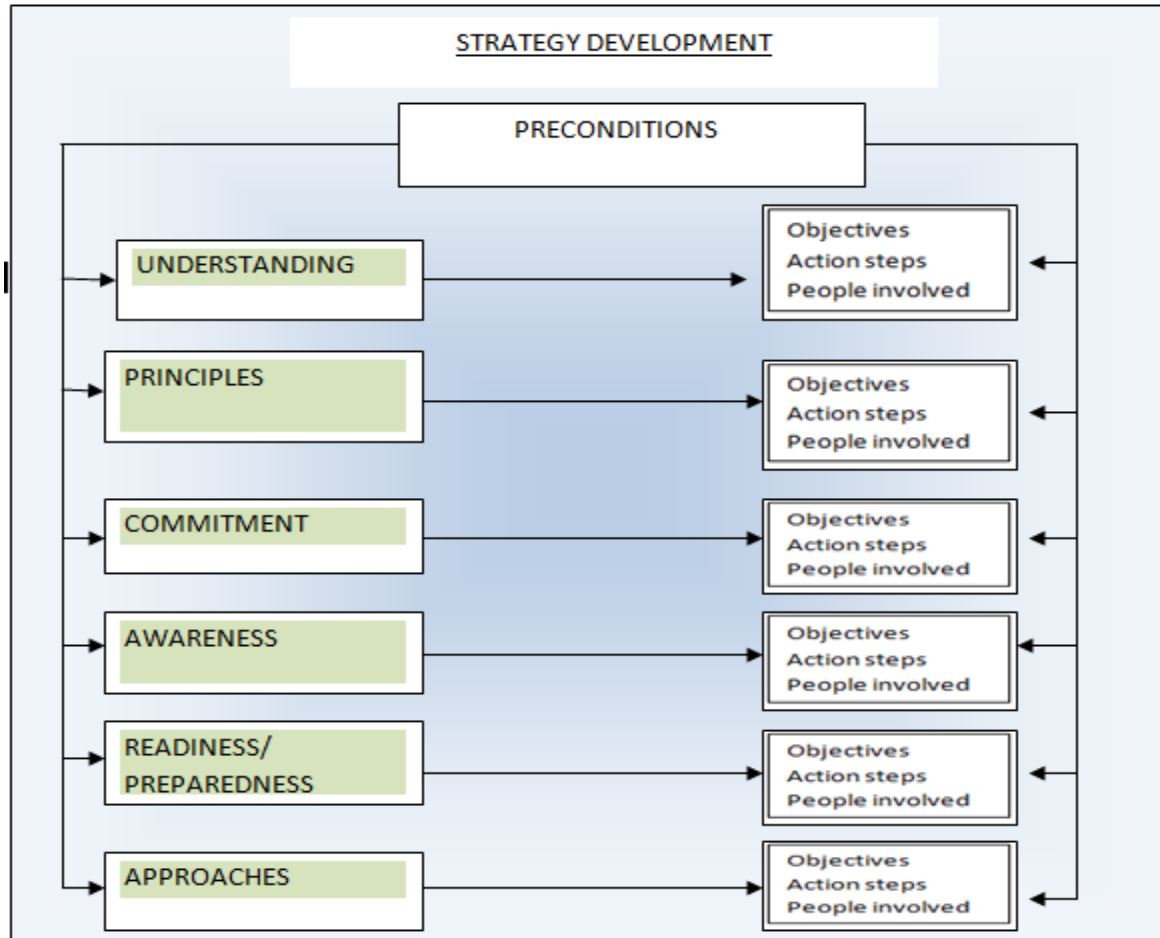
5.6.4 Strategy development phase

The management strategy development phase entails creating a planned intervention strategy to address contextual factors-related problems in accordance with identified necessities (cf. par. 5.5.2). The strategy formulation phase is broken down into three sub-phases that are in line with the theoretical framework for the management of contextual elements. These phases include preconditions, situation analysis, and management plan (cf. figure 5.2).

5.6.4.1 Preconditions

A strategy for managing contextual factors is developed with preconditions being a sub phase of that process. Figure 5.4 lists the prerequisites anticipated for the creation of a contextual factors strategy.

Figure 5.4: Preconditions for a strategy to manage contextual factors



In order to increase the chances of a successful strategy implementation and the achievement of predetermined objectives, helpful preconditions to its successful implementation were identified and described in a literature review (cf. par. 2.1.1 & 2.4). Setting up the prerequisites before beginning the implementation phase will lessen the challenges and potential failures associated with implementing a management strategy for contextual factors (cf. par. 2.4). Some preconditions identified for a successful contextual factors management strategy development in the literature overview include, understanding of contextual factors, principles for the management of contextual factors, management's commitment towards strategy development, contextual factors awareness and organisational preparedness.

5.6.4.2 An understanding of contextual factors

As a prerequisite in developing a management strategy, understanding of the contextual factors is imperative as a starting point to give an abstract as well shared foundation for introducing a strategy to deal with contextual elements. Understanding of the contextual factors helps to avoid different interpretations (cf. par. 2.4 & 2.4.1). Appreciation of contextual factors and how they affect teaching and learning led to the justification of a strategy to deal with them successfully (cf. par. 1, 1.3, 2.4, & 5.4.4).

Thus, the following section shows the objectives and action steps which were put together in relation to par. 1. 2., 2.4, 2.4.1 & 5.4.4.

Objectives

- To understand clearly the many-sided and complex phenomenon of contextual factors in the Zimbabwean education environment.
- To make sure everyone engaged is aware of and knowledgeable about the idea of contextual factors to consider.
- To make sure that everyone involved is aware of the rationale behind developing a contextual factors approach to address situations and problems involving contextual factors.
- To appreciate the prevalence and impact of contextual factors in a school context.

Action steps

- Organise meetings and workshops to inform and ensure a fair and a total comprehension of the nature of contextual factors in a Zimbabwean situation. Different definition interpretations call for a united comprehension to exist between all parties involved in the school community.
- Bring in and talk about reasons behind the creation of the strategy in the meetings and workshops with people involved, to allow for an understanding and acceptance of the justification to deal with school contextual factors issues.
- It is essential to comprehend the signs of the contextual elements in the particular educational situation in addition to the idea and its justification.

- Maintain minutes, agendas, and attendance records for all meetings and workshops to ensure that all relevant parties are included in the concept explanation and related activities. This will help ensure that all contextual variables are taken into account.

People involved

- The school principal, who serves as the head of the School Management Team, should take the initiative to explain the idea of contextual elements to all significant stakeholders.
- Depending on their expertise and willingness to participate, the School Management Team, School Development Committee, learners and community may be involved in the idea clarification activities.

5.6.4.3 Contextual factors management principles

Some underlying principles referred to in the literature review (cf. par. 2.4.2, 3.4.2, 3.5.3) were regarded as fundamental guidelines which need to be accounted for by those who develop a management of contextual factors strategy. Principles that relate to the contextual factors management strategy take account of (cf. par.2.4.1, 2.4.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.4.1 & 5.4.4):

- upholding of high standards
- setting of practical goals
- guaranteeing constant communication
- acknowledging and appreciate diversity without biases
- customising opportunities to suit individuals
- respecting and caring for all persons
- acting in accordance with relevant legislation
- bringing people together and work as one unit
- taking up all forms of diversity
- looking for mutual understanding

The distinctiveness of each school's situation determines some context-specific objectives and action steps to guarantee the comprehension of the aforementioned principles as preconditions for executing a strategy for contextual factors. The objectives and action steps listed in the next part were developed using the guidelines found in paragraphs 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.4.1, and 5.4.4.

Objectives

- To reach agreement on the guiding principles for the control of contextual elements in a particular school.
- To ensure that everyone concerned is aware of the principles and accepts ownership of them.
- To incorporate the established principles into the school's culture.

Action steps

- Find consensus on the essential principles that should be acknowledged as prerequisites in a particular school for the management of contextual elements and make sure that the principles are included in the policy document.
- Verify that the contextual factors policy is in line with the set principles.
- Make use of seminars, meetings, assemblies, and any other opportunities to share the guiding principles with the entire school community.
- Generate occasions for the accepted values to become a part of school culture and daily life.

People involved

- The school's principal, acting as the team's leader, takes action to ensure that the established rules for the management of contextual elements are relevant and followed.
- The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the School Development Committee must be included as key partners in the school's educational decisions.
- In order to express their own expectations, students and other community members must communicate.

5.6.4.4 Commitment of the school's administrators

The achievement of learners in the classroom is the shared objective of the School Management Teams, School Development Committees, and Ministry of Education (cf. par. 3.3.3.1). Thus, school management's commitment suggests obligated school management and teachers who offer their leadership by being exemplary in the execution of a victorious strategy which copes successfully with contextual factors within a certain institution setup. For the execution of a contextual factors approach to be successful, school management's commitment

is viewed as essential (cf. par. 2.4.2). The next section describes objectives and action steps established, in line with par. 2.4.2 and 3.5.3.

Objectives

- To exhibit leadership and commitment from school management for implementing a strategy for the management of contextual factors.
- To ensure continuous support and guidance from management to deal with contextual factors.

Action Steps

- School management must take advantage of conferences, meetings and workshops meant for them, to comprehend their function as leadership and particular responsibility for action which can be demonstrated to deal with contextual factors within an institution.
- School administration must demonstrate leadership, dedication, and commitment in all of the school's activities.
- Constant assistance together with advocacy from management, for the execution of a contextual factors strategy must be included in the school's culture and curriculum.

People involved

- The institution's head as well as the Management Team of the school and each of its personnel
- The School Development Committee chairperson and the lone members.
- The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education officials at the district, regional and national levels.
- The school principal, in addition, incorporates the school prefects' body (head girl and head boy).
- The school community leaders.

5.6.4.5 Development of contextual factors awareness

An extraordinary awareness which is in line with the nature, circumstance and influence of contextual factors is thought to be a necessary prerequisite for the successful implementation of a strategy to deal with contextual factors. Contextual factors awareness involves several frames of reference, trust, respect and care for others, and being able to relate with different people in the school community (cf. par. 2. 4. 2). Contextual factors awareness takes account of clearness of one's own opinions about others and potential subjective conclusions based on particular aspects of contextual factors. Effective management of micro or internal contextual elements is observed as an essential prerequisite before putting into practice a strategy to control contextual issues.

The ensuing related objectives and action steps were derived from literature review par. 2.2, 3 and par. 2.4.2.

Objectives

- To establish the existing extent of contextual factors.
- To establish common principles as well as enhancing a feeling of member inclusion through use of group method and joint action.
- To appreciate contextual factors' existence founded on reciprocal respect.
- To deal with contextual factors earnestly.
- To make opportunities of training available.

Action steps

- Establish the actual extent of contextual factors consciousness by employing, for instance, a range or series of contextual factors awareness (cf. par. 1.2.2, 1.3 & 2.4.2). It is important to document the results as part of the guideline data.
- Establish and develop common values and mutual understanding through sharing of ideas and holding meetings.
- Earnestly deal with and appreciate the occurrence of contextual factors through reciprocal respect for each and everyone in the course of school meetings and other occasions.
- Implement curriculum-based activities to foster a sense of inclusion, belonging, and respect.

- Merit in addition to quality rewarding; and recognition of contextual factors, for instance, during speech and prize-giving functions.
- Handle conflict effectively as a cause of contextual factors through fair grievance judgment measures, as an element of a contextual factors strategy.
- Encourage a unified team approach that consists of all people involved as a way to implement a contextual factors policy.
- Create training-oriented activities to increase awareness of contextual elements.

People involved

- Those who manage the institution as a team and teachers being led by the school principal must together take accountability to support and raise awareness about matters concerning school contextual factors.

5.6.4.6 Readiness of the organisation

An organization's readiness is seen as a crucial prerequisite for the successful implementation of a strategy for contextual elements. Organisational readiness alludes to the systems of the organisation, the systems of organisational management and the culture of the organisation where all those who belong to the school community realise that they are being honoured, esteemed and respected. As a result, the organisation's readiness (cf. par. 2.4.1, 2.4.2, & 3.5.3) determines the general tone and environment of the school in which a strategy for the management of contextual elements is implemented.

Objectives

- To ensure that the aims and mission of the school are aligned with the justification for implementing a contextual factors strategy.
- To ensure that the organisation's processes and structures support the adoption of a contextual factors strategy.
- To provide resource for the sustainability of a successful implementation of a contextual factors strategy.
- To make certain for an organisational way of life that inspires and promotes frankness, tolerance and self-growth.

- To establish extremely high bar standards for success.

Action steps

- Confirm that the school's goals and mission are aligned with the justification for implementing a contextual factors strategy.
- Adjust and customise systems and structures of the organisation in order to promote the implementation of a strategy to manage organisational contextual factors.
- Accessibility of enough resources must be granted for a sustainable and successful implementation of a contextual factors strategy.
- Take into account the larger social context in which members are perceived to have experienced both achievements and failures in their professional and personal life when implementing strategy and policy.
- Contextual factors suggest different opinions, and approaches, hence, there has to be acceptance and preparedness for disagreements in views and perceptions.
- Learn about and take advantage of the diverse points of view's learning opportunities to include them in both strategy creation and execution programmes.
- Make certain there is an organisational way of life that motivates frankness, stimulates tolerance for argument and contributes to individual development.
- Set high quality levels for achievement as an element of culture in the organisation.

People involved

- The Management Team, teachers, and the principal, who serves as the institution's leader, must all accept responsibility for maintaining and enhancing contextual factors awareness.
- The participation of parents and learners in awareness development programmes is regarded as fundamental for them as important stakeholders.

5.6.4.7 Approaches

An overview of the literature parts and empirical portions of this study reveals information that may be used to build and put into practice a strategy to manage contextual factors. These contextual factors strategy approaches include the ensuing circumstances (cf. par. 2.4.5, 3.5.1, 5.4.5.3 & 5.4.5.4).

- A strategy to manage contextual factors should be approached as a challenging issue which comprises a sensitive network of communication which is determined by mutual and shared respect.
- It's crucial to know that implementing a strategy for managing contextual elements is a lengthy process that takes roughly 3–5 years to complete; therefore it must be fully comprehended over time.
- Any management strategy that addresses school contextual factors must guarantee access for all learners. Any attempts for a group formation, built around particular values, beliefs and principles have to be prevented as they risk segregation which might be regarded as deliberate moves to reject other social groups.
- Contextual factors strategy developers need to embrace inclusivity in order to account for all issues of contextual factors.

The next steps to be taken as well as objectives were derived from par. 2.4.2, 3.5.1, 5.4.5.1, 5.4.5.3 and 5.4.5.4.

Objectives

- To put in place a contextual factors strategy over an extended period of time.
- To guarantee supportive ideas and mind-set in backing the contextual factors strategy implementation.
- To embrace a comprehensive, universal and unbiased approach to contextual factors

Action steps

- Embrace a long term process approach for the implementation of an elaborate contextual factors management strategy.
- Anticipate and be open to receive potential modifications to preconceived individual perceptions about contextual factors concerns and matters.
- Prevent a compressed and limited approach to contextual factors. Regard contextual factors in a comprehensive, universal and fair way in the course of developing and implementing a contextual factors strategy.
- React decisively to any indication of group formation that excludes other social groupings due to some elements or features of contextual factors.

People involved

All the individuals involved in the creation of a strategy for the management of contextual elements must be taken into account when relating the various situations as approaches. When developing a contextual factors strategy to address contextual factors for the promotion of high-quality teaching and learning, it is helpful to comprehend and be aware of the aforementioned preconditions. The scenario analysis strategy phase in figure 5.5 is discussed in the section that follows.

5.6.5 The situation analysis

Figure 5.5 below, summarises the situation analysis of a contextual factors strategy.

Figure 5.5: The situational analysis of contextual factors phase of the strategy



A situation analysis of contextual factors provides reliable information that can be used to adjust or modify a contextual factors strategy. If there is no dependable and guideline information, a contextual factors management strategy would be founded on untrustworthy information. An analysis of the situation of existing circumstances, manifestation of contextual factors, capabilities, practices and awareness, allows for the development of a contextual factors strategy for a specific situation in a school. The key elements of a contextual factors situation analysis comprise, in addition to others (cf. par. 3.3 & 3.4):

- An assessment of the aspects of contextual factors in order to allow a foundation for bettering the involvement of all persons and classes, for instance, diverse racial, linguistic, gender, religious, health status and other cultural backgrounds.
- An inquiry into management practices, policies and processes will help to pick out systemic obstacles connected to contextual factors issues within the institution.
- Analysing attitudes, feelings and perceptions enables standard information for attitudes and perceptions to be monitored gradually and provides an in-depth understanding of how people perceive contextual factors.

As part of a tailored approach to manage contextual factors within a school, the information collected from a situation analysis is essential for the creation of action plans. The execution of a management strategy is supported by a thorough situation analysis that identifies specific areas of strength and improvement. Objectives and action steps below were gathered with reference to a contextual factors situation analysis (cf. par. 3.3, 3.4, 5.4.1 & 5.4.3).

Objectives

- To collect standard information as points of reference and purposes of comparison in future.
- To determine an exhaustive contextual factors report substantiated by the manifestation of contextual factors within the school.
- To ascertain the efficiency and appropriateness of the structures in the organisation as well as the management structures that are operational.
- To come up with and give priority to intervention initiatives, particular to the situation and in line with the needs appropriate to the contextual factors.
- To establish training as well as empowerment requirements as regards to contextual factors.

- To use the results of the situation as drive and inspiration for implementing the planned contextual factors strategy.

Action steps

- Dependable standard evidence similar to circumstances on the ground, policies, procedures, awareness, resources, attitudes and expertise need to be acquired and documented for reference, purposes of comparison and determination, in future.
- The indication of contextual factors in the school and any other characteristics of contextual factors must be put together to come up with a recorded contextual factors school outline.
- Operational structures in the organisation, systems of management and aid from outside assistance from, for instance, community and education ministry authorities, need to be reviewed and documented to establish their efficiency and appropriateness to the contextual factors strategy.
- Specific areas of need and growth in terms of how contextual factors present themselves within the school must be identified and given emphasis as elements of the strategy.
- Develop solutions for intervention suited to the setting and in line with the needs of development.
- Recognise any group associations and alliances that may come about and take measures to avoid them (cf. par. 5.4.6.).
- Establish training and empowerment needs based on tangible recommendations from the situation analysis of contextual elements.
- Make use of the situation analysis' findings to motivate and support the adoption of a strategy for contextual factors and to take the necessary action to effect the necessary change.

People involved

- The School Development Committee and School Management Committee acknowledge authority to carry out a situation analysis.
- As the institution's leader, on this issue, the principal has a leadership responsibility to do.

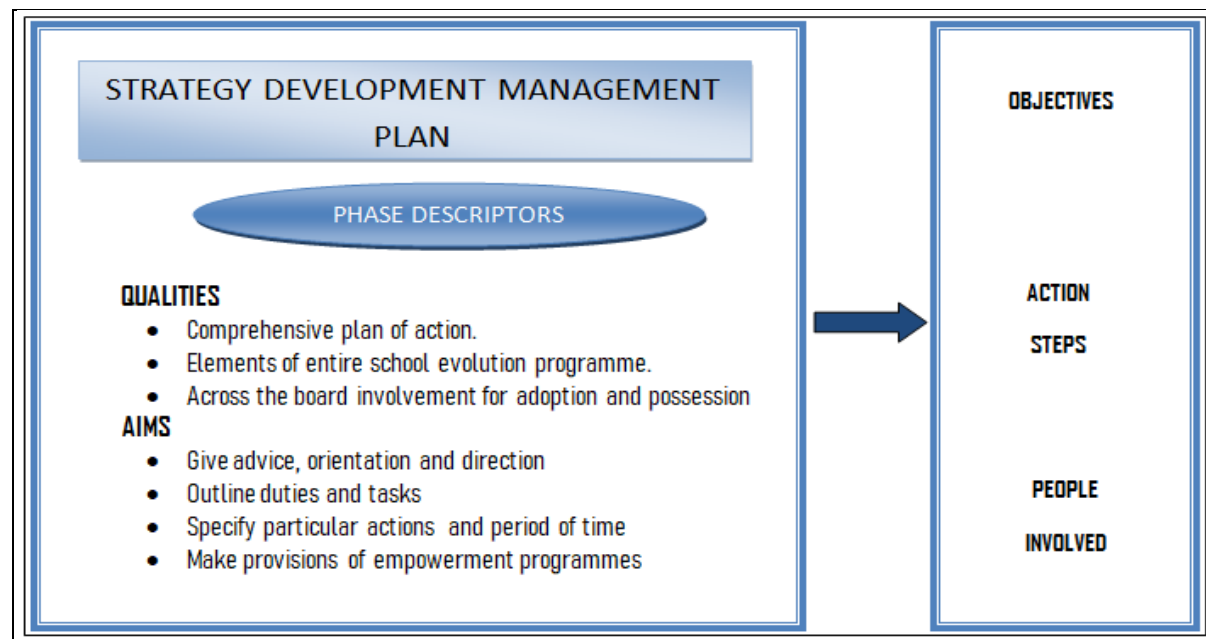
- The teachers are expected to take part due to their understanding and exposure in classrooms and co-curricular activities.
- Contribution from learners through prefects' body representatives must be considered within an analysis of situation.
- Since the school is an integral part of the community culture, including the school community in the situation analysis is equally essential.
- Due to the situation analysis's unique identity outside knowledge and experience can also be taken into account.

When done with the phase of the situation analysis, the next phase will be to look at a management plan for strategy development. Figure 5.6 shows a management plan for strategy development.

5.6.6 A strategy development management plan

A strategy development management plan is shown below in figure 5.6, as an element of the strategy development.

Figure 5.6: A strategy development management plan



As a collaborative plan of action, a management plan works with an intention of giving advice, orientation and direction to all the people who take part in a contextual factors management strategy as an element of the entire school evolution programme. The different people in the school who take part in the contextual factors management strategy are expected to join, in the interest of embracement, possession and adoption of the anticipated initiative. A thorough management plan expresses an assortment of duties, responsibilities and a well organised explanation of activities inside the boundary of appropriate legislative policies as well as education policies. Time frames which are practical and understandable are connected to the specified action steps. For a successful implementation in a particular school context, the management plan should be customised to suit the environment. Opportunities for empowerment and supervision as an element of a management plan, need to be provided in order to expand contextual factors competence and to avoid contextual factors disagreement (cf. par. 2.4.1, 3.3, 3.5 & 3.5.3). The ensuing steps that need to be taken as well as the objectives below emanated from par. 2.4.1, 3.3.5, 5.4.5.1, 5.4.5.2, 5.4.5.3 and 5.4.5.4.

Objectives

- To make achievable, an approved and easy to understand management plan which gives guidance to all role players in the contextual factors management strategy, over a long set period.
- To assign an executive committee or a chairperson to take control of the management plan development.
- To guarantee conflict and well-informed resolution structures and processes are in order.
- To design opportunities for empowerment in order to increase skills to cope with contextual factors.
- To allow individuals to take part and chip in with ideas for the management plan development.
- To organise for help from everyone who is a key stakeholder.
- To include an evaluation method that is both ongoing and comprehensive as part of the creation of the management plan.

Action steps

- Come up with an approved and easy to understand management plan that elucidate the activities, tasks and responsibilities of particular individuals which are connected to clearly set time frames.
- The development of a management plan must be open to every individual and done collaboratively, founded upon contextual factors situation analysis outcomes as well as policy commands and appropriate regulations.
- Adopt a long-term, collaborative approach to strategy execution to ensure that the management plan's goals are realised.
- The management strategy ought to be adjustable for its modification at any time, to suit particular needs that may crop up, for example, issues to do with religion and barriers to communication.
- The assigning of an executive committee or a chairperson to take control of the management plan should be considered, depending on the condition and necessity.
- Create conflict and well-informed resolution structures and processes as an element of the contextual factors management plan.
- Give constant empowerment opportunities in order to increase skills and expertise to cope effectively and efficiently with contextual factors.
- For possible course of action, allow individuals to come up with variety of contributions and decisions for the plan.
- Make possible for assistance systems from stakeholders, for instance, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education authorities as well as school community as a whole.
- Draw up a continuous and completion evaluation programme as an element of the contextual factors management plan to determine successes and needs for improvement.

People involved

- The head of the school (principal) facilitates in the development of the strategy.
- The School Development Committee and the School Management Team, in partnership with the teachers, learners and community leaders need to earnestly take part with the intention of acknowledgement possession of the strategy.

- An executive committee or a chairperson might be assigned in the development of the strategy.

When the management strategy development is completed, the strategy implementation phase follows. Figure 5.7 shows the management plan implementation phase.

5.6.7 Management strategy implementation

Figure 5.7 below shows a profile of the management strategy execution phase.

Figure 5.7: Management strategy execution phase



A refined strategy is put into action during the strategy implementation phase in accordance with a management plan and within the parameters of pertinent policies. The approved management strategy for the management of contextual factors needs to be employed pragmatically according to defined processes and systemic designs with the goal of achieving the expected objectives. There is no doubt that characteristics, expertise and capabilities of school principals as regards to contextual factors management will play an important role on how the implementation phase will be understood by others who are involved inside the school. Nevertheless, sound and preferred practices, in addition to methods that are rooted on the context, are helpful in preventing possible obstacles and reasons for failure in the course of the management implementation phase (cf. par. 2.4 & 3.5.3). The contextual factors strategy implementation needs to be treated as an element of the entire school evolution management

plan of action, distinguished by teamwork, unity, dedication and valuing one another (cf. par. 2.4.2). Contextual factors training is an element of the strategy implementation phase to increase contextual factors competences, skills, understanding and awareness to cope effectively with connected matters and threats (cf. par. 2.4 & 2.4.2). The generation of steps to be taken and objectives intended for the execution of the management strategy of the contextual factors was as specified by par. 2.4, 2.4.2, 3.5.3, 5.4.1, 5.4.2, 5.4.3, 5.4.5.2, 5.4.5.3, 5.4.5.4 and 5.4.5.5. The affirmed objectives and action steps are adjustable and they work as guidelines that have to be tailor-made in accordance with specific individual school conditions.

Objectives

- To allow the implementation of a management plan that is situation-based as an element of the improvement programme of the school in conformity with a contextual factors policy.
- To make certain of ideal leadership from management of the school in the course of implementation of a contextual factors management plan.
- To build methods of communication, structures of support and procedures to solve problems to withstand a successful management strategy execution.
- To ascertain accepted behaviour that promotes the attitude of all-embracing equal access to education.
- To apply effective practices and cooperative plans for action to escalate possibilities for fruitful strategy implementation.
- To set up contextual factors situations and exhibition activities to transform mindsets, labels and prejudgment.
- To pick out traditional biased discrimination and organisational injustices.
- To make possible empowerment and development initiatives in the course of the implementation stage.
- To engage the entire school community in the course of the contextual factors plan implementation.

Action steps

- As specified by the accepted policy document and the management plan, implement the contextual factors initiative.
- The School Development Committee as well as School Management Team are compelled to denote ideal leadership in the course of implementation as their conduct and operations set the implementation mood.
- Put in place different structures of support and methods of communication for implementation of strategy, for instance, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education officials.
- Establish standards for actions as element of the management strategy objectives that emphasize fairness of education for everyone.
- Regard and choose most effective practices as part and parcel of the strategy in agreement with context-based needs.
- Consider contextual factors related matters on the schedules of frequent meetings.
- Motivate implementation of collaborative action plans making available guidelines in place of inflexible orders. The school community needs to be given opportunity to contribute towards the programme in order to acknowledge ownership.
- Be foresighted and ready to act on potential crisis, for instance, inadequate support, and language incompetence.
- Make use of the constructive and practical experiences to increase successes of the development plan and as inspiration for acknowledgement and adaptation of contextual factors within the school.
- Embrace the wider school community. The School Management Team cannot adopt a strategy for the management of contextual factors alone, the entire school community must contribute.

People involved

- As people in leadership, the School Management Team needs to be exemplary by giving regular assistance in the course of the strategy implementation phase.
- As part of school culture, the strategy for the management of contextual factors implementation should include all the people involved in the plan.

When the implementation phase is done, the evaluation stage follows. The Evaluation phase must be regarded as part and parcel of the management plan. The previous phases and sub phases involve uninterrupted checking as well as evaluation for identification of successes and failures for appropriate action.

5.6.8 Management strategy evaluation

Figure 5.8 below, shows an outline of the evaluation phase of the management strategy.

Figure 5.8: Management strategy evaluation phase



To establish the effect of a strategy for the management of contextual factors, it is significant to have a rigorous evaluation programme for the purpose of pinpointing the achievements and failures of the three strategy phases with the intention of imminent adjustment, alteration and upgrading. Dependable strategy evaluation information gives indicators of effectiveness, confirmation of impact and data that encourage continuous development. Successful evaluation of the strategy hinges on understandable criteria as well as management of constant assessment to get realistic proof in the course of the phases of strategy development and implementation. In order to identify strengths and failures, the evaluation information has to be thoroughly studied and analysed with the intention of reviewing actions and interventions (cf. par. 2.4.4, 2.4.5, 3.5.3, 5.4.5, 5.4.5.1, 5.4.5.2, 5.4.5.4 & 5.4.6). The objectives

and action steps of the evaluation phase were established in line with the above-mentioned paragraphs.

Objectives

- To establish the success and outcome of the different phases of a contextual factors management plan.
- To determine the intention and criteria for a constant and all-inclusive evaluation plan of action.
- To get previous information regarding strategy implementation for contrast.
- To make sure the environment is favourable to carry out the evaluation initiative and the associated actions to follow up.
- To readjust planning and execution in compliance with the outcome got from the evaluation programme.

Action steps

- Devise understandable intention, conditions and programme for the evaluation phase and liaise lucidly with all the people involved.
- Build up context-based mechanisms and tools for evaluation in all the phases of the management plan.
- Get valid and dependable baseline or previous information from the implementation stage, for comparison purposes.
- Build an environment of constant feedback chances and dissemination of outcomes without blaming any other party (being non-defensive).
- Make certain dedication by frequent opportunities for feedback to confirm any needed measures or intervention actions.
- Uphold trust and make use of judgment more, to evaluate end results than only quantitative measurement.
- In compliance with the results got from the evaluation plan, readjust the planning and implementation of the strategy.

People involved

- In commanding and supervising the total evaluation scheme, both the School Development Committee and the Management Team are led by the school head.
- Contributions from all those taking part are required for a broad study of the effect of the strategy.

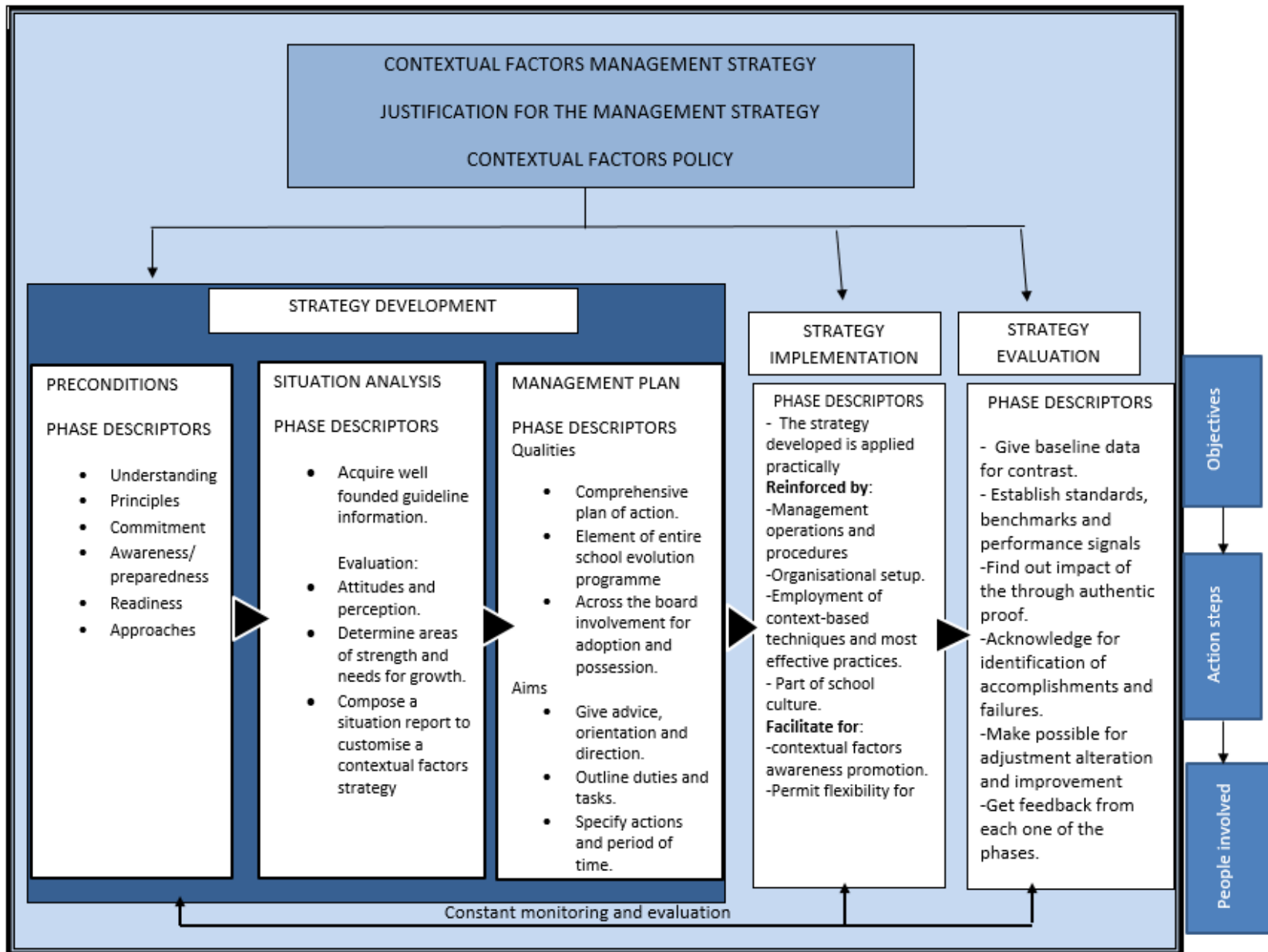
The development, implementation and evaluation phases that are explained above demonstrate the process of the contextual factors management strategy. Thus, a merged structure of the three phases for the contextual factors management strategy is shown in figure 5.9.

5.6.9 A synthesis of management strategy phases

Figure 5.9 shows a synthesis of a framework and phases of a management strategy for the management of contextual factors.

(View figure 5.9 on the page that follows.)

Figure 5.9: A synthesis of the management strategy phases



5.7 Summary

The presentation and discussion of the data analysis and interpretation were the main topics of this chapter (cf. par. 5.3). The data analysis was guided by the Content Analysis Process (cf. par. 5.2.2). In chapters 2 and 3 of this inquiry, the findings were discussed in relation to a review of the literature. There was also a section devoted to the significance of the biographical data of the research subjects (cf. par. 5.2.3). In order to give readers a better understanding of the context of the research that led to the findings presented in this chapter, the study's purpose and research question were reiterated in this chapter. The purpose of this research was to create a management strategy for school administrators to control several contextual aspects and advance school performance. For that reason, a management strategy was developed for the school heads (principals) in the district of Marondera in Zimbabwe to account for the contextual factors with the aim of achieving quality teaching in schools.

The management strategy is made up of a three phased procedure which comprises development, implementation and evaluation. Descriptors, objectives, and action steps are included in each of the three phases, and they are all in line with any applicable contextual factors policy. The policy-related context factors determined the parameters for development and implementation. The different strategy phases were then put together and presented as a synthesis (cf. fig. 5.9). According to the research aim 4 (cf. par. 4.3.2), the management strategy for contextual factors in this chapter 5 was developed.

According to what is covered in this chapter, the strategy's significance lies in how well it bridges the theoretical and practical control of contextual factors in schools (cf. 1.2.1 & 5.4). The findings, recommendations and conclusions are presented in the next and final chapter.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The overview of the study, the findings, and the recommendations are included in this chapter. The conclusions that were obtained from the research findings on the influence of contextual factors for school principals to support school effectiveness in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe, are expounded in this chapter. The conclusions and recommendations were based on the study's purpose, research questions, and findings. What the findings denote and the accompanying recommendations will be elucidated as well, in this chapter. The recommendations were made with regards to both the conclusions and the research purpose.

6.2 Summary of the study

The investigation took place in 9 unrelated schools which were grouped into public schools (1), private schools (2) and mission schools (3). The grouping was done for a representation of all the types of schools in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 1 provides a holistic overview of the research study and is followed by an extensive literature study done in chapter 2 (School leadership and school success) and chapter 3 (The influence of contextual factors on the school). The essence of these chapters entails literature that looks at how vital school headship is in dealing with the influence of contextual factors in order to promote school effectiveness. The literature emphasises the liability of school leaders for quick response, proactive action and alignment of various practices to account for the contextual factors in the school so as to promote success. The essential leadership practices outlined by The Wallace Foundation (2023) and Waite and Bogotch (2017) served as the theoretical foundation for the research study, which was conducted within the context of Wolhuter et al. (2016) contextual factors framework. The intention of the study was to create a management strategy for school leaders in Zimbabwe's Marondera District to support school effectiveness in dealing with contextual influences.

The research design and methodology used to address the research topic are described in Chapter 4 of the study which sought to identify the influence of contextual factors on schools for principals to promote quality teaching. I adopted the qualitative research design which was based on the interpretivism and phenomenological principles (cf. par. 4.2). The data generation strategy was semi-structured interviews which were in close relation with qualitative research which involves representations and investigation of audio-records of human experiences (cf. par. 4.2). A non-probability and purposive selection technique was employed in the choice of the nine school principals as the research participants, based on the researcher's subjective

judgment (cf. par. 4.3.2). Those participants who were selected were assumed to have outstanding knowledge about the area of study. In order to test for the practicality of the semi-structured questions intended for the interviewees, a pilot test was carried out with two principals who were not part of the research but they possessed the same qualities as the research participants (cf. par. 4.5.1). Participants demonstrated awareness of school contextual factors that influence success in schools. All the interviews were managed in English. An audio-recording device was used for audio-recording all the interviews. Data was analysed manually because of the cost of training and the *Atlas TI* software package challenges (cf. par. 4.6). An independent helper was co-opted to assist with the typing for the transcription of the recorded interviews. To be able to collect relevant information from the interviews, I had to take on the role of being a participant as observer. I participated as interviewer in close interaction with the interviewees thereby, being an instrument of data generation. To guarantee trustworthiness in this research, credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability and authenticity as criteria for evaluating the qualitative research were employed (cf. par. 4.8). The investigation ethics was warranted by adhering to the ethical requirements of the NWU and Faculty of Education, in a strict manner (cf. par. 4.8.1).

A thorough presentation and discussion of the data analysis and interpretation, which were influenced by the content analysis approach, were included in Chapter 5. In order to determine the patterns and trends that led to the study findings that were used to address the research questions, the data analysis was helpful (cf. par. 4.2). The content analysis process was adopted because it allows for replication of the study by other researchers and can yield with high liability (Luo, 2021). The biographical information for the participants was also included in chapter 5 for a deeper understanding of their characteristics which could provide relevant information for other researchers who might want to replicate the investigation.

The research findings and the specified recommendations illuminated in this research are concentrated on the encounters of the nine participants, the research question, the research purpose and aims; and the categories and themes that resulted from the study of the qualitative data. The central research question answered was, ***“What strategy can school principals in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe implement to account for the influence of contextual factors?”*** The central research question was answered by realising the following research aims:

- i) Determine and describe the relation between school leadership and school effectiveness
- ii) Identify and describe the contextual factors that have an influence on school effectiveness according to the contextual forces framework

- iii) Identify and elucidate specific contextual factors that affect school effectiveness in schools in the Marondera District of Zimbabwe, and to
- iv) Develop a strategy for implementation by the school leadership in the Marondera District of Zimbabwe to account for the influence of contextual factors

6.2.1 Identified categories

The categories that were identified in the collected data were given weight and strengthened by the reviewed literature. The final list of categories, which were methodically categorised in accordance with the applicability of the information from a thorough literature review (cf. par.3.2), is shown in the segment below.

- An understanding of leadership in general
- An understanding of leadership in a school context
- Relationship between school leadership and school effectiveness
- Leadership styles for school leaders
- Micro-contextual factors
- Meso-contextual factors
- Macro contextual factors

The research's conclusions were based on and connected to the aforementioned categories. The next section contains a description of the findings.

6.2.2 Findings of the research

- An understanding of leadership in general

As comprehended by the participants, generally leadership implies the ability of a leader to influence subordinates in order to attain desired results. Leaders need to influence people to implement strategies (cf. par. 5.5.3.5). These opinions were also buttressed by the literature review (cf. 2.1 & 2.3.1), which indicates a strong relationship between influence and school effectiveness. Generally, the participants' responses indicated that leadership involves having a vision, mission and mandate to be achieved. An organisation functions well through a vision where one states achievable objectives (cf. par. 5.3.1.2). Participants alluded to leadership as concerning accountability. A leader is accountable and responsible for anything that happens in an organisation on daily basis, hence a leader needs to be ready to accept all the blames in an organisation (cf. par. 5.3.1.3). These responses signified that indeed leadership affect organisational effectiveness. The views were also raised in literature (cf. par. 2.4.3). Responses from participants regarded leadership as encompassing honest communication. A leader's

intentions and objectives must be stressed clearly, to all individuals so that people operate on the same platform for effectiveness in an organisation (cf. par. 5.3.1.4). Literature indicates that dialoguing at every level in the organisation helps leaders to articulate issues (cf. par. 2.1.1 & 2.3.1). The influence of having a vision, accountability and honest communication by leadership helps to promote school effectiveness in reaction to the impact of contextual aspects. The general understanding of leadership by participants was important in leading them to an understanding of leadership in a school context, which was the context of focus for this research and that indicated an appropriate selection of the research sample which helped with dependable information. The findings supported the creation of a strategy for school administrators to manage the impact of contextual factors and advance school performance.

- An understanding of leadership in a school context

Findings for this category indicated that participants do understand what leadership means in a school situation (cf. par. 5.3.2) and that leadership influences the standard of education provided in schools. According to the participants and as substantiated in the literature study, school leaders need to set a clear school vision, clear goals, and high standards which they have to work towards, to attain school effectiveness in response to the influence of contextual elements. For school effectiveness and dealing with the effect of contextual factors, school leaders ought to have positive relationships with the school community, fostering a pleasant school climate and environment which encourages and develops students' talents. In support of these opinions, literature allude to positive community relationships as the foundation of the educative endeavour and that upright leadership enhances workplace environments and teacher motivation, leading to excellent instruction and learning (cf. par. 2.4.2). According to the research findings, school leadership needs to support staff professional development through sending teachers to training courses, staff development workshops or refresher courses in order to develop their professional skills as well as personal development in order to improve school success (cf. par. 5.3.2.4) as a way of dealing with the effect of contextual factors in a school situation. The review of literature additionally confirmed the significance of school leadership in promoting staff development. (cf. par. 2.4 & 2.4.4). The participants' responses were in line with the expected management principles in the development of a contextual factors management strategy (cf. par. 5.6.4.3) to deal with the influence of school contextual factors.

- Relationship between school leadership and school effectiveness

The research findings showed that participants agreed, in accordance with the findings from the literature study that there is a symbiotic relationship between school leadership and school effectiveness. The two variables have a close link. A school's teaching and learning standards, as well as its final outcomes, are determined by the calibre of its school leadership, according to the responses. To arrive at school effectiveness, school leadership should ensure a clear school vision (cf. par. 5.3.3.1) in response to the effect of contextual factors. In support, literature indicates a school vision as inspirational and conveying the expectations that a school has to accomplish (cf. par. 2.4.1). The responses suggest that a school vision gives guidance and direction towards school effectiveness and helps to deal with the impact of school contextual factors. In addition, participants showed that the close link should be supported by the school leadership by ensuring a fair allocation of resources like, ICT materials, stationery and textbooks as a way of dealing with the influence of contextual factors for school success (cf. par. 5.3.3.2). Related literature demonstrates that provision of adequate material and human resources by school leaders can deal with the impact of school contextual factors, leading to the attainment of quality learners' outcomes (cf. par. 2.4). The relationship also springs from the leadership of the school, which guarantees excellent instruction and learning throughout the institution (cf. par. 5.3.3.3). Participants' responses denote supervision of teachers' work, observation of lessons, inspection of teachers' documents and learners' work, as practices by principals which help to account for the effect of school contextual factors and promote school success. Reference from literature shows that quality teaching and learning is attained through principals who monitor teachers' work in the classroom, conducting in-class observations and monitoring students' progress (cf. par. 2.4.4). Furthermore, school leadership ensures professional development as foundation for school effectiveness (cf. par. 5.3.3.4). Participants indicated that principals need to make sure that teachers' skills are developed in order to add value to the performance of learners as a way to account for the impact of contextual factors. These results served as the foundation for creating a strategy for management for school administrators to support high standards of instruction in response to the influence of contextual factors.

- Leadership styles for school leaders

According to the literature review, findings showed that participants had the knowledge of different leadership styles which can be applied depending on the prevailing situations in their schools in response to the effect of contextual factors (cf. par. 5.3.4) and table 5.11. Participants concurred that there is no single leadership style that effectively handles all situations in the school. The democratic style (cf. par. 5.3.4.1) and autocratic style (cf. par. 5.3.4.2) were the

most common leadership styles for the reasons indicated by other interviewees that, democratic leadership style involves everybody in decision-making and running of the school, for example, students, teachers and SDC. Stakeholders work in collaboration with school administration (cf. par. 5.3.2.3). These viewpoints are consistent with literature which emphasizes on a leader to involve and encourage everyone to participate and work as a team because engagement and collaboration can be employed to deal with the impact of school contextual factors by a school leader to yield expected results (cf. par. 2.2.2 & 2.2.3). These opinions also imply that teamwork improves efficiency and it instils a sense of ownership in the staff as well, helping school leaders to manage the impact of contextual factors and promote school effectiveness. With autocratic leadership style, participants indicated that there are situations where a leader needs to be dictatorial, especially when decisions need to be made quickly (cf. Int 4: 105-107). Responses also indicated that autocracy may be applicable where issues need no debate, for example with implementation of policies and circulars (cf. par. 5.3.4.2). Literature also substantiates this view where followers have to simply follow instructions as given and fulfil the leader's will so as to deal with the effect of contextual factors. Though it might seem cruel to some teachers, if the radical decisions are not taken, most schools will be sinking ships (cf. par. 2.4.5). Therefore, for school principals to deal with the influence of contextual elements, bold decisions are crucial.

With the laissez-faire leadership style, responses suggested its significance in schools because of the autonomy that it gives to subordinates which is significant in managing the influence of contextual factors. A leader delegates duties to followers (cf. par. 5.3.4.3). If left to work on their own followers perform well without being pushed (Int 3: 53-55). One interviewee totally disagreed with the use of this type of leadership style in managing the impact of contextual factors, arguing that no one is held accountable and that leads to failure of schools. However, literature highlights delegation of responsibilities to members and then monitoring of the progress (cf. par. 2.2.2) in reaction to the impact of contextual factors. Responses supported the use of the transformational leadership style to deal with the effect of contextual factors by focusing on organisational change which promotes school effectiveness (cf. par. 5.3.4.4). These responses were confirmed by Korenjani and Sharbaz (2016) who argue that a transformational leader mobilises the organisation's members to make important changes in organisations so that they gain the necessary capabilities for moving in new directions (cf. par. 2.3). Participants indicated that transformational leadership style promotes change in the institution and in individuals as well. Responses indicate that it is the leader who should constantly develop the teachers and change them in reaction to contextual factors in order to improve performance in the school. In support, Northouse (2001) claims that transformational leadership is at the root of changes and transforms individuals, causing valuable and progressive change in followers and social structures (cf. par. 2.3.1). The significance of instructional leadership style in schools was also acknowledged by the participants. Responses specified that instructional leadership

centres on teaching, as a result of the influence of contextual factors in schools, the principal collaborates with teachers to build best practises that encourage high-quality teaching and learning. (cf. par. 5.3.4.5). The main identified five key roles for the school principal by the Wallace Foundation and Bogotch (cf.par.2.4) validate the use of instructional leadership in school to deal with the impact of contextual factors and promote school effectiveness. One response also brought up the use of pragmatic leadership style (cf. par. 5.3.4.6) which encourages leaders to be practical at work to deal with the impact of contextual factors. For example the participant, indicated that a leader needs to be on the ground and be exemplary to teachers and learners, showing them how things are done (cf. Int 7: 87-88).

Responses under the identified leadership styles were important in showing that school leaders do not need to dwell on one leadership style, but they have to be accustomed to different styles that can be employed according to the context in order to manage contextual factors for the promotion of quality teaching. The identified leadership styles were also helpful in developing a management strategy for school leaders so that they manage the manifestation of contextual factors in schools in order to promote school effectiveness.

- School contextual factors according to the contextual forces framework

Findings indicated that there are various contextual factors which exist in schools. Different contextual factors which are in line with the contextual forces framework, which impact school achievement, were identified and described by school principals (cf. par. 5.4). Some of the identified contextual factors included, demography of the school, school curriculum, provision of infrastructure and resources (human and material) school relationships, national policies and family background. Participants were of the opinion that contextual factors influence the development of a school hence action should be taken in order to account for the contextual factors so that school effectiveness is promoted in schools. Participants went on to identify and describe various specific micro, meso and macro contextual factors that influence success in their particular schools.

- Micro-contextual factors

Research findings indicated the different micro-contextual factors which exist in schools in the district of Marondera and influence school effectiveness which were identified by the participants. Literature findings indicate that micro-contextual factors are found within the school boundaries and they have an effect on school achievement (cf. par. 3.2). The micro-contextual elements that have an effect on the quality of instruction and learning in Marondera District schools were identified in accordance with the literature's findings. First, the participant

biographies revealed that the Marondera District's school principals are mature, experienced and professionally qualified with at least five years being at the same school (cf. par. 5.3). That implies continuity in terms of leadership and disturbances in the school are limited. Literature indorses the advantages of school leaders' maturity as well as staying at the same station for longer periods to ensure a positive impact (cf. par. 2.2.1, 2.4.5 & 3.5.1).

Findings revealed the importance of abiding by the Ministry of Education's required school enrolment policy in order to deal with the effect of contextual factors to promote quality teaching and learning. Sticking to the expected school enrolments implies a fair distribution of both material and human resources by a school leader as a result of the influence of contextual elements and the promotion of top-notch instruction and learning. Participants at mission institutions and public schools complained about over enrolment of learners in their schools, leading to a shortage of qualified teachers (cf. table. 5.6 & 5.7). The participants' arguments were substantiated by literature (Parliamentary Committee Report, 2012) which claims that the Zimbabwean Government has been unsuccessful in maintaining the one teacher to forty learner ratio since many educators have to handle huge classes which result in unbearable workload for teachers (cf. par. 3.3). In line with the teacher-pupil enrolment, participants opposed the involvement by government on the control of school fees as it leads to over enrolment and lack of financial resources (cf. Int 5: 104-105). As a result, managing school contextual factors and promoting school effectiveness is a challenge. Private schools are self-determining hence they have the expected learner enrolments which help them to manage the impact of contextual factors and promote school effectiveness. Thus, school principals should stick to the government's stipulated class enrolments so as to promote school effectiveness in response to the impact of contextual factors.

It was also revealed in the findings that supervision of both teachers' and learners' work perform a pivotal part in alleviating the effect of contextual factors for the promotion of quality teaching by school principals. Findings revealed that teachers need to be supervised when work is delegated to them, lesson supervisions need to be done, as well as supervision of learners' work, as a way to alleviate the impact of contextual factors in schools. In support, literature also argues along those lines, for school leaders to consider supervision as a requirement to deal with the effect of contextual factors (cf. par. 2.2.4 & par. 3.3.3). As an example, Int 8: 306-318, indicated conferencing supervision as an effective method of supervision which principals may employ so that contextual factors can be accounted for, to promote quality teaching and learning. For this method, it was indicated that teachers discussed ways that helped them to achieve the subject areas' percentage set targets which include (i) creation of social media whatsapp platform which includes the teacher, learner and parent where homework for the learner would be sent and also (ii) asking the school to buy particular textbooks that benefit the

learner. These actions were indicated as important in dealing with the impact of contextual factors and promote school effectiveness.

Participants also indicated that sufficient infrastructure and resources, school curriculum, positive school relations, teachers' competence, teachers' intrinsic motivation, religious values, school status and social integration help school leaders to account for the influence of contextual factors and improve school effectiveness (cf. table. 5.12). These micro-contextual factors are also confirmed in the literature review (cf. 5.4.1.1, 5.4.1.2, 5.4.1.3, 5.4.1.4, 5.4.1.6 & 5.4.1.7). Social integration was raised in literature as a factor in schools which promotes school effectiveness in reaction to the influence of school contextual factors (cf. par. 5.4.1.4). For the purposes of developing a school management policy, it was important to consider school social integration as significant in dealing with the effect of contextual factors to promote school success. Literature demonstrates how crucial a role schools play in fostering social cohesion by giving everyone access to common experiences (cf. par.3.4) so that contextual factors' influence is dealt with. Therefore, it is important for principals to be aware and be positive about the different learners from different cultural backgrounds in order to support school social integration for school effectiveness in response to the impact of contextual factors.

Continuous staff development workshops and refresher courses were shown to be important in promoting school effectiveness in response to the impact of contextual factors in schools. Responses indicated that teachers need professional development in order to deal with contextual factors (cf. par. 5.3.2.4). This was validated by literature which indicated that school principals should keep track of teachers' professional development needs (Leithwood et al., 2004) (cf. par. 2.4.4).

Findings also suggest that religious values are important in dealing with the effect of contextual factors, leading to the promotion of school achievement. Participants from private and mission schools indicated religious values as supporting a religious and happy atmosphere; unity and respect among all individuals which helps school principals to deal with the influence of contextual factors (cf. par. 5.4.1.5). Thus, the implication here is that religious environments help school principals to manage the influence of contextual factors in schools thereby promoting quality teaching and learning. In support, MOPSE Marondera District, (2019) secondary schools results analysis indicated that schools at the top of the log were mission schools and private schools because of the Christian background in the schools. Due to the impact of contextual factors, it was essential to establish a management strategy for school principals in the Marondera District based on the discovered micro-contextual factors.

- Meso-contextual factors

Findings reveal that participants concurred on the view that meso-contextual factors impact school effectiveness. Parental involvement in children's school work and school psychological support services can help to manage the effect of contextual factors and promote school (Int 6: 178-182), as evidenced by the literature calling for parents to be involved in their children's education due to their impact on academic achievement (cf. par. 3.4.2).

Principals also indicated that poverty and unemployment in the family lead to learners coming to school without having food and that affects learners' academic achievement (cf. par 102-104), a factor that was also substantiated in a publication by Wolhuter et al. (2016) which argues that the environment in which FCE schools operate is one in which hunger and poverty are persistent, with food shortages and malnutrition lowering community standards of living let alone, school performance. In support, literature (cf. par. 3.4.1) and a participant (Int 8: 173-175) argued along those lines. Thus, to deal with the challenges caused by poverty, participants revealed that they organise and give food to the learners in order to deal with the influence of contextual factors and promote school effectiveness. In relation to that, literature indicates that a school feeding scheme has become part of the school (Wolhuter et al., 2016) in reaction to the influence of the contextual factors. What is implied here is that, poverty undermines the educational goals, leads to under-resourced schools, resulting in failure of school achievement. To encourage high-quality teaching and learning in schools, school administrators must take into account the influence of such contextual elements. Thus, with the indicated impact of contextual factors, the development of a management strategy was inevitable for school leaders to account for the meso-contextual factors and promote school effectiveness.

- Macro-contextual factors

Participants indicated that school effectiveness is influenced by different macro-contextual factors. Some of the macro contextual factors that influence school effectiveness, identified by participants were, national policies (cf. par. 5.4.3.1), information and communication technology (ICT) (cf. par. 5.4.3.2), teachers' remuneration (cf. par. 5.4.3.3) as well as teachers' unions and politics (cf. par. 5.4.3.4).

Findings showed that national policies are important in dealing with the impact of contextual factors to promote school effectiveness. For example, participants indicated the importance of compulsory inclusion of technical vocational subjects in the school curriculum as a policy which equips learners with life skills (Int 5: 84-85). National policies guide schools on how operations and activities should be run. In support, literature indicated different educational

policies (cf. par. 3.3.3) involve rules and regulations which guide school leaders in their school activities in order to deal with the impact of contextual factors, promoting school effectiveness.

The introduction of Information Communication Technology as a subject in schools has also been mentioned by participants as making teaching and learning more engaging and simple. (Int 1: 167-168 & Int 5: 82-85). This was supported by research that claims that ICT is fostering a new kind of electronic literacy in the classroom, where programming and educational resources are now accessible in electronic form and learners are producing electronic papers, assignments, and projects. (Steemit, 2020). In light of this research, it is necessary to take into account ICT use in schools in order to respond to the influence of contextual factors on school effectiveness. School leaders need to move with time.

Findings also indicated that sufficient remuneration or salaries for teachers is important in motivating teachers and improving quality of teaching. Participants revealed teachers are getting meagre salaries which those at the top need to improve so that teachers get motivated (Int 5: 67-68) and in support, literature indicates that offering reasonable salaries to employees is one of the most effective ways for motivating them (HRM Handbook, 2021). With respect to the purpose of this research, giving realistic salaries to teachers help to mitigate the impact of contextual factors in order to promote school effectiveness. Responses which showed that teachers' unions and politics are factors which can deal with the impact of contextual factors in response to promote school effectiveness (Int 5: 350-351) and (Int 4: 444-445). In agreement, the literature supports the part that unions play in fostering school success in response to the impact of context-specific factors (cf. par. 3.3.7).

Thus, with the above indicated findings and the supporting literature, I found it fit to develop a contextual factors management strategy to assist school leaders in addressing contextual issues in schools (cf. par. 5.6.1) to promote school effectiveness.

6.3 Recommendations

As researcher, I offer the following recommendations for potential courses of action in light of the findings that have been noted above.

- For over enrolment, the Ministry of Education Policy for teacher to learner ratio, needs to be accounted for when recruiting learners to address the effects of environmental factors and advance effective teaching and learning (cf. par. 3.3; 5.3.3.1; 5.3.3.2 & table 5.6). Extra classes can also be created in liaison with school development committees to hire and pay qualified teachers who will take charge of the extra classes. If funds permit, school development committees should build more

classrooms. These interventions may help to mitigate the manifestation of contextual factors and promote school effectiveness.

- In the case of financial and material resources, school leaders should liaise with school development committees for opportunities for general meetings with parents in order to raise school fees and ask them to buy some of the material resources like text and exercise books; and sports equipment for their children (cf. par. 5.4.1.1). Positive relationships with the private sector should also be developed, from whom donations in kind and in cash can be sourced (cf. par. 5.3.2.3) to support school effectiveness in response to the effect of contextual factors.
- School leaders should regard communication with all stakeholders as essential in a school organisation in order to deal with the effect of contextual factors in the promotion of quality teaching and learning (cf. 2.1.i; 2.3.1 & 5.3.1.4).
- School principals may employ conferencing supervision as an important supervision method of dealing with the impact of contextual factors in schools to promote quality teaching (cf. Int 8: 306-318).
- Principals should be aware of the diverse leadership styles and be able to select the appropriate style to promote school effectiveness in response to the effect of different contextual factors found in schools (cf. par. 5.3.4). The pragmatic leadership style which encourages school leaders to be always on the ground with the staff may also be considered as a factor that helps to alleviate the impact of contextual factors (cf. par. 5.3.4.6).
- School principals should create progressive and harmonious relationships with education official, responsible authorities and the local political and community leaders because their support helps to deal with school contextual factors thereby promoting school effectiveness.
- Principals, together with ministry of education officials should ensure provision of expert psychological support services (cf. par. 5.4.2.2 & 3.4.3) to all learners from the different backgrounds in order to promote school effectiveness in reaction to the effect of contextual factors in schools.
- School principals should adopt an all-inclusive school curriculum which allows for social integration (cf. par. 5.4.1.4 & 3.4) for the diverse learners who include those living with disabilities and those who are not academically gifted in order to deal with the appearance of contextual factors in schools.
- School administrators in connection with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education need to have mechanisms in schools where food and health facilities are provided to all learners (Wolhuter et al., 2016; par. 3.4.1 & Int 8: 173-175) to mitigate

problems of health and undernourishment caused by poverty, so that school performance is promoted.

- A school principal ought to have a clear school vision with smart objective for the promotion of school effectiveness in response to the influence of contextual factors (cf. par. 2.3.1; 2.4.1 & 5.3.31).
- School teachers need to be professionally developed continuously in order to deal with the effect of contextual factors so as to improve school achievement (cf. par. 5.3.3.4).
- School principals are recommended to adopt a contextual factors management strategy in order to deal with the different contextual factors that influence school effectiveness in the district of Marondera in Zimbabwe.

6.4 Conclusion

Following the research findings and recommendations, I conclude that:

- An understanding of different leadership styles helps school principals to deal with different school contextual factors in order to promote school effectiveness.
- Provision of adequate qualified teachers, material and financial resources helps to promote school effectiveness in reaction to the impact of contextual factors.
- Conferencing supervision as a supervision method for teachers can deal with the influence of contextual elements for the promotion of high-quality instruction and learning.
- Positive school community relationships with all school stakeholders and the private sector help school leaders to deal with contextual factors in order to promote school effectiveness.
- School principals should adhere to the stipulated ministry of education's teacher-learner ratio in order to manage the influence of contextual factors and promote school effectiveness.
- Professionally developing school teachers helps to deal with the impact of contextual factors and leads to the promotion of school effectiveness.
- The provision of health services and food programmes helps students from underprivileged homes perform better in school. As a result, in response to contextual factors at the school, school administrators and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education need to take these impacts into account to encourage school performance.
- School principals should operate under the guidelines of educational policies in order to cope with the impact of school contextual factors and promote school achievement.
- Giving school teachers sufficient salaries promotes school effectiveness and as a result contextual factors are dealt with.

- It is important for school principals to develop and adopt a contextual factors management strategy for the promotion of school effectiveness and dealing with contextual factors' impact.

6.5 Strengths and limitations

This qualitative research, like any other study, had its own strengths and limitations which were recorded. The strengths which were noted are indicated in the following section.

6.5.1 Strengths

- The data were collected in a natural setting where I got first-hand, in-depth and rich information through the face-to-face interviews with the people and the phenomenon being explored. The produced data helped me to understand it in relation to its context. I got an opportunity to feel and internalise their real experiences and I could empathise with them which helped me to understand better their circumstances. The face-to-face interviews also furnished me with the direct quotations which helped to describe particular concepts thereby increasing reliability of the research.
- I was able to investigate the semi-structured interview questions further in order to gain a better knowledge of the participants' circumstances, which led to the development of new ideas.
- The purposeful selection of the research participants helped with the expected rich information for use in the research. Only the participants who had the expected information were selected to participate.
- This research was cost-efficient due to a small number of the selected research participants. It therefore implies that I used limited resources to complete the research.

Some limitations to this study were also eminent. These were, insufficient local previous studies, the period of study, data gathering procedure, myself as a tool for gathering data, availability of time and financial challenges. The limitations are shown in the ensuing section.

6.5.2 Limitations

- Prior research studies, relevant to this thesis, from the Zimbabwean context were limited. As a result, I depended more on studies and literature from other countries which gave a restricted reflection of contextual factors in the studied district of Marondera. This literature limitation makes available an opportunity for further research development in this field of study.

- The study was conducted during the outbreak of COVID 19. Most of the participants, including me, were affected by the virus. Most of the interview appointments had to be moved to later dates which were comfortable with the participants and this derailed the progress of the study. Since I wanted to examine the activities and atmosphere at the schools, it was crucial to conduct the interviews there. Nevertheless, all the interviews were carried out under strict COVID 19 guidelines.
- The settings for data generation were a hindrance to the smooth running of the interviews. Interviews were done in the participants' offices during working hours as a result, there were some disturbances where some participants would receive visitors and sometimes they would excuse themselves to attend to issues that needed their attention. Noise from learners and sirens could be heard during the interviews in some schools. For future studies of this nature, it is advisable to agree with participants to hold the interviews after working hours. All interviews were however completed with the fullest cooperation and appreciation from all of the participants.
- I gathered the data, hence her presence (face-to-face) could have prejudiced some of the responses supplied. Some information was sensitive, so participants were hesitant to divulge it. This could have deprived the study of some important information. Maybe, if it was over the phone, the information could have been shared. On the same note, since the qualitative research depended on my conclusions, some bias could not be ruled out. This was, however, reduced by being reflexive that is, separating what I knew from what the participants expressed in the interviews.
- I was a full time worker and a school leader as well, hence being a part time PhD student was a challenge when it came to balancing the two. As a result, the study took more time than expected. Being a conventional student could have allowed more time for the study.
- The study encountered some financial challenges. First, the data analysis was done manually and it took long because it was not possible for me to employ any relevant software for the purpose of data analysis. Secondly, although the research participants' schools were in the same district, I was responsible for covering the costs of getting from one school to another on various days.

6.6 Recommendations for further study

- Since this study was confined only to the district of Marondera in Zimbabwe, its findings form a basis for recommendation for researches to be carried out in other different district settings of the whole province. Other districts should also probe into the effect of contextual factors on quality teaching in their schools. If the same

findings are brought out, then collaborative endeavours may be applied to encourage effective instruction in all secondary schools in Zimbabwe.

- The findings in this research were mostly established on the standpoint of the male principals which reflects gender disparity in school leadership in the selected schools of interest which could be a reflection of the school leadership gender disparity in the whole District of Marondera. Thus, I recommend for other researches on the importance of gender parity in school leadership in Marondera District as well as the bigger picture of the whole country of Zimbabwe where males dominate the positions of school leadership.
- Future researches on the impact of conference supervision on school achievement will help to deal with the impact of contextual school factors and promote quality teaching in schools.
- Further studies may also be done on the significance of school psychological services on the promotion of school success in reaction to the effect of contextual factors.
- The influence of social integration on school success and
- The importance of professional development in dealing with school contextual factors.

6.7 Personal reflection about the research process

This part outlines my own reflection on my involvement in the research process and how it relates to the research problem. My study focused on identifying the impact of contextual factors in Marondera District schools in Zimbabwe so as to develop a strategy for school leaders in response to the influence of the contextual factors to promote school effectiveness. My research was limited to secondary schools in Zimbabwe's Marondera District, and therefore its findings could not be applied generally. The journey through my research was not that easy, so it needed my optimum effort and resilience in order to sail through.

The formulation of my research topic was not really a challenge. I had many discussions with my supervisor on the area that I wanted to research on and through his support and guidance he approved my research topic. The biggest challenge was on proposal writing and it took some effort and time to arrive at the proposal approval stage. Some of the reasons behind the challenges for proposal approval were that I lacked relevant experience on academic writing skills and at the same time, I lacked self-confidence. I appreciate the time that was taken by my supervisor to teach me the academic writing skills as well as encouraging me and boosting my confidence. I got a lot of literature, relevant to my study from him and the library as well. My supervisor also gave me the opportunity to read some of the researches by former doctoral

students so that I expanded my knowledge and understanding of the effect of different contextual factors in schools for principals to promote quality teaching and learning. My other challenge was getting enough applicable local literature which related to my area of study of the influence of contextual factors for school principal to promote school effectiveness. Accordingly, most of the literature that I relied on was from a foreign situation, for instance, the background of my research has been created by the contextual factors framework of Wolhuter, Van der Walt, and Steyn (2016). On the other hand, the basic leadership practices as pinpointed by The Wallace Foundation (2013 and Waite and Bogotch (2017) served as theoretical basis for this research study, supported by Bass (1989) transformational leadership theory, Hersey and Blanchard (1996) situational leadership theory and the instructional leadership theory explained by different researchers. These theories relate well with the research purpose, to promote school effectiveness in response to the impact of contextual factors. It again took me more time than I had expected to finish the two theoretical chapters of my thesis.

Being a part-time student and a full-time school leader at a school in Zimbabwe was also a draw-back to me although I tried my best to travel to South Africa at least once a month for one-on-one discussions with my supervisor who always made himself available for those meetings. Many times my supervisor would suggest for online meetings in order for me to cut travelling costs. However, due to unreliable power supply in Zimbabwe most meetings had to be abandoned and we mostly relied on emails and Whatsapp platforms for feedback which I felt created a bit of some gap between my supervisor and myself.

Since my research study had adopted the qualitative design which depended on direct communication with the research participants and often allowing researchers to unearth unanticipated facts (Wong, 2008), it was obvious that interviews with semi-structured questions were the most appropriate tool to choose for my data generation. Describing my research design and methodology in chapter four was no easy task for me. I submitted three drafts to my supervisor without success. Honestly speaking, this is the time that I nearly hung up my boots because I could see my journey through my research crumbling. I want to thank my supervisor who kept on supporting and encouraging me to continue being focused and confidently telling me that I was going to make it. Before my fourth draft submission my supervisor arranged for an online discussion with me on how to present my research design and methodology which took about thirty minutes and it paid. My chapter four was at last approved and that was an inspiration to me. My next task was data generation.

The purposive sampling method for participants' selection was appropriate for this study. Before the actual collection of data I carried out a pilot study with two participants who had the same characteristics with the selected participants. This was done to check whether the interview questions were suitable. The first trial-run was done online with my supervisor

watching and I felt very nervous because to me it felt like an examination. I breathed a sigh of relief the following day when my supervisor gave me a positive feedback though with some corrections on my interview guide and the manner in which I had to probe my questions. All the corrections that he recommended were done. With the little experience that I had with interviews, the pilot study boosted my confidence and that was my first step into the field of data generation. Although the experienced and knowledgeable principals made my job easy by providing the expected rich data, the generation of data was affected by lockdown during the COVID 19 pandemic period. Some of the appointments were postponed to further dates because the participants would be down with the disease and this led to my data generation taking long. However, the good part was that I managed to hold all the scheduled interviews successfully.

During the data generation, confidentiality was ensured to all participants and that led the participants to share even the sensitive information with me in a relaxed and composed manner. One other thing that I had to be careful about was the issue of reflexivity. Reflexivity is a social science concept that emphasises the effect of the researcher in study and practice, according to Fook (2002) (cf. par. 4.7). As part of the research (as interviewer) and knowing very well that my experiences, judgments and beliefs as a school leader could influence my study process, I had to make sure that I reduced the chances of biasing the research by withholding my opinions of reality and letting those of the participants prevail. I created a rapport with the participants which allowed me to come out with rich first-hand information because of the face-to-face interviews (direct contact) and that allowed some of my biases to be disapproved. I could feel that the participants regarded my research as a saviour to their woes about the impact of contextual factors at their schools and I remember one participant asking me repeatedly to send him a copy of the results after the research. To me, that reaction was an indication that contextual factors do exist in schools in the district of Marondera and there was need to develop a strategy to promote school effectiveness in response to the effect of the contextual factors.

After the data generation, another heavy task of data analysis lied ahead of me. My supervisor advised me to regard this stage as the most crucial phase of a research where I had to assess and understand the collected information in relation to the reviewed literature as well as in relation to the theoretical framework. I had collected volumes of information which of course included irrelevant ones. Due to the nature of my qualitative research, we agreed with my supervisor to adopt the content analysis method for the data analysis. I had to analyse and interpret the data personally and manually because I wanted to familiarise with the data in an effort to comprehend them better. The process was strenuous and time-consuming because it was iterative. It required me to read the interview transcripts several times to familiarise myself with the data and to be able to remove all the irrelevant information during the coding process.

The repeated data coding ended with accepted data which later resulted in categories which I used as the topics in the discussions which led to the end results of this research. The discussions and coaching on data analysis and interpretation that I got from my supervisor helped me to sail through the process.

The findings that I got were limited to the schools in the Marondera District and they showed that most schools in the district were affected by contextual factors at school, society and national levels. The research concentrated on the influence of contextual influences in schools in the district of Marondera and to develop a strategy for school principals as a measure for dealing with the contextual factors. So, the management strategy that was developed in this research, if utilised by school leaders, it may help them to promote school effectiveness in their schools.

In conclusion, it was an exciting challenge for me to embark on this research. It has helped me to grow in the field of research where I socialised with different researchers through reading diverse literature related to my area of study. The knowledge of research ethics has moulded me to develop into a principled and improved researcher. Also, I have learnt that research needs someone to be determined, self-disciplined and to put extreme effort if the research is to be completed. I remember there were times that I would go for bed around midnight or early hours of the day in order to finish my work. One other important lesson for me was never to get discouraged during the study. At times I would get feedback and comments from my supervisor which I thought were negative but honestly, I later realised that those comments were actually constructive and they even pushed me and made me stronger.

They helped me to develop and enhance my academic writing skills which led to the achievement of what I thought was unachievable. I have developed a close relationship with the principals who participated in the research and the education officials who made it possible for me to conduct my investigation in schools in the Marondera District. Being a full time worker and at the same time being a research student is no joke. You need to manage your time well. At times I would find myself sacrificing for my research at the expense of my job due to poor management of time. In my case, I overcame that challenge through doing some of my school duties during weekends.

With that, I respect my supervisor for his guidance, encouragement, patience and for all the discussions and online meetings that he scheduled in order to see me accomplish my goal.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Schedule

How are you sir/madam? I am Lizzie Muvevi, a student at the North West University in South Africa. Thank you for accepting to be interviewed by me. As per our discussion on the phone, I selected you as one of my participants in my research which will assist me to come up with a thesis. I am interested in learning about your experiences and the challenges that you face every day as you discharge your duties as the school principal of this school. Therefore, there will not be any wrong or right answer to all the questions. The purpose of this research is to develop a strategy for school principals in the Marondera District schools, in order to promote quality teaching. Thus, I would also like to understand more on some of the strategies that you employ, in order to deal with some of these contextual factors that obstruct the quality of teaching and learning. Let me assure you that, sensitive information that you shall share with me will be confidential. I shall replace all identifying information with pseudonyms or abstract characters, where the actual names shall never be known by anyone. The research is for authenticity and getting correct data which I shall use for research purposes only. If you feel that you no longer want to continue with the interview, you are free to do so any time. With your permission, our interview will be audio-recorded using my mobile phone. The purpose of recording is to capture your voice as it is, so that when analysing the data, no information is left out. It will also help me to write your responses, word for word.

Our interview may approximately take about 40 to 60 minutes. I hope this will not be a problem for you. Do you have any questions that you want to ask me before we start? May you also sign the consent form that I have, to show that you willingly agree to participate in this interview? I also have a biographical information form which I would also want you to fill before we start our conversation. Thank you sir/madam.

Our interview may approximately take about 40 to 60 minutes. I hope this will not be a problem for you. Do you have any questions that you want to ask me before we start? May you also sign the consent form that I have, to show that you willingly agree to participate in this interview? I also have a biographical information form which I would also want you to fill before we start our conversation. Thank you sir/madam.

1.1 So, to start, may you please explain to me your experiences as a school principal in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE), to ensure quality teaching and learning

in your school? What are your successes and challenges as a school principal, to ensure quality teaching and learning? (Research question 1: Chapter 2)

2. The concept of school leadership in relation to quality teaching and learning

2.1. In your view, what do you understand about the concept of leadership (i) in general and specifically ii) in an education/schooling context? (Research question 1: Chapter 2)

2.2 Can you explain how you perceive the relationship between the quality of school leadership and the quality of teaching and learning in a school? (Research question 1: Chapter 2).

2.3. Can you clarify further sir/madam, the school leadership style/s that you have found applicable, to promote quality teaching and learning in your daily discharge of your duties? (Research question 1: chapter 2.)

2.4. How have you found the styles that you have mentioned, useful in maintaining the quality of teaching and learning in your school? (Research question 1: Chapter 2).

3. Contextual factors that have an influence on the quality of teaching and learning in your school

3.1. Schools in the Marondera District have been affected by different contextual factors that have led to the high academic failure rate, with some schools scoring 0% in the Zimbabwe schools examinations (MOPSE Marondera District, 2019). May you please explain what you think are some of these contextual factors? (Research question 2: Chapter 3)

3.2. Please can you explain on any specific contextual factors (factors related to broader context of your school) that have an impact on the quality of teaching and learning in your school (question 2: Chapter 3)

3.3. Can you classify these contextual factors that influence the quality of teaching and learning in the following categories, Micro (those factors within the school boundary), meso (those factors influenced by the society or community) and macro (those contextual factors that are nationally or globally influenced) (Research question 2: Chapter 3)

4. The extent to which specific contextual factors have negatively, as well as positively, impacted on the quality of teaching and learning in your school

4.1 Can you be specific on what contextual factors have an influence on the school in terms of: (Research question 3: Chapter 3)

4.2 Welfare of learners

4.3 Welfare of staff

4.4 Quality of teaching

4.5 Quality of learning

4.6 school demographics

4.7 School community interaction/involvement

4.8 school culture and climate

4.9 school management and governance

4.10 Support from stakeholders, for example, the parents, responsible authority and Ministry of Education

4.11 Any other influence(s)?

5. Strategies that are being implemented in schools to account for the influence of contextual factors.

5.1 Can you please explain the strategies that you are using to manage the influence of your school's specific contextual factors? (Research question 4)

5.2 Yourself as school principal

5.3 The school management team

5.4 The school development committee (SDC)

5.5 The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

5.6 Community leaders

5.7 Is there anything else besides what is currently being done, that you feel or think can also aid in managing the mentioned contextual factors, to improve the quality of teaching and learning in your school?

6. Conclusion

6.1 Is there anything else that you feel you want to add and any question that you want to ask me?

6.2 Thank you so much sir/madam for taking your time to answer the questions. It has been my pleasure to be with you today and talking to you. If I have any other question to you, I will phone you to book for another appointment.

If you also have something that needs my attention after this interview, please do not hesitate to contact me on my mobile number, which is, 0773 072 664. God bless

Appendix 2: Ethics approval letter



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Fax: 018 299-4910
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Senate Committee for Research Ethics
Tel: 018 299-4849
Email: nkosinathi.machine@nwu.ac.za

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee (EduREC)** on 25 November 2021, this committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-SCRE) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: The influence of contextual factors for principals to promote quality teaching in the Marondera District of Zimbabwe

Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Prof HJ van Vuuren

Student / Team: L Muvevi (PhD student – 27709159)

Ethics number:

N	W	U	-	0	1	9	0	5	-	2	0	-	A	2
Institution				Study Number						Year			Status	

Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

Application Type: Single study

Commencement date: 25 November 2021

Risk:

Low

Expiry date: 25 November 2022

Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- The study leader/supervisor/principal investigator/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the EduREC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.
- The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the EduREC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and EduREC reserves the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;

- to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;
- withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the EduREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
 - submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.

The EduREC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the EduREC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely



Prof JAK Olivier
Chairperson NWU Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee

Original details: (22351930) C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY.docm
8 November 2018

Current details: (22351930) M:\DSS1\8533\Monitoring and Reporting Cluster\Ethics\Certificates\Templates\Research Ethics Approval Letters\9.1.5.4.1 ES-REC Ethical Approval Letter.docm
5 December 2018

File reference: 9.1.5.4.2

Appendix 3: Permission by District Schools Inspector



Mr Tsindikidzo Simety (DSI)
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
P.O. Box 752
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Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
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Edu-Lead

PhD Candidate/Researcher: Mrs Lizzie Muvevi
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Email: lizziemuvevi@gmail.com

6 October 2021

PERMISSION LETTER: THE DISTRICT SCHOOLS INSPECTOR

I herewith wish to request your permission for the Marondera District Secondary Schools Principals to participate in this research, which involves interviews with them. Prior to granting permission, please acquaint yourself with the information below.

The details of the research are as follows:

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

The influence of contextual factors for principals to promote quality teaching in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe.

ETHICS APPLICATION NUMBER

NWU-01905-20-S2

PROJECT SUPERVISOR: Professor Herman Van Vuuren
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CONTACT NUMBER: 0832330604
EMAIL: Herman.Vanvuuren@nwu.ac.za

FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Contact person: Ms Erna Greyling, E-mail: Erna.Greyling@nwu.ac.za, Tel. (018) 299 4656

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education of the North-West University and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines of this committee. Permission was also obtained from the provincial Department of Basic Education/other relevant body.

What is this research about?

The aims of this research is:

- to determine and describe the connection between school leadership and quality teaching and learning.

- to identify and elucidate specific contextual factors that affect the quality of teaching in schools in the Marondera District, and
- to develop a management strategy for the school leadership in the Marondera District of Zimbabwe to promote quality teaching and learning in response to the influence.

Participants

- School principals.

What is expected of the participants?

Participants are expected to participate in the interview with the researcher and they give responses to the questions asked by the researcher.

Benefits to the participants

Participants will be informed and gain increased awareness of the contextual factors that directly and indirectly affect them, their schools and those of others. Participants will be in a position to choose the appropriate strategies to deal with the contextual factors that affect their schools, in order to promote quality teaching and learning.

Risks involved for participants

Private and confidential information supplied by the participants may be intercepted by people who are not involved in the research which may lead to the identification of the participants and their schools. This identification may lead to discomfort on the part of the participants. Therefore, to avoid this risk, interviews will be held in private places, convenient to the participants. Data collected will be kept as soft copies on the researcher's computer and flash disk, with a password, only known to the researcher. All hard copies and notes will be kept in my office in lockable drawers, with keys only accessible to me.

Confidentiality and protection of identity

All information will be private and confidential. No real names of participants will be identified as well as those names of schools involved in the research. Pseudonyms will be used for participants in order to hide their identity.

Dissemination of findings

The research findings will be made available in the public domain for all interested people to obtain information on the findings. Participants will be provided with hard copies of the findings.

If you have any further questions or enquiries regarding your participation in this research, please contact the researchers for more information.

DECLARATION BY: DISTRICT SCHOOLS INSPECTOR

By signing below, I TSINNIKATO SIMPSON agree to give permission for the research to take place with the identified participants in the study entitled:

The influence of contextual factors for principals to promote quality teaching in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe.

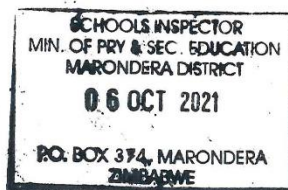
I declare that:

- I have read this information and consent form and understand what is expected of the participants in the research.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to the researcher and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and participants will not be pressurised to take part.
- Participants may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- Participants may be asked to leave the research process before it is completed, if the researcher feels it is in their best interests, or if they do not follow the research procedures, as agreed to.

Signed at (place) MARONDERA on (date) 06/10/2021



Signature of the District Schools Inspector



Appendix 4: Letter of proofreading

 ROBINDOS	1 Kingsmead Road Borrowdale, Harare	Suite 304, Garden Court 14th Ave/ R.Mugabe way Bulawayo	Sanhanga center P.O Box 279 Mutare	Shop No 4 Old Chinhoyi Hotel Complex Chinhoyi
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This is to certify that the thesis entitled

The influence of contextual factors for principals to promote quality teaching in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe

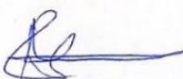
By

L Muvevi

has been edited for language by Robindos native English Editor. The following issues were corrected, grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure and phrasing. Neither the research contents nor the author's research intentions were altered. Robindos guarantees the quality of English in this paper, provided our editor's changes are accepted and further changes are checked by our editor.

Issued by Robindos

Date 13/09/23




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Appendix 5: Participant Information and Consent Form



Marondera

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Faculty of Education (Edu-Lead)

PhD Candidate/Researcher: Mrs Lizzie Muvevi

Tel: 0773 072 664
Email: lizziemuvevi@gmail.com

Date 13/12/21

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

I herewith wish to request your consent to participate in this research, which involves interviews with school principals. Before you give consent, please acquaint yourself with the information below.

The details of the research are as follows:

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

The influence of contextual factors for principals to promote quality teaching in the Marondera District in Zimbabwe

ETHICS APPLICATION NUMBER

NWU-

PROJECT SUPERVISOR: Professor Herman Van Vuuren
ADDRESS: North West University
Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520
Email: Herman.Vanvuure@nwu.ac.za
CONTACT NUMBER: 0832330604

FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Contact person: Ms Ema Greyling, E-mail: Ema.Greyling@nwu.ac.za, Tel. (018) 299 4656

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education of the North-West University and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines of this committee. Permission was also obtained from the District Schools Inspector (DSI).

What is this research about?

The aims of this research are:

- to determine and describe the connection between school leadership and quality teaching and learning
- to identify and Describe the contextual factors that have an influence on the quality of teaching and learning in schools according to the contextual forces framework

I declare that:

- I have read this information and consent form and understand what is expected of me in the research.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to the researcher and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the research process before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the research procedures, as agreed to.

Signed at (place) _____ on (date) ____/____/20____

Signature of participant

Researcher

Appendix 6: Participant biographical information

Participant biographical information

Fill in the blank spaces with correct personal details

Name of participant -----

Gender -----

Age -----

Professional qualification -----

Year appointed as principal -----

Years at the station -----

Type of school -----

School enrollment -----

Thank you

Appendix 7: Pre-interview arrangements

Pre-interview arrangements

1. Venue

- I contacted all the participants through the phone, a week before carrying out the actual interviews in order to confirm their availability at the stations and the time when the interviews would start. A day before the interview, I phoned again each participant to confirm my visit and the time of my arrival, at least thirty minutes before the interview. The thirty minutes would be enough for the participant to put the house in order and get ready for the interview.
- In the event that the participant would not be present at the station, I agreed with the participants that, with the permission of the principal, the interview would proceed with the deputy principal. On the other hand, if the principal did not want anyone to replace him/her, then it was possible to communicate with me to reschedule the interview.
- I encouraged the participants to choose quiet and convenient places for the interviews in order to minimize interruptions during the interview processes. If any unanticipated interruptions occurred in the midst of the interview, I paused my audio-recording for about three minutes in order to allow the interviewee to sort out the problem. However, I did not expect any challenges because participants had agreed to assign all the work to their deputies so that they (principals) concentrate on the interviews only. Throughout the interviews, I agreed with the interviewees to put mobile phones on silence to avoid disturbances.
- A day before going to the interview venue, I made sure that the iPhone that I would use for audio-recording was fully charged and had enough space for storage. I also carried two fully charged power banks to recharge my phone batteries, just in case my iPhone ran out of power. To avoid disappointment, I ran a few trial recordings before my first actual interview.

3. My role as the interviewer

To collect enough, rich and relevant data from the interviewees, I had to build trust and confidence with them in their own settings. That also helped the interviewees to share their profound experiences and opinions in a relaxed frame of mind, leading to dependable research findings. I informed the interviewees that I would be audio-recording them, using an iPhone and also I would write. I explained to the participants that by audio-recording them, I had the advantage of being able to review and replay the interview at a later date and I also had the potential to identify key information that might have been missed during the interview (Sullivan, 2010).

Because the recorded interviews were data files, which were likely to be lost any moment, I had to immediately transfer the files onto my laptop and flash disk. That enabled me to create a back-up copy to which I would give a name.

2. COVID 19 health and safety precautions

For the safety of participants and myself, I adhered to the COVID 19 regulations and protocols. On the day of the interviews, I made sure that I wore a surgical mask that covered both my mouth and nose before I left home. I drove alone to all the nine interview venues, so that I would not have to bother myself about maintaining any social distance with anyone. I carried a box of fifty surgical masks and two, 500ml bottles of 80% alcohol-based sanitizing hand rub to the interview venues, for fear that the participants might not have them. I made sure that there would be no handshake between myself and the participants. I encouraged the participants to choose spacious and well ventilated places which would allow us to maintain a social distance of two metres or more. Hand sanitizing by participants and I, before and after handling any materials during the interviews, was the order of the day. I encouraged participants to feel free to communicate with me if they felt unwell so that the interviews would be rescheduled. I would also communicate with them as well, if I was unwell. That helped to avoid putting my health and that of the participants at the risk of contracting COVID 19.

Appendix 8: Interview transcript

Interview 1

Date: 13/ 12/ 21

Time: 09:15

LM = interviewer

FN = interviewee

LM: To start sir, we are going to look at the concept of, leadership in relation to quality teaching and learning. Now in your view sir, what do you understand about the concept of leadership in this case, in general? What is leadership to you? Then the concept of leadership in an education or schooling setup, so, may I share with you sir?

FN: Right, firstly, uum, generally, leadership refers to management of any organization. You sit down and plan, devise the methods that you would want to use to achieve the institutional goals. Leadership is all about vision, look into the future of your organization and see where you want to be with your company. Then you work towards that.

A leader must work with a vision in order to be successful. Secondly, umm, it refers to being an accounting officer of a particular organization. You are the one who is responsible for anything which happens in the organization on a daily basis. Then ehh, in an educational setting or in a school setting, the concept of leadership refers to being in charge of that educational institution, referring again to being the accounting officer of the day to day running of that particular institution. It could be, umm, finance, financial books. It could be, theee, any project being done in the school. All school activities in a school, are his charge. Therefore, all that, should run smoothly in a conducive environment which will contribute to good performance by staff and learners. The ehmm, leader of that particular school, is the one who is responsible or is in charge or is manager of that particular institution

LM: Ok sir thank you very much think I have understood everything there. Ahh, sir can you please explain how you see or how you perceive the relationship between the quality of school leadership and the quality of teaching and learning in a school. Yes, can you explain to me how you see it, the relationship between the two, the leader and the quality of teaching and learning in a school?

FN: Right there is a close link, between the leader and the quality of teaching and learning in the school. He is the one responsible with the provision of the learning and teaching materials, that is, the resources in general and he is also in charge of supervision of teaching and learning. He is the one who goes into the classroom, observing lessons even inspecting the professional documents for the teacher. After every class visit for supervision, I sit down with the teacher to discuss all areas that needed improvement and also give a pat on the back to appreciate the work being done well. All this effort is to develop the teacher professionally. So, there is that close link between the, ehm, school manager and the quality of teaching and learning.

LM: Ok sir, can you clarify further sir the school leadership style that you have found applicable to promote quality teaching and learning in your daily discharge of your duties. Uuumm, you have leadership styles that you feel are comfortable with and you apply those uumm, leadership styles and you have seen things ticking. So these are what I want to share, eehh, I want you to share with me, sir. Can you explain how you, eehh, can you clarify to me eehh, the school leadership

43 styles that you have found applicable to promote quality teaching and learning, in this school of
 44 yours.

45 **FN:** Right, umm, in fact there are many leadership styles which can be used and they vary
 46 according to the situation of the environment, but there are two main ones which I have used most
 47 of the time, ehh, first one is the democratic style, whereby everyone in the institute is a decision-
 48 maker but ehh, at the, after you have listed the decisions made by each staff member, you select
 49 the most vital ones and then you make your overall decision. It could be uuum, buying of, mm,
 50 purchase of school resources, you can employ the heads of departments, probably, purchase of
 51 text books, school equipment and then after they have provided you write the list of their
 52 requirements, you select the most vital ones, and then, eehmm, the purchases will be done. Then
 53 there is the collaborative style. Eeeh, it includes the demands of the individual and those of the
 54 institution, eehmm, there is that eehm, link between the needs of each member of staff and the
 55 needs of the institution. Then you combine the two and they usually make the learning and
 56 teaching process more meaningful. Or again, at times you may use other undesirable styles, like
 57 the autocratic style. It depends on the situation or the environment. Eeeh, let's say members of
 58 staff have given decisions which are detrimental to the development of the school, you can be
 59 autocratic, eeh, being the overall decision-maker, discarding what has been said by the members
 60 of staff.

61 **LM:** Ok, uumm, can u be very specific there, when you use this autocratic, uum, leadership style,
 62 uumm, does it have any benefits, have you found any benefits in it, and when you use it, do your
 63 subordinates accept that?

64 **FN:** Yaaa, of cause, you can face some challenges. It could be resistance from the members of
 65 staff, but once you have made your decision, and you don't waiver in your decision-making, they
 66 will have to accept it at the end. Though it's not used oftenly but you can use it according to the
 67 situation.

68 **LM:** Ok, thank you very much. There is this second, uumm , the second leadership style, that you
 69 have mentioned can you really explain further, eeh, how the incidences where you have applied
 70 this, eeh, leadership style, yes .

71 **FN:** Uuum, probably, like, eehh, it's the beginning of the year , and your heads come with their
 72 budgets of the various departments, uumm, you, uumm, sometimes you have to accommodate
 73 most the items which have been written in that budget and then, and also consider whether the
 74 finance you have in the school, tallies then you can go ahead and purchase the items which have
 75 been requested by each department, so there is honoring of the needs of each department and
 76 the school's, eeehh, requirements .

77 **LM:** Ok, ok, soo, what you are saying here, are you saying, uuum, it depends with the resources
 78 that you are going to accept the demands of uum, eeehh, and the teachers?

79 **FN:** Yes.

80 **LM:** Alright sir, thank you very much. Now, eehh, may I go further sir, and ask, eehh, these
 81 leadership styles that you have mentioned, the leadership styles that you have found very useful,
 82 uuhh, in your school, eehh, to promote, eehh, quality teaching and learning of cause. How have
 83 you found the styles that you have mentioned useful in maintaining eehh, the quality of teaching
 84 and learning in your school?

85 **FN:** Ummm, I am sure, for instance, the democratic style ensures the contribution, by all members
 86 of staff, in the teaching and learning which will be going on the school. Eeehh, the head then
 87 select decisions from those which have been contributed by those heads of departments. Then

88 the collaborative style ensures optional function of the organisation, since it encompasses both
 89 the demands of the individual and those of the institution.

90 **LM:** Ok sir. Eeehh, thank you very much. Eeeh, may I continue to ask, we are still there. Eeeh,
 91 can you cite some examples where you have seen the quality of teaching and learning being
 92 successful, though, eehh, the leadership styles that you have mentioned. Some incidences, can
 93 you cite some incidences or some events that you feel, ahhh, here, by this leadership style of
 94 mine, yes I'm seeing some fruits, from this leadership style. Can you mention, can you cite some
 95 examples, where you have seen those styles of yours successful?

96 **FN:** Ummm, for instance, over the years, we have sat as a board, that is, the teachers and the
 97 administration, in the procurement of text books or it could be equipment, and we have given each
 98 department the opportunity of listing down their requirements and then we have been successful
 99 in most of the incidences, for instance, the pass rate improves if you honor the demands of each
 100 department and as long as the financial position of the school is in a position of supporting those,
 101 the demands of each department.

102 **LM:** Ok, thank you very much sir. So, ehmmmm, we continue sir. Now we are looking at the
 103 contextual factors sir that has influence on the quality of teaching and learning at your school. I
 104 want you to share with me, eehh, and these contextual factors that have some influence on the
 105 quality of teaching in your school. Uuum schools in Marondera District sir, have been affected, I
 106 think you agree with me they, have been affected by different contextual factors that have led to
 107 high academic failure rate in our district in Marondera, with some schools scoring even zero
 108 percent, yes. Ehhh, in the Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council, that is ZIMSEC, Marondera
 109 District, 2019, there is this information that there are some schools which scored zero percent
 110 because of certain contextual factors. Now, sir, may you please explain what you think are some
 111 of these contextual factors.

112 Maybe, if you can clearly explain on that.

113 **FN:** Right uumm, some of the contextual factors have impacted positively, either positively or
 114 negatively ehhh, for instance on the negative side, it could be lack of resource eehh, can impact
 115 negatively on the performance of these , the candidates of that particular year but uummm, if the
 116 resources are adequate, that will boost pass rate. It could be, purchase text book, equipment,
 117 provision of the internet services in the school. If all those are in place, then there will be a high
 118 pass rate in the school. Ehhh, also, negative aspects have impacted our school, for instance
 119 introduction of the new curriculum in the schools that is, Continuous Assessment Learning
 120 Activities, where learners are expected to do projects, which are assessed and allocated marks
 121 which carry 30% of the final examination mark in every learning area. It is ill-timed. They have
 122 consumed most of the learning time and coverage of syllabus has been affected, due to the
 123 various learning activities which should be covered within two terms. The teachers did not know
 124 how to go about it because of lack of training, it was a new thing to them. That compromises
 125 standards. Probably this has been affected by mostly the pandemic which is occurring at the
 126 moment, that is, covid 19 and also contextual factors have impact on quality of teaching and
 127 learning in our school. That's, I think that, ehhh, those are some of the points which I can say in
 128 connection with the contextual factors.

129 **LM:** Ok, alright. Ehh may I ask there sir, eeehh, be specific, I think I didn't get you well, for the
 130 specific contextual factors that are affecting your school, the specific contextual factors that have
 131 an impact, ehhhh, on the quality of teaching and learning in your school .

132 **FN:** Right, there is ehh

133 **LM:** Negative, positive in your school,

134 **FN:** Ehmmm, I will be, looking at both negative and positive. Firstly, there is non-payment of fees
135 particularly the school. It has impacted negatively, ehmmm, in the teaching and learning of our
136 learners and teachers, eh, for instance, purchase of resources depends on payment of fees.
137 Parents or the community of this school resist payment of fees and as a result, we don't succeed
138 well in, uhmm, it could be academically and also development of the school, but there are some
139 parents who are willing to pay, but a small percentage of parents have contributed, to some
140 extent, to better performance of our school but the majority are resistant, in payment of fees. Then
141 there is also negative attitude from the community surrounding our school, towards the education
142 of their children. Most cases there are vandalism of school property. Recently during the
143 lockdown, before we opened this term, our school garden fence was stolen and as a result our
144 project, agricultural project has suffered a lot.

145 Then reduction of the school year due to the impact of COVID 19 has impacted negatively, there
146 is less teaching and learning time. There are now only two terms, first and this ehmmm second
147 term. Meaning, coverage of school syllabus is difficulty. Then as I have said earlier on the
148 introduction of continuous assessment learning activities has also impacted negatively on
149 syllabus coverage to the school.

150 **LM:** May I know sir, sorry, may I interject. You are talking about Continuous Assessment Learning
151 Activity. What exactly will be taking place, that you say it's affecting the quality of teaching and
152 learning?

153 **FN:** ummm, the, there, for each subject, there are now three learning activities, which should be
154 accomplished by each candidate and at the expense of syllabus coverage and as a result ,
155 teachers are at pains in trying to cover for lost time ummm, during lockdown. They will have to
156 concentrate mainly on learning area activities which have a deadline, a set deadline and at the
157 same time they have to cover the school syllabus so it's a challenge which is impacting the school,
158 could be contextually and both contextually and eh, as a nation.

159 **LM:** ok sir, eh, I have heard you talking about the negative contextual factors, those contextual
160 factors that have negatively affected you as the leader and your school as well as the teaching and
161 learning. Eeh, may I also, aah, may you share with me, eeh, if there are some positive factors
162 that have influenced the quality of teaching or that have made the quality of teaching and learning
163 in your school improve.

164 **LM:** It's already there?

165 **FN:** We transformed our old staffroom into a computer lab and with the help of the government.
166 So the main challenge we have is for a qualified computer science teacher. We eh at the one
167 stage the SDC employed a computer teacher but later due to lack of funding, ehmmm ,there is
168 now no teacher for that particular area.

169 **LM:** Ok, have you, eehm, presented your challenge of lack of personnel in the ICT department to
170 the Ministry of Education?

171 **FN:** Yes, uuum, we applied but up to now they haven't responded.

172 **LM:** All right.

173 **FN:** Ehmm, I have gone there often but they are still looking into the matter.

174 **LM:** All right .Thank very much sir. Now sir, let's look at eh, in your school, let's look at the
175 specific contextual factors that you feel are affecting the welfare of learners at your school .Are
176 there any factors that are affecting positively , negatively , eh, the welfare of learners in your
177 school ?

178 **FN:** Right, ehh, there is a formation of, ehh, ehmm, a fund for the girl child, ehh, from NAC, National
 179 Aids Council. They have chosen our school, Marondera and Mureverwi, a few schools, so that
 180 they can fund the education of the school and the community is also involved .Eeem, parents of
 181 those children, they are fifty girls and they often , the parents come to meet with ,ehhm, members
 182 from NAC, so as to look at the funding of the girl child at the school and recently, eehhm , we
 183 were lucky to receive a donation of over 300 000 Zimbabwean dollars for the purchase of school
 184 uniforms for those fifty girls .

185 **LM:** Ohh, ok, good.

186 **FN:** So there is collaboration between ummm, between NAC and the community ehmm, the
 187 parents of those children come and witness, ehmm, thee, help which is being, it is done monthly.

188 **LM:** And NAC sir, is it a non-governmental organization or?

189 **FN:** Uhhmm, I think it's a-a-a, what can we call it? Eehhmm, it's an affiliate of ummm, government,
 190 eehhh, its National Aids Council, and our eehhm, Mr. Chapwanya often comes whenever we
 191 have meetings with NAC and parents .

192 **LM:** Ok, ok, so this funding, how are you using it, if I get you well sir, you said it is specifically for
 193 the girl child, to fund the girl child. How are you using this fund to benefit the girl child? How is it
 194 benefiting the girl child?

195 **FN:** Eeehmm, most of the girls who were chosen, have challenges in payment of school levies.
 196 Parents are eehhm, not working and as a result, NAC chips in the payment of those school levies.

197 **LM:** Uumm, uumm, ok, thank you very much. Ok, and May I ask sir, eehh, we also have contextual
 198 factors that affect or that influence the welfare of your staff here negative, positive. May you share
 199 with me, some of these factors that are influencing the welfare of your staff?

200 **FN:** Right, uumm, I can say payment of fees in a way, aahh, helps in the boosting of the moral of
 201 the teacher. If the fees are paid in full then the school can purchase stationery which is required
 202 in the teaching and learning, uumm, which goes in the school, but sometimes, eehh, iihh, ust a
 203 few parents pay, and ehhh, as a result we have challenges in purchase of school equipment
 204 which is needed in the school, and that inturn, impacts negatively in the performance of both the
 205 teacher and the learner.

206 **LM:** Ok, all right, all right sir. Ok aahhm, what about - - -

207 **FN:** B aahhmm, there are also positive uumm, aspects like, ehhh, the school has a large terrain
 208 which can be used for, ehmm, farming activities, and eehh, as a result, all teachers have pieces
 209 of land where they can eeehh, do some agricultural activities, particularly during this season, they
 210 have, each one has a field where he can plant crops for his own benefit.

211 **LM:** Umm, ok, and how big?

212 **FN:**Eehh, just, let`s, say, uumm, I don`t know, how, I can measure, both in the school yard just
 213 outside the perimeter fence.

214 **LM:** ok, aahh, thank you very much. And may I know also sir, eehh, if there are any contextual
 215 factors that are affecting the quality of teaching here.

216 **FN:** Uuumm, contextual?

217 **LM:** Yes, the factors that are affecting the quality of teaching, the teaching itself, yes.

218 **FN:** Uuuum, like what I said earlier on, most of the parents have a negative attitude towards, the
 219 teaching and learning activities in this school. This is mostly brought out by non-payment of fees
 220 by the majority of parents. I don't know why they have that attitude, the community itself.

221 **LM:** Ok, thank you very much. Now, may I know ahhmm, if we have, aahh, the contextual factors
 222 that are affecting your school demographically, the demographic of this school, aahh, may I know
 223 some factors, some contextual factors, aah, that are affecting ehheh, the demographics of your
 224 school ?

225 **FN:** All right. Uuuumm, if u can explain what you mean by demographics.

226 **LM:** Ok, maybe school enrollment, may you talk about, the boys, eeheh, any.

227 **FN:** Ok, right, eeheheh.

228 **LM:** You may also want, maybe it also affects, ahhh, the demographics maybe on the part of
 229 teachers. Yes.

230 **FN:** Eeehehmm, mostly, eeheh, our school, eehehmm, the school levies, ahh, we charge a bit higher
 231 than those of within our zone or our cluster, eehehmm, for instance we are charging, at the moment
 232 we haven't held our annual general meeting but last year we applied for, it was 5400 dollars eeheh,
 233 that's what we are charging right now but we intend to increase the school levies for each term.
 234 The other schools, secondary schools within our cluster are charging half of that amount , and as
 235 a result , most of, there has been an exodus of, learners from this school, going to, either
 236 Marondera, eeheh, Chizengeni, eeheh, secondary school, which are nearer our school. It's mainly
 237 caused by the fact that our fees are higher than those of the surrounding schools.

238 **LM:** Ok, ok, so, what is it really affecting?

239 **FN:** The population has gone down due to that exodus. Parents are now choosing to, eehehmm,
 240 eehehmm, to transfer their children to nearby schools due to the fact that, aahheh, we are changing
 241 higher levies.

242 **LM:** Umhu, umhu, ok sir, thank you very much.

243 **FN:** Though quality wise we produce better results than those of the schools within our cluster.

244 **LM:** Aaah, good, ok, all right, all right. Eeeheh, we also have uuhm, some contextual factors, eeheh,
 245 can you explain to me sir, eeheh, and some factors that may affect the school community
 246 interaction or the school community involvement, eeheh, and do we have some factors that are
 247 affecting the involvement of parents in your school .Maybe that will affect the quality of teaching,
 248 eeheh and learning. Or ma you explain, to be specific, explain how parent's involvement, the
 249 community involvement is affecting your school, the teaching and learning in your school. The
 250 community interaction or the school community involvement. How is it affecting the teaching and
 251 learning, yes, in your school?

252 **FN:** Yeess, I'm sure in a way , there is a link between the eehehmm, administration and the parents,
 253 for instance, at the beginning of each year we hold ohm, a general meeting or, each the inclusion
 254 of parents in the running of the school, that is, choosing of SDC members who are part of the
 255 community, they are representatives of the community and eeheh, in a way they help in eeheh,
 256 interacting with the community, surrounding the school concerning the developments which are
 257 in school and even some of the challenges being met by the school. They are in way
 258 representatives of parents, who are within the community.

259 **LM:** All right sir, thank you very much, and the school culture, the school climate, yes, can you try
 260 and share with me some of the factors that are affecting the school culture of the school climate
 261 in general, of your school.

262 FN: Alright, uuhhm, school culture, that is the environment of the school?

263 **LM:** Yeess, yeess.

264 FN: Right, eehh, in a way none payment of fees is the one which is impacting negatively on our
 265 school. As I mentioned before, we don't have adequate equipment and eehh, infrastructure
 266 needed in the teaching and learning process, eehh , it's mainly being caused by, eehh, resistance
 267 by some of the parents , mainly caused by, eeh, what I have mentioned earlier, by aahh, the fact
 268 that our school is charging higher school levies than the surrounding schools.

269 **LM:** Uuuhmm, thank you, and can you share with me sir, some of the contextual factors that are
 270 affecting the school management. The school management, your senior teachers, your deputy
 271 head, yourself. Eeeeh, may you share with me the factors that are affecting the school
 272 management, in order to promote quality teaching and learning.

273 FN: I'm sure the one which I'm repeating, nonpayment of levies is impacting heavily on the daily
 274 running of the school. Parents are not that ahhh, that welcoming, they are not paying fees in full.
 275 We have quite a number who haven't paid anything since the start of the year, and we are in the
 276 process of compiling the names of such parents so that we can probably engage the court in
 277 settling of school levy arrears.

278 **LM:** OK, all right, sooo, you are talking of ahmm, eehh, the school being difficult to manage, you
 279 are finding it difficult to govern or manage the school without fees being paid. Ok, so do have any
 280 other, eehh, factors that are affecting the management of your school or the governance of your
 281 school that is preventing maybe, the quality of teaching and learning or positively maybe some
 282 contextual factors that are influencing ehh, the management and governance of your school and
 283 maybe or maybe you are saying these factors are promoting quality teaching in my school.

284 **FN:** I think the general attitude of the parents, eehh, surrounding us, eehhm, for instance
 285 yesterday, weee, the guard discovered that the perimeter fence had been cut, and the part of that
 286 perimeter fence, has been stolen and as a result, we have stray cattle coming into our garden,
 287 our orchard, so eehh, there is that negative attitude of the community towards the school. There
 288 is a general eehhm, negative attitude of parents towards the staff.

289 **LM:** Ok, ok, sir. Thank you very much. now, eehh, sir, may I hear the specific contextual factors ,
 290 some of the contextual factors, I mean, the extent, positively, negatively, eehh, the extent to which
 291 they have impacted on the quality of teaching and learning . Some of these contextual factors
 292 how they, eehh, have positively or negatively, I am saying the extent to which they have affected
 293 your school as far as promoting quality teaching and learning in your school?

294 **FN:** Right, eehh, to some extent they have, the contextual factors impacted negatively to our
 295 school, for instance, at the moment, our perimeter fence we don't have any intact perimeter fence,
 296 to the extent that sometimes it is difficult to eehhm, to control the learners. They sometimes go
 297 unnoticed outside the school fence due to the theft of the fence and vandalism of infrastructure
 298 by the community.

299 **LM:** All right, ok, let me hear from you sir, aaahhh, the support of stakeholders, for example, the
 300 parents, the responsible authority and the Ministry of Education. Eeehm, the hand that they are
 301 giving to you, in order to promote quality teaching in your school.

302 **FN:** Eeehm, Ministry of Primary and Secondary education, has positively helped in the day to
 303 day running of the school, particularly during this advent of COVID 19, they have contributed
 304 somewhat to PPEs (personal protective equipment) in the school, though the amount that they
 305 have contributed is not that much, but they have somehow helped with the supply of detergents
 306 and even, eehh, other necessary equipment, even face masks, they have tried by all means to
 307 supply the school with those.

308 **LM:** All right, all right sir. No-oo, thank you very much sir. Now eeehh, when you are running this
309 school of yours sir, eehh, you have some strategy, some strategies that you are implementing in
310 order to account for the influencing of these contextual factors. There are some strategies, ways
311 that you are implementing, yaaah, in order to account for these contextual factors that you have
312 mentioned. Can you please explain sir, the strategies that you are using, to manage the influence
313 of your school's specific contextual factors? What strategies are you implementing? Yes, to
314 manage some of these contextual factors that you have mentioned to me.

315 **FN:** Right, uum, we hold SDC meetings , at least once per term and eeehhm, these help in trying
316 to identify some these contextual challenges we are meeting as a school .We meet the parents,
317 representatives of the parents trying to iron out some of these challenges. It could be payment of
318 fees eeehhm, parents may write letters to the eeehhm, guardians or parents of the children, so that
319 they pay up in time. It has helped somehow, if you involve members of the School Development
320 Committee in trying to remind the parents in connection within payment of school levies.

321 **LM:** Ok, all right, eehh, you have told me what some of these parents are doing in order to see
322 that fees is paid. What about you sir yourself as a school principal, what strategy or strategies are
323 you using to see that your school's quality of teaching and learning is promoted?

324 **FN:** Right, uuhhhmm, it involves meetings with all stakeholders, eeehhm, of the school, it could
325 be parents, teachers and learners. We meet with them but the frequency of meetings have been
326 reduced due to COVID 19 .Eeehhm , in the past we used to have such many meetings where we
327 would invite even parents for consultation days so that they would eehm, come and see the work
328 of their children. Eeehhm, right now since the advent of the covid 19, we haven't been able to
329 have such meetings with parents because the government has urged schools to refrain from
330 having such meetings.

331 **LM:** All right, its fine sir. Thank you very much. What about your school management team, your
332 school. What strategies are they implementing to see that teaching and learning are promoted?

333 **FN:** Right, the deputy head, usually sits down , with the heads of department and they identify the
334 teaching and learning material they may need in their departments and they list them and they
335 handover them to the finance committee so that the list they have made can be eehh,
336 accommodated in purchase of the material or resources needed .

337 **LM:** Eeehh, what about the senior teachers, you have senior teachers and there must be some
338 strategies they must be implementing to see that there is eeehh, quality teaching, quality learning,
339 in your school.

340 **FN:** Yes, eehhhm, we, in fact there are internal supervisors in the school. Eeehhm, apart from the
341 head, the deputy head is an internal supervisor, assisted by the heads of department. They
342 eehhm, they look into various departments to see whether they have the adequate equipment
343 and also whether ehmmmm, the expected standards are being implemented in each department.
344 That is eeehhm, the-e teaching load for each teacher in that department does it tally with the
345 expectations of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education .Eeehhm also the, amm, is the
346 quality of teaching, eeehmm, also in keeping with what is expected by the Ministry, that is
347 supervision is being done, eehhm, by all supervisors in the school, even compile the school
348 supervision programme for the whole term and hold meetings within each department.

349 **LM:** Thank you sir. What about the school development Committee? What are strategies,
350 strategies that the school development Committee in your school is using to promote quality
351 teaching and learning?

352 **FN:** Right. Eeehh as I have said earlier on, they meet with the administration at least once per
353 month and almost most of those meetings are trying to promote teaching and learning in the

354 school. Eeehh, it could be repair of school infrastructure uummm, projects in the school, all those
 355 are looked at by both the administration and the school development committee.

356 **LM:** Ok sir, thank you very much and the Ministry of Primary and SECONDARY Education ,
 357 eehhh, are there any specific, uumm, things, or what help, whatever, eehh, strategy, the Ministry
 358 is implementing to see that eeehhh, quality teaching and learning is implemented In your school
 359 ?

360 **FN:**Yeess, eehh, through the DSI's and his team of inspectors, often inform us on what is
 361 expected. It could be various circulars which are sent to the DSI's from the Head Office. These
 362 are posted on our platform to ensure that standards within the ministry are maintained.

363 **LM:** Ok, all right, all right, ok, and the community leaders, the community leaders. Maybe the
 364 chiefs, whatever the community leader's .What are they doing? The ways that they are
 365 implementing to see that this school of theirs, education is promoted, learning, teaching is
 366 promoted. What strategies are the school leaders implementing?

367 **FN:**Uuuuhm, I think at the moment I have, eeehh, there is, not much interaction between the
 368 community leaders and the school, we eehm, sometimes the counselor may come into the school
 369 aaa, informing us of, it could be any programme, which can benefit the school, for instance,
 370 recently, there was distribution of agricultural inputs to all members of staff and each member of
 371 staff was able to have, to receive a seed pack of maize and also garden seeds . We are still
 372 waiting for fertilizers but generally at the moment, there is not much interaction between the
 373 community leadership and the school.

374 **LM:** Ok, so there is nothing that is happening even to the learners.

375 **FN:** Nothing.

376 **LM:** So-o-o is there anything sir, besides what is currently being done, to promote, eehh, quality
 377 of teaching and learning in your school. What you have mentioned that is being done to promote
 378 quality teaching. Is there, anything else that you feel yourself, if that is done eeehhh, great things
 379 will happen in my school .If this is done, I wish this could be done, eeehhh , what can you tell me
 380 about that? What you feel, what you think if that is done, in your school, there will be promotion
 381 of quality teaching and learning.

382 **FN:** I'm sure if uuumm, parents, ahh, cooperative with the school, eeehm, mainly through
 383 payment of school levies, I'm sure we going to ahhm, eradicate the challenge of non-payment of
 384 fees since every activity in the school, hinges on the payment if school levies .

385 **LM:**Ummhuu, ok, all right. Anything else?

386 **FN:**Uumm, nothing.

387 **LM:** Nothing. All right sir, is there anything else that you feel you want to add and any question
 388 that you want to ask me?

389 **FN:**Uuumm I don't have anything in particular, but eehh, I want to thank you for the time you have
 390 afforded me to contribute to your research. I have learnt a lot and it also improves on our efficiency
 391 as a school. If the eehh, our interaction with all stakeholders, it could be parents, it could be
 392 members of staff, and it could be learners.

393 **LM:** Thank you very much sir. I would like to thank you sir for allowing me to have this interview
 394 with you. So if you feel at any time, that you have a question that you want to ask me, don't
 395 hesitate to phone me and if it means me coming here again, that's ok, I am very free, so I assure
 396 you sir, if this thesis of mine is ready, it's finished, I will be able to share with you. All what I would
 397 have collected, you are a participant and you are a stakeholder in this and you deserve to know,

398 eehe, since you are one of the principals in our schools and you are also affected, you will be
399 able. This will be at your disposal.

400 **FN:** Thank you.

401 **LM:** Thank you very much sir

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