The Influence of Instructional Leadership Behaviours of School Heads on Teachers' Instructional Practices in Primary Schools in Muzarabani District

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Abstract
The school's effectiveness increases when the school head prioritises teaching and learning, dedicating significant time to academic programmes and inspiring teaching staff. Effective instructional leadership is known to enhance educational outcomes and yet its application in resource-constrained primary schools in rural districts in Zimbabwe remains underexplored. There is a notable gap in literature that scrutinises the influence of instructional leadership behaviours of school heads on the instructional practices of primary school teachers in rural districts of Zimbabwe. Addressing this gap is crucial for providing significant insights into the influence of instructional leadership behaviours of school heads on teachers' instructional practices in primary schools in rural districts. This study therefore explores the influence of instructional leadership behaviours of school heads on teachers' instructional practices in primary schools within Muzarabani District. The study employs a qualitative research approach through a case study to collect data using semi structured interviews. The participants were primary school heads and teachers selected by means of purposive sampling from five primary schools in Muzarabani district. The findings reveal that school heads' instructional leadership behaviours, such as setting clear instructional goals, providing support and fostering a collaborative culture, significantly influence teachers' adoption of innovative teaching strategies and practices. Despite these positive influences, barriers including limited resources, time constraints and inadequate professional development opportunities hinder the effectiveness of instructional leadership. The study concludes that school heads who prioritise the development and demonstration of instructional leadership behaviours in their schools can enhance the instructional practices of their teachers in the primary schools. This research contributes to the field of educational leadership by offering insights into the specific challenges and opportunities of instructional leadership in a rural context, providing actionable recommendations for enhancing leadership practices in similar settings.

Keywords: Influence, instructional leadership, instructional leadership behaviours, school head, teachers' instructional practices, primary school.

Introduction
Public education, particularly in developing countries, has faced significant challenges with demands for accountability and increased learner achievement over the years (Gray, 2018). Quite often, the intervention measures as well as literature have tended to be skewed towards the provision, development and management of material and financial resources (Akimbo 2021). Teacher competencies have tended to hog more limelight in educational discourse than the competencies of school heads (ibid, 2021). This is despite the significance of instructional leadership to the instructional practices and performance of teachers. In Zimbabwe, when assessed through the metric of the grade seven pass rate, the performance of primary schools in Zimbabwe has been on the decline. The Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council

(ZIMSEC, 2023) reports that the 2022 grade seven pass rates in Zimbabwe was a lowly 40.09% down from a similarly underwhelming 41.38% of the previous year. This low achievement rate at primary schools can be attributed to an array of factors including failures in instructional leadership. For instance, Masuku (2021) found that a lack of basic instructional resources, low morale among teachers and learners, high teacher mobility and the economic constraints faced by parents in paying school fees and levies were adversely inhibiting instructional leadership at primary schools in the Midlands Province. Similarly, Chitsinga and Zarure (2021) found that limited professional development of in-service teachers was a significant barrier to the effective application of school heads' instructional leadership.

Most of the available literature has mostly focused on resource based and teacher competency related factors (Mapfumo, 2023). There is a gap in literature that scrutinises the influence of instructional leadership behaviours of school heads on the instructional practices of primary school teachers in rural districts of Zimbabwe. Therefore, potentially, inhibiting the formulation and implementation of intervention in that regard. Addressing this gap is crucial for providing significant insights into the influence of instructional leadership behaviours of school heads on teachers' instructional practices in primary schools in rural districts. It is with this in mind that this study, through a qualitative enquiry, explores the influence of Instructional Leadership Behaviours of school heads on teachers' instructional practices in primary schools in Muzarabani District.

Research Questions
1. What are the instructional leadership behaviours that school heads engage in?
2. In what ways do the instructional leadership behaviours of school heads influence teachers' instructional practices in primary schools?
3. Which barriers to effective instructional leadership by school heads are experienced at primary schools and how can these be prevented?

Review of Related Literature
According to Gedik and Bellibas (2018), instructional leadership is a leadership characterised by stating that setting clear goals, managing curricula, monitoring lesson plans, allocating resources and evaluating teachers regularly to promote student learning. Similarly, Leithwood et. al. (2022) asserts that instructional leadership as a behavioural model designed to influence classroom instructions. He adds that instructional leadership specifically entails that a school principal is responsible for providing teachers with information on new training strategies, techniques and tools for effective teaching. Furthermore, principals must also support teachers in judging various tools when determining their suitability and applicability for classroom situation.

According to Irons (2021), instructional practices refer to how information is delivered, received and experienced by learners. Similarly, Mapfumo (2023) asserts that instructional practices are the various methods that teachers utilise in teaching learners or in facilitating learner development. In the context of this study, Muzarabani District presents a compelling case for examining the impact of instructional leadership in a resource-limited environment. Located in a rural area of Zimbabwe, the district faces significant constraints, including inadequate funding, poor infrastructure and limited access to teaching materials and resources. These challenges create a unique educational environment where school heads are tasked with implementing instructional leadership practices under conditions that differ drastically from those of their urban counterparts. Despite these constraints, instructional leadership remains a critical factor in promoting effective teaching practices and improving

student outcomes. The question, however, is how school heads in such challenging environments navigate these constraints and what impact does their leadership behaviours have on teachers' instructional practices.

Previous studies have identified several key instructional leadership behaviours that are associated with improved educational outcomes. Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) emphasise the importance of setting clear instructional goals, providing continuous support to teachers and fostering a collaborative school culture. They argue that school heads who engage in these practices are better positioned to influence teachers' instructional methods, which in turn positively impacts student learning outcomes (ibid, 2008). However, while these studies provide valuable insights into the general impact of instructional leadership, they often overlook the specific challenges faced by school heads in resource-constrained districts like Muzarabani. In such environments, where resources are scarce and infrastructure is often inadequate, school heads may face significant barriers to implement these leadership behaviours effectively.

The literature further suggests that in resource-limited contexts, the challenges associated with instructional leadership are multifaceted. For example, school heads may lack access to professional development opportunities, which are critical for enhancing their leadership capacity. Additionally, the scarcity of instructional materials and the pressure of managing multiple responsibilities in understaffed schools can hinder the ability of school heads to provide adequate support to teachers. As a result, the effectiveness of instructional leadership in these contexts may differ from that observed in well-resourced settings (Leithwood et al., 2004). This study seeks to address these gaps by exploring the instructional leadership behaviours of school heads in Muzarabani District, focusing on how these behaviours influence teachers' instructional practices and the specific barriers school heads face in this rural, resource-limited environment.

By conducting an in-depth investigation into the instructional leadership practices in Muzarabani District, this study aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on educational leadership in under-resourced contexts. The study not only seeks to understand how school heads in this district navigate the challenges they face but also aims to provide practical recommendations for improving instructional leadership in similar settings. By exploring the unique dynamics of instructional leadership in a rural context, this research will offer valuable insights on how educational leadership can be adapted to resource-constrained environments, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of teaching and learning practices in such contexts. Through this exploration, the study hopes to provide actionable strategies that can help school heads overcome the barriers they face, thereby improving both instructional leadership and educational outcomes in resource-limited schools.

Theoretical Framework
The theoretical framework for this study is based on the Instructional Leadership Model developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). The model is displayed in figure one below. The model consists of three dimensions, namely the dimensions of defining school goals, managing instructional programmes and promoting a positive learning climate. According to Hallinger and Murphy (1985), these dimensions are divided into 10 elements of instructional leadership, namely the practice of school head leadership in setting goals, disseminating those goals, supervising and evaluating teachers' teaching, coordinating curriculum, monitoring student progress, controlling student progress, maintaining quality visibility in school programmes, creating incentives for teachers, encouraging professional development and

providing incentives to students. The instructional leadership practices by school heads are represented by the three dimensions and the ten elements mentioned earlier on. When each of these are manipulated, this will influence the instructional practices of teachers. The instructional practices of teachers typically include lesson plans, diverse teaching methods, multisensory activities (which may include games, audio visual media, oral teaching, music and field trips and so on), learner assessment, classroom presentation and management as well as classroom resource management (Musah, 2022).

This study utilises the Hallinger and Murphy (1985) model because it clearly illustrates how instructional leadership of school heads can shape primary school teachers' classroom instructional practices. Thus, the model provides the lens with which the study can explore the influence of school heads' instructional leadership on teachers' instructional practices at the schools that will be studied. Amin (2019) opines that the dimension defining school goals lists two sub-dimensions, namely formulating school goals and disseminating school goals. This is where school heads determine the short term and long-term objectives of the school in accordance with the curriculum and other policies derived from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE). It is also where planning and budgeting takes place. Irons (2021) notes that the dimension of managing an instructional program has three elements, namely supervising and evaluating teaching, coordinating the curriculum and monitoring student progress. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) posit that the dimension of encouraging learning climate lists five sub-dimensions namely controlling teachers' teaching time, maintaining visibility, providing teacher incentives, encouraging professional development and providing learners' learning incentives.
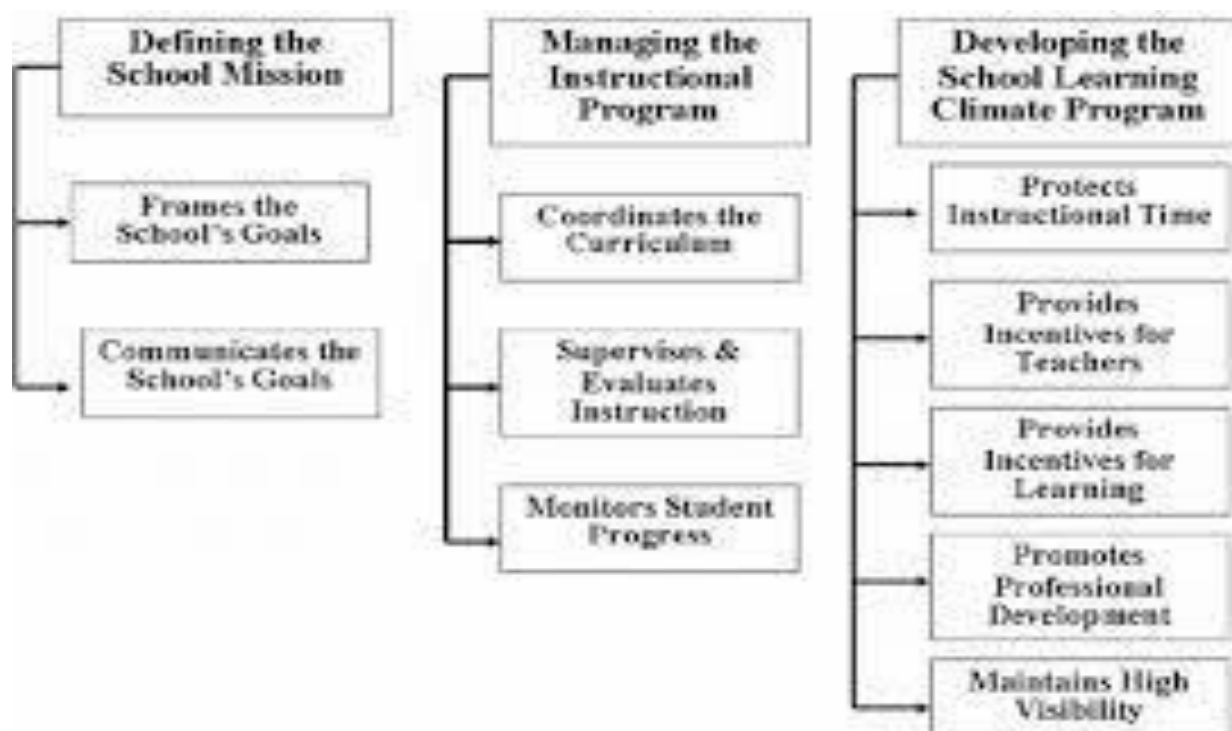

Figure 1: A framework of instructional leadership
Source: (Hallinger and Murphy, 1985; 1986)
A wealth of research has demonstrated the powerful influence that instructional leadership can have on educational outcomes. Hallinger (2005) asserts that school heads who actively engage in instructional leadership practices are more likely to lead schools that demonstrate higher levels of student performance. This is particularly evident in well-resourced

educational settings where instructional leadership is supported by access to professional development opportunities, instructional materials and a collaborative culture among staff. The ability of school heads to shape the instructional environment by setting high expectations for teaching and learning has been shown to create a ripple effect throughout the school, influencing not only teachers' instructional methods but also the overall academic performance of students (ibid, 2005).

However, much of the research on instructional leadership has concentrated on urban and well- resourced schools, where the availability of resources and infrastructure provides a fertile ground for the successful implementation of leadership practices. This focus on well-resourced contexts leaves a gap in the literature regarding the application of instructional leadership in rural and resource-limited areas. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) highlight the challenges faced by school heads in less-resourced settings, such as limited access to professional development, inadequate instructional materials and infrastructural deficiencies. These challenges can significantly impact the effectiveness of instructional leadership, as school heads may struggle to provide the necessary support for teachers or to monitor and evaluate instructional practices effectively (ibid.2004).

Methodology
The study employed a qualitative research approach through a case study to collect data using semi structured interviews. The qualitative approach was chosen for its capacity to provide deep insights into participants lived experiences and the meanings they attach to instructional leadership behaviours in their specific context. It is well-suited for capturing the essence of how school heads' behaviours affected instructional practices from the perspectives of both school heads and teachers. According to Yin (2014) qualitative study is commonly utilised when the phenomenon studied and data anticipated is non-quantifiable but seeks to evaluate perception, attitude, intensity and effectiveness of opinions and practices. The research adopted a case study research method. Yin (2014) describes a case study as a first-hand investigation that examines an existing phenomenon in complexity and within natural settings, particularly when the limitations between phenomenon and context are not noticeable and the researcher has slight control over actions. In the context of this study, the researchers interacted with the participants as they solicited for their views. The method was therefore considered appropriate to help the researcher interact with the participants consisting of primary school heads and senior teachers in their school environments and obtain primary data in the form of their views.

Sampling
The population for this study comprised of all the one hundred and seven (107) registered primary schools in Muzarabani District, in Mashonaland Central Province of Zimbabwe. However, from the population, the researcher conveniently selected the five (5) largest primary schools by learner population in Muzarabani District because these are more likely to provide an abundance of data and because of their proximity to the researcher. The purpose of the sample selection was not to compare the perspectives of the different participants, but to provide a balanced picture of their views. The researchers further purposively selected the school head and one longest serving male and female teachers respectively from each school and these constituted a sample of fifteen (15) participants. Five primary school heads and ten (10) primary school teachers participated in the study. A male and a female teacher were selected from each school to accommodate the gender balance of the teachers. Thus, a total of fifteen (15) participants were selected to participate in the study.

Table 1: Sample size

Targeted Population	Number of schools	Number per school	Total sample
School heads	5	1	5
Male teachers	5	1	5
Female teachers	5	1	5
Total	15	3	15

Data Collection

Permission to undertake the research was requested from the Secretary of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe and the Education Director of Mashonaland Central Province and District Schools Inspector for Muzarabani. After permission was granted, the researchers explained the purpose of the study to the school heads and other participants before the interviews were conducted. Informed consent was obtained from the selected participants through the distribution of consent forms. A "qualitative investigation procedure" (Creswell, 2007), through a self-developed interview guide, was used in this study. The researcher used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to collect data from the participants. Participants were interviewed individually. The researcher used a voice recorder to record the responses of participants during the interview sessions and also made field notes. The school heads were interviewed in their offices while the teachers were interviewed after school hours in a location convenient to them, such as the staffroom or their classrooms. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. As far as this study is concerned, all ethical concerns required in human research were observed. The participants were interviewed to saturation.

Data Analysis

Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2012) define data analysis as "the process of observing patterns in the data, asking questions about those patterns, forming conjectures, purposively collecting data from specially selected individuals on targeted topics, confirming or refuting the conjectures, then continuing analysis, asking additional questions, seeking more data, furthering the analysis by sorting, questioning, thinking, forming and testing the conjectures and so forth". The researcher used the ATLAS.ti, a data-analysis software programme, to code the transcripts, using open coding. After establishing codes, the coded data were grouped into three categories, which converged into one theme, namely "Influence of Instructional Leadership Behaviours on Teachers' Instructional Practices".

Findings and Discussion

The results of this study are presented concurrently with the discussion. All fifteen (15) participants participated in the study.

Codes, categories and the research theme

While cognisant of the fact that data do not speak and that the messages stay hidden and need teething out, this section provides the codes, themes and categories that emerged from the interview transcripts. Participants' views about the Influence of Instructional Leadership Behaviours of School Heads on Teachers' Instructional Practices converged under three categories as is illustrated in figure 1 below:
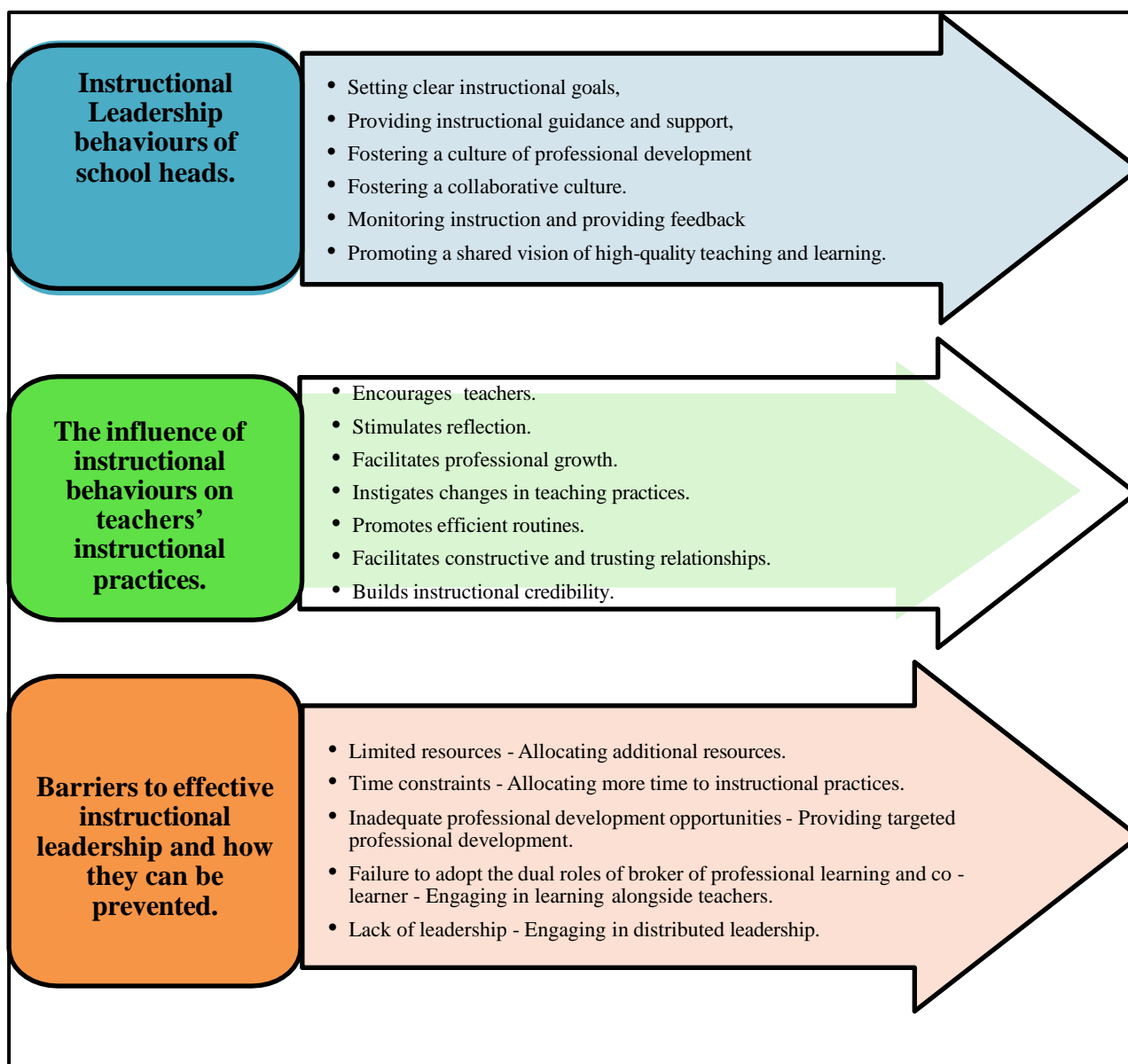

Instructional Leadership behaviours of school heads.
- Setting clear instructional goals,
- Providing instructional guidance and support,
- Fostering a culture of professional development
- Fostering a collaborative culture.
- Monitoring instruction and providing feedback
- Promoting a shared vision of high-quality teaching and learning.

The influence of instructional behaviours on teachers' instructional practices.
- Encourages teachers.
- Stimulates reflection.
- Facilitates professional growth.
- Instigates changes in teaching practices.
- Promotes efficient routines.
- Facilitates constructive and trusting relationships.
- Builds instructional credibility.

Barriers to effective instructional leadership and how they can be prevented.
- Limited resources - Allocating additional resources.
- Time constraints - Allocating more time to instructional practices.
- Inadequate professional development opportunities - Providing targeted professional development.
- Failure to adopt the dual roles of broker of professional learning and co - learner - Engaging in learning alongside teachers.
- Lack of leadership - Engaging in distributed leadership.

Figure 1: Categories and codes

Influence of Instructional Leadership Behaviours on Teachers' Instructional Practices
The theme "Influence of Instructional Leadership Behaviours on Teachers' Instructional Practices" reveals how participants in this study viewed instructional leadership in their schools. Although the schools in this study were purposefully selected based on size, the views of the participants, as will be indicated in subsequent discussions, were similar. For example, the way teachers viewed the instructional leadership behaviours of school heads in Muzarabani District were similar regardless of the size of the school. The researchers sought the participants' views on their understanding of the instructional leadership behaviours that

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school heads engage in. Head of School B had this to say:

> I am expected to spend more time in classrooms, observing, monitoring and providing feedback. Together with my Deputy head and Teacher in Charge of infants we give teachers directions, expectations and where needed we provide professional guidance through staff development.

Teacher from School A said:

> We get guidance and support from our school head. They provide us with resources so that teaching and learning become shared responsibility but most of the time these are not enough. They tell us what they really want us to do to avoid clashes.

Teachers at School C made the following comments:

> When my school head comes to observe me, I am told where I could be going wrong or right. To her, supervision is a shared responsibility where if I fail, she also fails and therefore we must work together.

Teacher from School E revealed:

> My school head comes to monitor what I do in my classroom. He tells me his expectations and uses staff development sessions to correct most of us if he observes what we could be doing wrong. He wants us to do things as team and not individually. He says we are a family and we do work together.

Most participants confirm the instructional leadership behaviours of school heads during school-based supervision. A school head from School D said:

> Teachers are made aware of the supervision schedule at the beginning of each term. This helps them to diligently prepare for the lesson observations. They are made aware that whenever each visit is made, all teachers' records, lesson notes and other records should be availed for inspection. They get feedback on the observations I will have made.

What is the influence of instructional leadership behaviours on teacher's instructional practices?

Head of school C had this to say:

> Teachers feel encouraged when they see us coming to observe them. I think our supervision helps them to grow. Remember some will be inexperienced. Even those experienced sometimes like a pat on the back.

A teacher from school E had this to say:

> When my school head comes for supervision, I get time to think and reflect on what she will have said so that I become a better teacher. "I'm not intimidated when my head comes for supervision because I know she's there to support me and help me improve if needed.

The teacher from school B also said:

> Lesson observations by my school head always leave me a better teacher – it's a boost to my professional growth. I improve my teaching methods, which benefits my learners.

Most teachers were of the view that the leadership behaviours of their school heads on

teachers' instructional practice made them to be efficient in the school routines and helped in creating trusting and constructive relations with their school heads. This is ably summed up by a teacher from school D who said: *"You see, when I see our school head, I see him as a father, mentor and someone who wants me to succeed. I know his advice is for my benefit, so I trust what he says."*

When asked about the barriers to effective instructional leadership and how they prevented them, the head of school E had this to say:

> *School heads are often overloaded as they are expected to perform both their managerial roles and instructional leadership roles. After planning our work for the day, week or term, the schedule is often disrupted when we are called for meetings or other events planned at higher offices or even at other fora. Such occasions are usually given priority. This eventually forces us to carry out our supervisory responsibilities unannounced.*

One teacher from School C said:

"When we are not regularly supervised, we tend to relax. We may not plan for the lessons or even teach out of context or prepare for teaching and learning resource materials needed for effective instructional delivery."

One teacher from School B had this to say:

> *Although a supervision timetable is often produced at our school, it is mostly not followed. Various activities such as meetings which crop up are often given precedence. The head often deals with management issues. The head is eventually left with limited time to effectively supervise teachers.*

A schoolteacher from school A had this to say:

> *I think one of the barriers to effective instructional leadership is inadequate resources which lead to poor planning, poor preparation of lessons, both teacher and student absenteeism, lateness which leads to low output by teachers. There is a need for schools to have adequate resources to make teaching and learning successful in schools.*

A teacher from School D had this to say:

> *I have noted that most of the school heads who are also our supervisors have not been able to de-role and become instructional leaders when it comes to supervision in schools. When they come for supervision, often, they threaten us and remind us that we will be charged if we do what they do not want. The supervision report is produced before the discussion is carried out and no changes will be made even after the discussion. Therefore, there is a need for professional development on the part of school heads.*

One school head from School B lamented:

> *The issue of role conflict is greatly affecting us as we are both school administrators and instructional leaders. We are expected to effectively execute both our administrative responsibilities and instructional leadership responsibilities. However, we often give precedence to administrative responsibilities because of the bureaucratic nature of our education system. This often results in irregular instructional leadership practices which are hurriedly done. The solution is staff development.*

Still on the issue of role conflict, one teacher from School D said:

The issue of school heads' failure to de-role their administrative behaviour when they assume the instructional leadership behaviour role is problematic in schools. Their supervision is mainly focused on fault finding as it is hurriedly done. The environment created is not conducive to effective supervision, supervisees find it intimidating and threatening.

One teacher from School E said this:

Although most school heads are graduates, they still need further training on contemporary instructional leadership so that they view teachers as individuals with different professional needs. If the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) organises such trainings, school heads will acquire such instructional leadership skills as clinical supervisory skills, collegial supervisory skills and collaborative supervisory skills.

An analysis of the participants' responses revealed that participants view the instructional leadership behaviours of school heads in various ways. These include, setting clear instructional goals, providing instructional guidance and support and fostering a culture of professional development. Additionally, they also include collaborative culture, monitoring instruction, providing feedback and promoting a shared vision of high-quality teaching and learning. These findings are consistent with those by Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) who observed and emphasised the importance of setting clear instructional goals, providing continuous support to teachers and fostering a collaborative school culture. They argued that school heads who engaged in these practices were better positioned to influence teachers' instructional methods, which in turn positively impacted student learning outcomes (ibid, 2008).

These findings are also consistent with Hallinger and Murphy's 1985 Instructional Leadership Model which guides this study. The model identifies three dimensions and the ten (10) elements namely the practice of school head leadership in setting goals, disseminating those goals, supervising and evaluating teachers' teaching, coordinating curriculum, monitoring student progress, controlling student progress, maintaining quality visibility in school programmes, creating incentives for teachers, encouraging professional development and providing incentives to students. The findings of this study also align with recent literature on instructional leadership, which underscores the significance of leadership behaviours in influencing teaching practices and improving student outcomes.

According to Hallinger and Wang (2015), effective instructional leadership behaviours, such as setting clear goals, offering instructional support and actively supervising teaching, are critical for creating environments conducive to teaching and learning. These behaviours not only promote the adoption of innovative teaching strategies but also improve the overall quality of instruction (Grissom, Egalite & Lindsay, 2021). These research findings and literature suggest that school heads in primary schools demonstrate various instructional leadership behaviours which contribute to creating a conducive environment for effective teacher instructional practices. It therefore suffices to conclude that school heads who prioritise the development and demonstration of these instructional leadership behaviours can enhance the instructional practices of their teachers in the primary schools.

A further analysis of the participants' responses on the influence of these instructional

leadership behaviours on teachers' instructional practices reveals that they include among others encouraging teachers, stimulating reflection and facilitating professional growth. Further, instigating changes in teaching practices, promoting efficient routines, facilitating constructive and trusting relationships as well as building instructional credibility are some of the findings from the study. These findings are consistent with those by Oduwah (2022) who also found that school heads under the influence of instructional leadership behaviours offered opportunities for teacher development through in-servicing teachers and consequently these teachers were highly competent.

Masuku (2021) found that school heads under the influence of instructional leadership behaviours, greatly motivated teachers, learners as well as parents towards academic excellence. They did this by constantly reminding them of the school vision and modelling their core values through their own practice. This often led to greater commitment to utilising a wide range of teaching methods for optimum learner achievement and development among the teachers. Masuku (2021) also found that school heads, as instructional leaders, helped to engender confidence in their teachers and inspire higher standards of academic performance. However, because of the socio-economic challenges faced in the country, school heads found it difficult to motivate teachers and therefore, the teachers' efficiency at learner assessment, diversity in methods of instruction and creation of a stimulating class environment were quite low (Sibanda, 2021).

The study also found that most teachers conducted their duties professionally because school heads were generally good communicators, efficient coordinators and impartial in their treatment of teaching staff. The positive impact of instructional leadership on teaching practices found in this study echoes previous research by Leithwood et al. (2020), which demonstrated that school heads who engage in instructional leadership are more likely to foster a professional culture that encourages teacher collaboration and student engagement. Similarly, Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) emphasise that leadership behaviours, such as fostering a shared vision and facilitating ongoing teacher development, significantly improved classroom practices, ultimately enhancing student achievement. From the above discussion, it suffices to conclude that instructional leadership behaviours of school heads significantly influence teachers' instructional practices. When school heads exhibit strong instructional leadership behaviours, teachers are more likely to adopt innovative and effective instructional practices that enhance student learning outcomes. Creating a positive and supportive environment that encourages and recognises these practices is therefore essential.

Findings in this study also reveal the barriers to effective instructional leadership such as limited resources, time constraints, inadequate professional development opportunities, failure to adopt the dual roles of broker of professional learning and co-learner and lack of leadership. These findings are consistent to those by Kujah and DaSilva (2022) who also found that resource scarcity and poor communication skills were particularly detrimental to effective instructional leadership at selected primary schools. They also found that teachers were generally demotivated while there was very little stakeholder support which curtailed teachers' professional development and resources provision. Similarly, findings by Akimbo (2021) revealed that school heads' efforts to positively influence the instructional practices of teachers were thwarted by a lack of basic instructional resources. On the same vein, a study by Chitsinga and Zarure (2021) reveals that limited professional development of in-service teachers was a significant barrier to the effective application of school heads' instructional leadership. The study determined that the frequency and effectiveness of staff development programmes and school-based supervision by school heads and their deputies, Head of

Departments and external supervision has been greatly affected by the socio-economic and political challenges. School heads cited time pressures and financial constraints as some of the reasons for not conducting the scheduled staff development programmes, though this is regarded by them as very important.

From a study in Khazakstan, Kefran & Kumail (2018) determined that poor personality traits among school principals were deleterious to their instructional leadership. Teachers reported that school principals lacked communication skills and were heavy-handed in supervision which demotivated staff. Mineiro, Rubio, Sacko & Jackobsen (2021) analysed the factors acting as barriers to effective instructional leadership at schools across Latin American countries. These included limited government support for teachers' professional development, the late or non-payment of school fees, inadequate material resources and technological resources as well as poor remuneration significantly hindered the school administrator's ability to effectively carry out their instructional leadership roles.

To mitigate against the barriers cited in the discussion above, Akimbo (2021) recommended that the school head needs to ensure the availability of essential resources required for effective teaching and learning to take place. The availability of resources in schools was an important factor in the instructional leadership role of the school head. The provision of adequate resources does not only motivate and empower teachers but also motivates and empowers learners too. Similarly, Irons (2021) also recommends that adequate resources be availed from the integrated efforts of the community, parents, government school administrators, civil society groups, development agencies and the corporate sector. According to Akimbo (2021), school heads that have access to adequate resources are in a far better position to effectively implement instructional leadership than those that are not.

On the other hand, Mineiro et al (2021) recommend that the school head needs to create an environment within which teaching and learning can occur optimally through the effective empowerment of people directly involved such as teachers, learners and parents. According to Mineiro et al (2021), empowered teachers, for instance, tend not to regard the syllabus or learning area guidelines as a recipe to be followed but rather as an opportunity to experiment and make it relevant to the needs of learners. The study has found that teachers who are empowered participate actively in the process of improving instructional practices. Manifestations of empowerment noted in the study include professionalism through teamwork.

Musah (2022) opines that the school head needs to cultivate and maintain teamwork among all school constituents in his or her instructional leadership. Musah (2022)'s study concluded that schools that are organised into study teams and that work together for the improvement of the school are more cohesive and teachers are more responsive to initiatives from one another and from school leadership. Similarly, Masuku (2021) recommends that in their instructional leadership therefore, school heads should strive to develop a personality that enables them to understand not only their emotions, but also the emotions of followers so that they can establish cordial relationships.

From the above discussion, it suffices to conclude that addressing barriers to effective instructional is crucial for improving instructional leadership and promoting effective instructional practices. From the above discussion, these barriers to effective instructional leadership by school heads can be ameliorated through various strategies such as providing adequate resources and support, allocating dedicated time for instructional leadership

activities, reducing administrative burdens, and offering targeted professional development opportunities to teachers.

Limitations of the Study
However, some limitations of the research ought to be considered. The research scope and site were deemed limitations. The research site was limited to a few primary schools in Muzarabani district (5 out of 107) of Zimbabwe. Although the sampling procedures were implemented to ensure good representation of participants' views, the sampling was limited to a few schools. Owing to time and financial constraints, a larger sample could not be selected to conduct the interviews. These limitations are acknowledged, but they do not undervalue the significance of the study, as they can provide potential avenues for further research. For example, the study may be replicated in urban districts of Zimbabwe. Such further research could help in determining the influence of instructional leadership behaviours on teachers' instructional practices.

Conclusion
The study notes that school heads who prioritise the development and demonstration of instructional leadership behaviours in their schools can enhance the instructional practices of their teachers in the primary schools. The instructional leadership behaviours of school heads significantly influence teachers' instructional practices. When school heads exhibit strong instructional leadership behaviours, teachers are more likely to adopt innovative and effective instructional practices that enhance student learning outcomes. Creating a positive and supportive environment that encourages and recognises these practices is therefore essential. Finally, addressing barriers to effective instructional is crucial for improving instructional leadership and promoting effective instructional practices. This can be done through adopting various strategies such as providing adequate resources and support, allocating dedicated time for instructional leadership activities, reducing administrative burdens and offering targeted professional development opportunities to teachers.

Recommendations
Primary school heads must prioritise the development and demonstration of instructional leadership behaviour. They should strive to create a positive and supportive environment that encourages and recognises innovative instructional practices. To address the barriers to effective instructional leadership, school stakeholders must allocate adequate resources and support for instructional leadership activities. Additionally, opportunities for professional development should be provided to enhance the instructional leadership skills of school heads.

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