



## COMPLEX INTERPLAY BETWEEN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP, TEACHER PERFORMANCE AND SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES

**Rehabeam K. Shapaka<sup>i</sup>**

University of South Africa,

South Africa

[orcid.org/0009-0009-7921-3458](https://orcid.org/0009-0009-7921-3458)

### **Abstract:**

Using a qualitative single descriptive case study research design that emanates from a constructivist worldview, the current study explores the complex interplay between instructional leadership, teacher performance and systemic challenges. Data were collected through an interview schedule, field notes, and an open-ended questionnaire, using a criterion-based purposive sampling technique to select 20 educational leaders from 20 schools. Data analysis was conducted via thematic analysis, typological analysis, and content analysis using Atlas.ti. The study found that instructional leadership play very important roles in focusing on the teaching and learning process. Educational leaders should study and learn the application of instructional leadership strategies, apply them to optimise their success and enhance teacher performance. Educational leaders should integrate elements of instructional leadership strategies to support teacher performance. Instructional leadership strategies enhance and promote teacher performance.

**Keywords:** instructional leadership, teacher performance, systemic challenges

### **1. Introduction**

According to Feyisa and Edosa (2023), the role of instructional leadership is greatest when it is focused on improving teaching and learning and is amplified when responsibilities for leading teaching and learning are widely distributed across the school. In Shapaka (2025a), instructional leadership fosters teacher performance. Kloutsiniotis *et al.* (2020) have argued that instructional leadership is a core aspect of effective leadership, which has an intentional focus to demonstrate effort on continuous improvement in quality teaching/learning. Groenewald *et al.* (2024) explain that instructional leadership has placed teaching and learning at the forefront of school decision-making. DeWitt (2020) clarifies that instructional leadership is an overarching orientation that gives structure to schools' direction, evidenced by the core leadership practices and skills which support

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<sup>i</sup>Correspondence email: [rehashapaka@gmail.com](mailto:rehashapaka@gmail.com)

both teacher and student performance, drive schools' improvement and sustained success.

Studies such as Mastura *et al.* (2021); Arnold *et al.* (2021) have presented convincing evidence-based practices, and practical considerations to assist educational leaders with the application of instructional leadership to make a difference in teachers' and students' performance. Feyisa and Edosa (2023) have observed that instructional leadership has been used to build the common understanding of a shared expectation across the school, aligns the school resources to instructional needs of teachers and students, manages instructional program so that schools goals are translated into classroom practices, promotes positive school learning environment, engaging and inspiring teachers, and students while building skills and knowledge of current and emerging educational leaders (Shapaka, 2025b).

According to Tirri *et al.* (2021), supported by Harris *et al.* (2022), core elements of instructional leadership include defining a shared expectation, resourcing strategically, managing instructional program, promoting a positive learning environment, developing leadership skills and knowledge coupled with developing, refining, communicating improvement agenda, recommending school vision and culture (Hallinger & Wang, 2015).

Grissom *et al.* (2021) clarify that instructional leadership involves defining a shared expectation through developing, refining and communicating the school's explicit improvement agenda, vision and culture. Bey (2022) explains that instructional leadership involves resourcing strategically through aligning resources, and processes, human and financial resource allocations, planning roles and/or responsibilities. Bey (2022) also explains that instructional leadership involves managing instructional programs through observation, feedback, coaching, curriculum planning, assessment, moderation and/or pedagogy. Rabkin and Frein (2021) further posit that instructional leadership promote a positive learning environment through managing professional learning, collaboration, teachers, student engagement, student wellbeing, and student empowerment. Hickey *et al.* (2024) have clarified that instructional leadership involve developing leadership skills and knowledge through observation, feedback, coaching, school priority improvement and/or teachers' capability development.

According to Paais and Pattiruhu (2020), instructional leadership is about making sure that the bulk of conversations are around teaching and learning, improving student outcomes, being able to get into the classroom with teachers, working collaboratively and together, supporting teachers to do the best work, grow, improve, and develop a culture of loving to learn. Mohamed *et al.* (2023) argue that instructional leadership is how educational leaders put student learning as part of their strategic agenda (Shapaka, 2025c).

Iqbal *et al.* (2021) identified a range of practices and attributes that have been used by educational leaders including leadership behaviour prominent in successful school settings. Feye (2019) has observed that practices of instructional leadership are tasks of educational leaders in what they do to lead the work. Groenewald *et al.* (2023) note that

instructional leadership attributes include the capabilities needed to put instructional leadership practices to work and the ways educational leaders lead the way. Hickey *et al.* (2024) further clarify that practices and attributes are interdependent complementary dimensions of instructional leadership that combine to lead learning. Chen and Zhang (2022) further clarify that instructional leadership practices imply leading the work, plus attributes which imply leading the way, which is equal to leading the learning.

Research by Saleem *et al.* (2021) revealed the powerful effort educational leaders have in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Educational leaders create a culture of high expectations, provide clarity about what teachers are to teach and/or what students are to learn, establish strong professional learning communities and lead ongoing efforts to improve teaching practices (Shapaka, 2025d).

The purpose of this study is to address gaps in existing empirical findings by exploring the complex interplay between instructional leadership, teacher performance and/or systemic challenges. This study builds on previous quantitative research by Arnold *et al.* (2021) and by Tortia *et al.* (2022), estimating the impact of leadership on students' outcomes by considering previously neglected forms of leadership, namely instructional leadership. This study is very specific to the analysis of instructional leadership efforts on the student academic outcomes by Buyukgoze *et al.* (2022). Non-academic writing and/or policy-making efforts by Groenewald *et al.* (2023) have been intensified in the past decade, trying to link different types of leadership to student performance (Karakose *et al.*, 2023); therefore, the need for the empirical exploration of the instructional leadership efforts on teacher performance is warranted. Considering the above, the current study identifies an urgent need to investigate the complex interplay among instructional leadership, teacher performance, and systemic challenges, with a focus on the Oshana Region in Namibia.

The overarching primary research questions the study explored were:

- What complex interplay exists between instructional leadership, teacher performance and systemic challenges in Oshana Region?
- Which instructional leadership strategies do school leaders use in Oshana Region?
- Which existing instructional leadership strategies enhance teacher performance?
- What existing teacher performance is associated with instructional leadership strategies?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Instructional Leadership Strategies and Teacher Performance

In Saleem *et al.* (2021), defining shared expectation is the most influential strategy of educational leaders whereby teacher performance, achievement and improvement are brought to the fore in the school's decision-making process. Simms *et al.* (2023) further cement that defining a shared expectation is a foundation of establishing a shared school culture. According to Lani and Pauzi (2024), defining shared expectations entails setting and communicating school goals to teachers.

In Cherutoi *et al.* (2024), setting goals focuses attention, resources, and accounts of educational leaders' efforts on teacher outcomes. Tarro *et al.* (2020) further cement that to be effective, school goals need to have an annual focus, be few in number, applicable to the school-wide, respond to the demands of the school's environment, data-informed, and include measurable targets and milestones. Smith and Holloway (2020) further clarify that for the school goals to be relevant; they need to be developed with input from teachers and the wider school community. However, Gabr *et al.* (2021) and Iqbal *et al.* (2021) highlight the importance of hiring appropriate teachers while drawing on expertise from the wider school community to achieve goals.

In Tarro *et al.* (2020), the school's instructional leadership strategies are aimed at ensuring that goals are aligned with and translated into classroom practice. Sharif and Ghodoosi (2022) further explain that these processes involve coordinating curriculum, monitoring teachers' progress, supportively supervising and evaluating instruction.

In Karakose *et al.* (2023), coordinating curriculum entails managing the pacing, sequencing and coverage of contents, ensuring continuity across year levels and that teachers are exposed to the materials on which teachers are asked to use. Joseph *et al.* (2025) further clarify that this work is supported by collaboration amongst teachers within and across year levels, curriculum backward mapping, documentation, and common curriculum language.

In Tañiza (2024), communicating goals creates a sense of shared purpose, priority, emphasising a fundamental of schooling, securing a commitment for change. Arnold *et al.* (2021) have further clarified that goal communication occurred formally during instructional, curricular, and budgetary decision-making and informally through other interactions and the modelling of exemplar behaviour. Chen (2020) clarifies that for school goals to motivate teachers, they need to be clear, personally compelling, challenging and achievable.

In Pollock *et al.* (2020), educational leaders secure resources which are aligned with teaching and learning. Buyukgoze *et al.* (2022) clarify that educational leaders combine an understanding of school instructional needs with the ability to target resources to meet the needs. In Chen and Zhang (2022), these assignments are achieved through planning, strategic relationships and/or teachers' collaboration.

In Marshall (2024), monitoring teachers' progress is a key strategy for lines of sight into the classroom, quality assurance of instructional programs, aiming to evaluate the quality of instructions, make the classrooms allocations, diagnose program effectiveness, evaluate results of changes in instructional programs, and measure progress towards school goals. Iqbal *et al.* (2021) clarify that monitoring teachers' progress involves using standards-based, standardised, criterion-referenced assessment, providing interpretive analyses of test data in concise form, providing teachers with test results in a timely and/or useful way, discussing test results with teachers as a whole, within year levels, and with individual teachers, a similar argumentation echoed by Tortia *et al.* (2022).

In Masina (2020), supervising and/or evaluating instruction needs to be supportive. In Sharif and Ghodoosi (2022), supervising and evaluating instruction

requires knowledgeable educational leaders whom teachers can turn to, clearly communicated evaluation criteria, support for teachers to improve performance, and/or discernible results to improve. Mason (2013) has advised that the most productive supervising technique is classroom coaching, especially where it is used as a form of professional development. In support of Bendikson *et al.*'s (2012) argumentation, Rahman *et al.* (2020) have advised that walkthroughs need to support teacher professional learning if they are to be effective lines of sight into the classrooms. By contrast, Gabr *et al.* (2021) have advised that instructional leadership is a collaborative strategy between educational leaders and teachers, working together to unpack the why and how of what schools' improvement agenda is, whether this is through curriculum or pedagogical pieces. In Shapaka (2025e), it is not about the educational leader being an absolute expert, but it is about being a knowledgeable other, walking beside teachers so everyone is learning together.

In Dreer (2022), the key practices which promoting positive school learning environment involve minimising disruptions to instruction, promoting professional development, providing incentives for teachers, providing incentives for students, upholding academic standards, and maintaining educational leaders' visibility in schools. In Mastura *et al.* (2021), educational leaders minimise disruptions to instruction so that teachers effectively apply their skills in the classroom and students learn. They set clear expectations about protecting teaching and learning time, ensuring classes are not interrupted by announcements, requests from offices, excessive paperwork and meetings, system, parental pressures, student absenteeism, late arrivals, extended by apply equitable code of behaviour, and early and effective conflict resolution, a similar argumentation echoed by Pollock *et al.* (2020).

In Nellitawati *et al.* (2024), promoting professional development is strongly linked to teachers' outcomes, tailored to address teachers' needs and changing practice, while in Sharif and Ghodoosi (2022), educational leaders not only inform teachers about opportunities for staff development, but also lead in-service training, ensuring professional development is closely linked to goals and structured to groups and individuals. According to Zhou *et al.* (2021), this is another area where educational leaders achieve the line of sight on conditions required for improvements in teachers' learning, and where they can support and/or implement changes to class organisation, resourcing, assessment, and working collaboratively with teachers.

In Mawlood and HamadAmeen (2023), providing incentives for teachers involves establishing systems and/or practices that collaboratively engage teachers in collective efforts in teaching and learning, provide them with personal and/or professional support (Karakose *et al.*, 2033), and recognise their efforts. In Chen (2020), instructional leadership is clearly linked to teacher motivation, whereas in Kloutsiniotis and Mihail (2020), collaboration encourages a strong sense of collective responsibility and accountability for teacher achievement. In Tortia *et al.* (2022), order, support, and certainty for teachers influence commitment and effectiveness, whereas encouraging and acknowledging good work has the effort of lifting teachers' morale, eliciting a sense of pride and loyalty in

schools, encouraging the willingness to cooperate with colleagues and administrators, an ideal thought also supported by Karakose *et al.* (2023).

In Collie and Martin (2023), providing incentives for teachers involves recognising teachers for their effort, progress, achievement, and fostering a positive and empowering culture of learning. Recognition needs to be frequent, meaningful, and rewarding. In Simms *et al.* (2023), teachers are motivated by a culture of high expectations about learning and behaviour, and by optimism that teachers will meet goals, while giving teachers feedback on their work, whereas upholding academic standards involves ensuring that teachers master basic skills and achieve defined skills before entering subsequent year levels. In Chen and Zhang (2022), this is part of developing a culture of high expectations.

In Nellitawati *et al.* (2024), maintaining purposeful visibility around schools and in classrooms increases interactions between educational leaders and/or teachers. In Marshall (2024), being a visible presence needs to have a purpose in advancing shared expectations and/or a focus on teaching and learning, and focus more on teachers. According to Simms *et al.* (2023), visibility is more concerned with teachers' efforts to enhance student learning, and instructional issues, conducting classroom observations, ensuring ongoing professional development, communicating higher academic standards, and ensuring that the environment is conducive to learning, an ideal thought also supported by Masina (2020). Instructional leadership is about setting good examples from the school leadership team. In Shapaka (2024b), what educational leaders expect teachers to do, educational leaders do themselves. In Mohamed *et al.* (2023), they see themselves with teachers out there in the community, alongside teachers in their teaching, talking with teachers, checking in with the teachers and/or if there is something that educational leaders ask teachers to do, educational leaders would expect themselves to do it as well. According to Dreer (2022), it is working with teachers, alongside teachers and making sure teachers are aware that educational leaders are in it with teachers.

## **2.2 Instructional Leadership Strategies Used by Educational Leaders**

Rahman *et al.* (2020) advise that key strategic skills educational leaders bring to schools include communication skills, curriculum content knowledge, pedagogy, and the ability to solve complex problems. Mawlood and HamadAmeen (2023) clarify that communication skills include the ability to develop trust, clarity when leading teachers, how teachers exercise emotional intelligence, engage in conversation, which promotes openness to learning and build relational trust. In Chen and Zhang (2022), openness to learning involves conversational techniques that frame difficult situations, challenge assumptions, invite alternative views, manage feedback, and deal constructively with emerging alternative conflicts. In Tarro *et al.* (2020), relational trust is about communicating interpersonal respect, regard for others, competence, and personal integrity. In Gabr *et al.* (2021), good communication is very critical to supervising and evaluating instruction. In Timperley *et al.* (2007), good communication is positively associated with teacher outcomes.

Collie and Martin (2023) clarify that content knowledge in pedagogy and curriculum is especially important for understanding the effectiveness of teaching in the classroom, administrative decision-making, and, when managing instructional programs, the effectiveness of collaborative learning and decision-making. Chen and Zhang (2022) further clarify that school leadership is innovative and authoritative when educational leaders have a deeper content knowledge. DeWitt (2020) posits that teachers tend to trust and turn to educational leaders who demonstrate expert content knowledge linking to teacher success.

Gabr *et al.* (2021) clarify that using complex problem-solving strategies helps educational leaders to uncover, understand all requirements surrounding particular tasks, issues and integrate them to identifying best solution at a particular time and/or place. In Paais and Pattiruhu (2020), the level of educational leaders' performance in their problem solving depends on the extent to which strategies are structured by definable procedures for reaching clear solution criteria, the right data and/or the right information. In Grissom *et al.* (2021), solving complex problems are more common feature of higher performing schools whereby instructional leadership is synonym to higher expectations, consistency, being present, role model, walking beside teachers. In DeWitt (2020), it is a long game, very aligned, while in Harris *et al.* (2022), there are logical steps, taking a three and/or four-year view of where educational leaders are going to be, backward mapping from such a point. In Zhou *et al.* (2021), educational leaders make the greatest effort on progress, achievement of teachers by using their educational expertise and management skills, to focus efforts of everyone in the school on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Smith and Holloway (2020) point out that educational leaders foster collective commitment to focus on teaching and learning, and to consider leadership at all levels; build a leadership team that works widely across the school in strong alignment to drive the improvement agenda. Educational leaders create a culture in which other educational leaders and teachers have clarity about their roles, focus on understanding their efforts and improving their practice, and set high expectations and aspirations for learning and achievement for all teachers.

Tarro *et al.* (2020) pinpoint that educational leaders establish and regularly communicate clear goals and success measures at various levels. They consider ways to achieve purposeful visibility, leading, modelling, and working alongside teachers and students. They prioritise instructional time, consider the curriculum, program and structures, align resource allocation, and strategically invest in teachers, infrastructure, resources and initiatives to improve teachers' and students' learning. They minimise disruptions to learning time and maximise teachers' and students' engagement, and invest in ongoing development of teaching expertise for all teachers and other educational leaders.

Zhou *et al.* (2021) clarify that educational leaders provide regular differentiated opportunities for teachers to engage with the contemporary research-based professional development in core areas including curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and feedback,

creating collaborative and dynamic professional learning culture whereby continuous learning, reflection and growth are celebrated, ensuring all teachers have regular opportunities for feedback on the classroom practice, invest in developing educational leadership of current, emerging and future educational leaders.

Harris *et al.* (2022) point out that instructional leadership strategies begin when educational leaders' focus is on make core business of teaching and learning an explicit improvement agenda for the school. In Shapaka (2025a) and Shapaka (2026), what it becomes is cultural pieces that follow where school leadership teams use strategies, approaches to leadership, distribute that across the school, where leadership teams and teachers work collectively building professional learning, collegial learning opportunities, to really focus on ongoing school improvement through the way that they do teaching and learning.

### **2.3 Challenges Associated with the Application of Instructional Leadership Strategies**

In Groenewald *et al.* (2023), challenges in instructional leadership strategies include time constraints, financial constraints, limited stakeholder support, and teacher-related academic odds. Educational leaders grapple with an intricate balance between administrative responsibilities, resource allocation, and innovative initiatives to enhance teacher performance.

In Tañiza (2024), teachers grapple with addressing diverse student learning needs and managing teaching time. Topping the list are the presence of students with learning disabilities, a scarcity of learning resources, student learning gaps, a lack of specialised knowledge, collaboration to meet students' diverse needs, and creating an inclusive learning environment.

In Hickey *et al.* (2024), other notable challenges include administrative overload, policy proliferation, the spread of leadership roles, managing curriculum, providing support, improving teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluating teachers' progress, and working on inclusive education.

In Feye (2019), educational leaders were not assertive, open to new ideas, energetic, or motivated, and they did not provide immediate feedback to teachers; they lacked self-esteem and analytical ability, and they didn't work with stakeholders to develop a common vision for their schools. In Lani and Pauzi (2024), educational leaders failed to fulfil expected instructional leadership roles, and teachers alike were dissatisfied with existing school climates.

In Tirri *et al.* (2021), these challenges are related to educational leaders' continuous professional development, curriculum developments and ongoing community teaching. In Feyisa and Edosa (2023), most educational leaders have a communication gap with stakeholders regarding the vision, mission, and goals of schools, and face problems related to the lack of an educational management profession; they also lack measures to address these problems.

In Bey (2022), there is a gap in current practices for supporting inclusive special education students in achieving their educational goals. Major issues pertaining to time,

staffing, structures, research data, instructional strategies, and/or applied philosophies were most noticeable. In Lani and Pauzi (2024), social change implications include improved student achievement, which has the potential to increase literacy and improve quality of life. In Cherutoi *et al.* (2024), challenges include inadequate educational infrastructure, large class sizes, overburdened teachers, limited school budgets, a shortage of teachers, and low levels of students' and parents' involvement.

#### **2.4 Existing Support Mechanisms Used to Address Identified Challenges**

Empirical literature (Hickey *et al.*, 2024; Marshall, 2024) has suggested an urgent need to develop Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers and educational leaders alike through instructional leadership development programs, which contribute to increased teachers' academic achievement and educational leaders' leadership standing, a very similar argumentation echoed by Shapaka (2026).

Research literature (Groenewald *et al.*, 2024; Masina, 2020) has convincingly argued that there exists a growing cohort of disadvantaged schools that, despite the socioeconomic challenges they have faced, display a great degree of resilience and perform better compared to advantaged schools. In these schools, a shared form of instructional leadership strategy is prevalent; there is a strong emphasis on teacher academic success, instructional time is greatly valued and maximally utilised, and there is a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning to ensure effective scholastic teachers' performance.

The existing literature (Hallinger, 2005; Rahman *et al.*, 2020) has acknowledged that in these schools, educational leaders effectively demonstrate instructional leadership strategies in the area of teacher success and progress, working with reluctant teachers, financial limitations, and accountability requirements. Policy-makers reduce the number and scope of accountability requirements. Trustees and community stakeholders provide training to ensure that roles and responsibilities are understood, educational leader preparation programs are established, and mentoring and support mechanisms are in place.

The extant literature (Groenewald *et al.*, 2024; Karakose *et al.*, 2023) has acknowledged that policymakers and stakeholders prioritise the cultivation of leadership pipelines, support mechanisms to address the lack of established qualifications for educational leaders, gender disparities to remedy leadership development and equity. Initiatives to promote gender equity and empower women in leadership roles are also advocated.

The foundational literature (Hallinger & Wang, 2015; Mason, 2013) have acknowledged that to ensure schools achieve excellence, externally, educational leaders involve parents, teachers, and stakeholders' contributions. Internally, educational leaders' experiences, knowledge and expertise of instructional leadership strategies increase their roles as resource persons and/or instructional leaders to all teachers and support staff.

### 3. Material and Methods

#### 3.1 Research Design

Using the qualitative, exploratory, single descriptive case study research design, the current study explores the complex interplay between instructional leadership, teacher performance and systemic challenges in the Oshana Region in Namibia. In Dey (2003), the theoretical underpinning of constructivism as applied to learning theory is an interpretivist notion. In Creswell and Creswell (2018), Ling and Ling (2017), it represents an untruth about the ways individuals learn.

In this study, the position is taken that the research paradigm is primary, meaning researchers should be certain about the paradigm in which research is carried out. According to Ling and Ling (2017), this is important to ensure that research aspects, endeavours, exercises, and outcomes are congruent, coherent, appropriate, and defensible. Considering the above, the interpretivist paradigm was used to provide evidence and coherent, subjective insight into and understanding of the complex interplay between instructional leadership, teacher performance, and systemic challenges in the Oshana Region in Namibia.

Following the interpretivist paradigm, the study employed a qualitative, exploratory, single descriptive case study to examine and describe the complex interplay among instructional leadership, teacher performance, and systemic challenges in the Oshana Region of Namibia. In Creswell and Creswell (2018), the issue addressed in this study concerns the complex interplay among instructional leadership, teacher performance, and systemic challenges in the Oshana Region of Namibia. The case study was chosen because it aimed to explore the complex interplay among instructional leadership, teacher performance, and systemic challenges in the Oshana Region of Namibia.

The emerging nature of this study is best suited to a constructivist research design that can yield a rich understanding of key issues by minimising the distance between researcher and participants to develop practical and theoretical understanding; generate new and alternative understanding into concepts, issues under study, and argumentations, as also echoed by Leedy and Ormrod (2023). According to Dey (2003), the purely dominant positivist research design has adversely affected the relevance of the resulting research because the researcher needs not only to consider technical aspects but also social aspects and their continuous interaction, and the research design to which the constructivist worldview is suited.

When a researcher is interested in immediate responses to a particular situation, it may require using subjective data, since it is unlikely that objective data would have been collected at precisely the right times and in the right contexts. This is not to devalue positivist research design, but to suggest that an alternative research design can supplement and strengthen this study, since quantitative research design cannot reveal the study's complete story.

Investigation of the complex interplay among instructional leadership, teacher performance, and systemic challenges in the Oshana Region of Namibia cannot be conducted outside its natural setting, with its focus on this contemporary issue. The issue is that control and manipulation of the complex interplay between instructional leadership, teacher performance and systemic challenges is not possible. Theoretical knowledge on the issue under investigation is limited and not yet mature. The case study method was thus a suitable method for this study; arguments also echo those of Dey (2003).

### **3.2 Participants**

Using the Oshana Directorate of Education's latest statistics of 2025, the researcher selected 20 educational leaders from 20 schools in junior and senior primary and junior and senior secondary schools in Oshana Region. Based on the Oshana regional directorate, many schools are poorly performing (Shapaka, 2024a; United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2015), leading to poor teachers' academic performance. Educational leaders are chosen because they are the main pillars of teachers' optimisation, directly involved in organising, managing, and leading teachers' academic performance, and held responsible for spearheading it. Educational leaders' instructional strategies play an integral role in shaping the quality of educational delivery.

Criterion-based purposive sampling was used, based on the researcher's exposure to and engagement with 20 educational leaders from 20 schools in the Oshana Region. The researcher used a criterion-based purposive sampling technique, and only educational leaders with 7 years of experience and/or above in management and leadership were selected. According to the Oshana Directorate of Education's latest 2025 statistics, there are five circuits in the Oshana Region: Eheke, Oluno, Ompundja, Onamutai, and Oshakati. The researcher selected four educational leaders for each circuit. Notably, there are four phases in each circuit: junior and senior primary, and junior and senior secondary. The researcher selected one educational leader for each phase.

Data were collected through an interview schedule, field notes, and an open-ended questionnaire to capture participants' views on the complex interplay among instructional leadership, teacher performance, and systemic challenges in the Oshana Region. Data were collected using an interview schedule to elicit participants' views on the complex interplay among instructional leadership, teacher performance, and systemic challenges in the Oshana Region of Namibia. The study used an interview schedule with a written list of questions, which were covered during interview sessions and administered to participants. These questions include the four mentioned in the introduction. The same interview schedule was used for participants; however, indications showed that responses from participants in junior and senior primary and junior and senior secondary provided another dimension to the research, possible findings, and recommendations. For this purpose, an open-ended questionnaire was developed from questions and discussions from the interview session. According to

Creswell and Creswell (2018), the more open-ended the question, the better, as the researcher listened carefully to what participants said or did in their own context and settings. Data were only collected in response to the open-ended questionnaire and were used to support qualitative data. Field notes were taken during interview sessions. There was one interview session per participant per school for up to one hour and/or 20 minutes, depending on the number of responses to research questions. Participants were interviewed individually because they came from different schools and were distinct. A pilot test ensured the instruments' accuracy, reliability, and appropriateness. Qualitative research experts reviewed interview questions for clarity and relevance.

In this study, data were analysed using thematic analysis, typological analysis, and content analysis using Atlas.ti. Categories pertaining to the complex interplay between instructional leadership, teacher performance and systemic challenges were used to create patterned and thematic meaning from qualitative data. Major themes were derived from the study questions; the description of each theme was done, analysed, and interpreted critically and objectively. The researcher used Atlas.ti to conduct thematic analysis, explore his coded material, and systematically analyse his data.

Following advice of Creswell and Creswell (2018), Dey (2003), Leedy and Ormrod (2023) and Ling and Ling (2017), data were analysed using five levels of analysis (Levels 1 through 5) with additional level which considers data collection and/or recording process itself as first level of analysis (Level 0) as discussed explicitly below. From the outset, it is imperative to note that data collection and analysis are iterative processes; researchers move between different levels of analysis throughout the data collection process, even though they were discussed consecutively.

Firstly, the researcher reviewed his notes immediately after each interview and added additional notes for clarity and detail. He then transcribed interviews in the same order in which they were conducted as soon as he returned from fieldwork, using a de-naturalistic transcription style in which idiosyncratic elements of speech, such as stutters, pauses, nonverbal cues, and involuntary vocalisations, were removed.

Secondly, the case study narrative was both thematic and chronological, as it explained the use of data, systems, and information in relation to the complex interplay among instructional leadership, teacher performance, and systemic challenges in the Oshana Region in Namibia. The following are primary themes which were established as the key focal points for case narratives based on the interview schedule, notes which were taken and an open-ended questionnaire:

- Instructional leadership strategies and teacher performance;
- Instructional leadership strategies used by educational leaders.
- Instructional leadership strategies which enhance teacher performance;
- Teacher performance, which is associated with instructional leadership strategies

The researcher shared case narratives with participants using member checking, asked them if there were any inaccuracies, misunderstandings, or missing content they were unhappy with for any reason, and they kindly let him know within two weeks; after that, he assumed they agreed with the write-up of the interviews. The researcher used

member checking to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings by taking the themes back to participants and determining whether the participants felt that they were accurate. The researcher triangulated information from the interview schedule, open-ended questionnaire, and/or field notes to strengthen the depth of its findings, as data from one source supported data from another. The researcher checked transcripts to ensure they did not contain apparent transcription errors, compared data with codes, and wrote memos on codes and their definitions. The researcher examined each information source and found evidence to support themes, ensuring that the study was accurate.

Thirdly, the priori method was used, with themes established before analysis, based on descriptors in the complex interplay among instructional leadership, teacher performance, and systemic challenges in the Oshana Region in Namibia.

Fourthly, the researcher compared findings from the previous level with what has been reported in empirical literature.

Lastly, the researcher used identified themes and connections to explain his findings by considering what it all meant and what was necessary. The researcher developed a list of key points and important findings while considering what he had learnt, the major lessons, and the possible application to another setting. The researcher studied what those who used the study's findings would most want to know. In other words, the researcher interpreted the data by assigning meaning and significance to the analysis by developing a list of critical points, the essential findings he discovered as a result of categorising and sorting the data. The researcher then used direct quotations and descriptive examples to illustrate his points, bringing data to life.

Finally, the researcher opted to present case narratives from Level 1 of analysis as stories, compare cases in Level 2 of analysis and formalise his cross-case analysis findings in Level 3 of analysis. The researcher compared findings to extant literature at Level 4 of analysis, included his description, commented on and protected participant anonymity by assigning numbers to cases, and changed names and/or omitted them to identify details without sacrificing rich description. The researcher opted to present the implications of the findings for the complex interplay among instructional leadership, teacher performance, and systemic challenges in the Oshana Region of Namibia.

After all required permissions were sought and granted, the researcher sent a letter to participants informing them about information concerning the study and to avoid the reality and appearance of coercion. Participants were informed of the rationale, recording, transcriptions and safekeeping of audio-taped interviews. The researcher made sure that participants signed informed consent, ensuring privacy in subsequent interviews, guarding against manipulating the participants during the data collection, and/or reporting processes. Anonymity and confidentiality were observed when reporting on the utterances and narratives of participants. Participants' names were replaced with pseudonyms to protect their identities, and participation was voluntary.

## 4. Findings

This section presents findings on the complex interplay between instructional leadership, teacher performance and systemic challenges. The section comprises the views of 20 educational leaders who participated in this study. Some participant responses were summarised and presented in descriptive forms, others were reported verbatim and were presented in italics.

### 4.1 Instructional Leadership Strategies and Teacher Performance

The theme presented in this section is derived from the thematically analysed data obtained from interviews, open-ended questionnaires and field notes, with 20 selected educational leaders from Oshana Region. The theme is the complex interplay among instructional leadership, teacher performance, and/or systemic challenges. It is worth-noting that the theme relates to the manner in which the interplay between instructional leadership and measures of teacher performance could be constructed and/or developed to find the interplay between them. In this study, the researcher must determine whether educational leaders understand the interplay among them. This was done to address the question: What complex interplay exists among instructional leadership, teacher performance, and systemic challenges in the Oshana Region? The participant responses showed that educational leaders play a critical instructional leadership role in teacher performance. The phrase *“share vision, mission and purpose”* highlights the leadership role educational leaders play in teacher performance. The participant's mention of understanding the meaning of *“engaging in collaborative discussions, redefining compelling vision”* suggests that instructional leadership strategies facilitate teacher performance. One educational leader at the senior secondary phase said:

*“Educational leaders share decision-making process with all stakeholders. School leaders foster and promote collaborative learning.”* (Educational leader#1)

Educational leader responses indicated that instructional leadership strategies affect the teaching and learning process. The use of *“define role, responsibilities”* is noted key strategy in capturing attention, suggesting an instructional leadership strategy making the teaching and learning process more dynamic and appealing. The phrase *“distribute across multiple levels of organisation”* indicates a heightened level of intrinsic motivation, as the leader feels actively drawn into the instructional leadership process, aligning with theories of engagement which emphasise the role of aesthetically stimulating practice in sustaining attention. One educational leader at the junior secondary phase said:

*“Educational leaders distribute roles and responsibilities to professional learning communities. School leaders acknowledge and celebrate contributions from stakeholders.”* (Educational leader#2)

The leader appreciates a clear, integrated presentation of instructional leadership strategies, which include a combination of *“continuous professional development for teachers.”* This consolidated approach aligns with the preference of streamline instructional leadership practice, particularly for leadership preparation. The use of *“learn from failures, encourage experimentation, adjustment”* suggests that educational leaders create shared conducive environments for teachers to perform. This reflects principles of shared responsibilities across ranks, supporting inclusive leadership.

One educational leader at the senior primary phase said:

*“Educational leaders create conducive environments for teaching and learning. School leaders spread roles and responsibilities across school members.”* (Educational leader#3)

Similar to Educational Leader 3, these responses underscore how leaders’ instructional leadership strategies mitigate the overwhelming nature of traditional leaders’ leadership. The term *“determining teachers’ academic performance”* suggests that leaders’ instructional leadership strategies create a less stressful leadership environment, likely due to leadership distribution amongst stakeholders. The mention of *“leverage collective expertise”* indicates that leadership involves stakeholders in the decision-making process. One educational leader at the junior secondary phase said:

*“Educational leaders share responsibilities, support an inclusive school community. School leaders motivate teachers to do better.”* (Educational leader#4)

One educational leader at the junior primary phase said:

*“Educational leaders focus more on instructions to improve teaching, learning and curriculum delivery”* (Educational leader#5)

#### **4.2 Instructional Leadership Strategies Used by Educational Leaders in Oshana Region**

To determine the instructional leadership strategies used by educational leaders, the researcher asked: Which instructional leadership strategies do school leaders use in Oshana Region? Participant responses indicated that educational leaders use monitoring and communication strategies to monitor teacher performance. The use of *“foster a culture of open communication”* is noted as a key strategy in capturing attention, suggesting that this strategy makes leadership more dynamic and appealing. The phrase *“establish mechanisms for feedback, and evaluation”* indicates a heightened instructional leadership role, as the leader feels actively drawn into the teaching and learning process, aligning with theories of engagement which emphasise the instructional role of the leadership motivation aspect in sustain the attention. One educational leader at the senior secondary phase said:

*“Educational leaders allocate additional resources, establish communication channels. School leaders foster collaboration, communication, and adaptive skills.”* (Educational leader#6)

The leader appreciates a clear and integrated presentation of strategies that include a combination of *“continuous leadership development opportunities.”* This consolidates strategy aligns with the preference for streamlined instructional leadership practices, particularly for teaching and learning processes. The phrase *“devise best teaching and learning practices”* suggests that instructional leadership is used to monitor and to ensure that teachers’ academic performance is taken care of. This reflects a culture of continuous improvement and innovation. One educational leader at the senior primary phase said:

*“Educational leaders direct curriculum development, teaching quality, teacher outcomes. School leaders prioritise development of curriculum, continuous assessment.”* (Educational leader#7)

Similar to Educational Leader 7, these responses underscore how leaders’ instructional leadership strategies mitigate the overwhelming nature of the traditional leader’s strategies. The term *“shared responsibility, ownership over educational outcomes”* suggests that leaders’ leadership strategies create a less stressful learning environment, likely due to shared leadership autonomy, collective responsibility leading to a high level of ownership amongst stakeholders. The mention of *“foster a collaborative environment, enhance professional development”* indicates that leaders promote greater collaboration and a shared responsibility amongst stakeholders. One educational leader at the junior secondary phase said:

*“Educational leaders manage instructional programs. School leaders develop leadership skills and knowledge.”* (Educational leader#8)

One educational leader at the junior primary phase said:

*“Educational leaders promote continuous professional development for teachers. School leaders communicate an improvement agenda for teachers.”* (Educational leader#9)

#### **4.3 Instructional Leadership Strategies Which Enhance Teacher Performance**

In order to determine existing instructional leadership strategies enhancing teacher performance, the researcher asked the following question: Which existing instructional leadership strategies enhance teacher performance? Participant responses indicated that leaders use instructional leadership strategies to ensure teacher academic performance is taken care of and to monitor the teaching and learning process. The leader explicitly connects *“empowering teachers, recognise their agency, providing incentives”* to increase

motivation and enjoyment. The metaphor of *“leverage the collective expertise of stakeholders”* suggests that the leader uses innovative strategies to promote a positive climate. One educational leader at the senior secondary phase said:

*“Educational leaders leverage multiple educator collaborative approaches. School leaders involve various stakeholders in the decision-making process.”* (Educational leader#10)

The leader describes instructional leadership strategies as *“a shared vision”* which serves as *“a compass”* to promote professional growth, enhance and strengthen the leadership quality. One educational leader at the senior primary phase said:

*“Educational leaders foster a collaborative environment, enhance professional development of teachers. School leaders promote greater collaboration and shared responsibility.”* (Educational leader#11)

The leader explicitly distributes leadership, decentralises the decision-making process to *“create a sense of shared responsibility and ownership”* over educational outcomes. The metaphor of *“leverage technology”* suggests that leader uses innovative strategies to promote a positive school climate.

One educational leader at the junior primary phase said:

*“Educational leaders empower teachers to take on the leadership roles. School leaders foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.”* (Educational leader#12)

The leader highlights valuable insights leading to teachers' learning, engagement, and well-being by *“integrating leadership development into teacher training.”* Improved focus on managing job demand, providing adequate resources foster teaching quality. One educational leader at the senior primary phase said:

*“Educational leaders give teachers autonomy to be involved in decision-making processes. School leaders empower teachers to commit to their roles.”* (Educational leader#13)

One educational leader at the senior secondary phase said:

*“School leaders adapt curriculum standards, educational policies.”* (Educational leader#14)

#### **4.4 Teacher Performance, Which Is Associated with Instructional Leadership Strategies**

In order to establish existing teacher performance which associates with instructional leadership strategies, the researcher asked the question: What existing teacher performance associates with instructional leadership strategies? The participant responses continuously emphasise the use of high-performance work systems to enhance

teacher commitment and performance. One educational leader at the junior primary phase said:

*“Educational leaders adopt shared leadership leading to a high level of ownership. School leaders extend autonomy beyond the classroom to curriculum development.”*  
(Educational leader#15)

Educational leader highlights the efficiency of *“shared vision”* in facilitation of *“teacher efficacy and teacher achievement.”* The ability to use *“a compelling vision”* suggests that instructional leadership strategies leverage memory to enhance retention. The phrases of *“teacher ongoing professional growth”* indicates that leadership strategies provide a condensed, highly influential way to review, reduce cognitive effort required for retrieval, and reflect the power of visual mnemonics in leadership learning. One educational leader at the junior secondary phase said:

*“Educational leaders share vision to serve as a compass directing efforts of stakeholders. School leaders promote teacher autonomy, collective responsibility, and a shared vision.”*  
(Educational leader#16)

Educational leader consistently indicated that a compelling vision motivates teachers through individualised consideration, emphasising linking instructional leadership strategies to teacher confidence/motivation. The phrase *“innovative teaching practices”* suggests that instructional leadership strategies reduce cognitive and emotional strain, creating a positive leadership experience. The desire to *“strengthen teaching quality”* indicates that a stress-free environment fosters intrinsic motivation, encourages deeper engagement with leadership strategies. This aligns with theories of motivation; highlight the role of positive self-efficacy in leadership. One educational leader at the senior primary phase said:

*“Educational leaders give valuable insights to teachers’ learning, engagement, and overall well-being. School leaders manage job demands, provide resources, and/or foster teaching quality.”* (Educational leader#17)

An educational leader contrasts the *“organisational climate”* of leadership with *“teacher performance and well-being”*, highlighting the role of visual aesthetics in leadership preference. One educational leader at the senior secondary phase said:

*“Educational leaders promote positive culture to create a supportive environment that enhances teacher motivation and learning. School leaders promote and enhance teacher performance and well-being.”* (Educational leader#18)

One educational leader at the senior primary phase said:

*“Educational leaders inspire teachers; foster an environment for collaboration and/or collective success. School leaders promote teacher professional growth, enhance and strengthen teaching quality.”* (Educational leader#19)

## 5. Discussion

This section discusses findings on the complex interplay between instructional leadership, teacher performance and systemic challenges. The discussion is based on the views of 20 educational leaders who participated in this study.

### 5.1 Instructional Leadership Strategies and Teacher Performance

This study explored the complex interplay between instructional leadership, teacher performance and systemic challenges in the Oshana Region in Namibia. The first question answered by the study was: What complex interplay exists between instructional leadership, teacher performance and systemic challenges in Oshana Region? The paramount issues that emerged from the findings were a complex interplay between instructional leadership and teacher performance, which may result in both positive and negative teacher performance. This finding suggests that instructional leadership strategies facilitate teacher performance, foster and promote collaborative learning. Educational leaders create shared conducive environments for teachers to perform. Researchers such as Mastura *et al.* (2021) have found that instructional leadership strategies enable a learning-focused process that fosters improvement in learning and teaching, while studies such as Joseph *et al.* (2025) have found that the instructional leadership role of educational leaders is crucial in advancing teachers' academic achievement.

In Saleem *et al.* (2021), defining shared expectations is the most influential strategy of educational leaders, whereby teacher performance, achievement, and improvement are brought to the fore in the school's decision-making process. Researchers such as Cherutoi *et al.* (2024) have found that setting goals focuses attention, resources, and accounts of educational leaders' efforts on teachers' progress and outcomes. Studies such as Marshall (2024) have found that monitoring teachers' progress is a key strategy for lines of sight into the classroom, quality assurance of instructional programs, aiming to evaluate the quality of instructions, making the classrooms allocations, diagnosing program effectiveness, evaluating results of changes in instructional programs, measure progress towards school goals.

Another crucial issue which emanated from the findings was that instructional leadership strategies promote, enhance, and monitor teaching and learning. This finding suggests that educational leaders engage in collaborative discussions to create conducive environments for teaching and learning to take place. However, studies by Buyukgoze *et al.* (2022) and Chen (2020) have found that while some teachers enjoy teaching and/or the learning process, others are frustrated due to insufficient preparation, poor training workshops, unclear procedures, poor academic literacy skills, and a lack of commitment

shown by some teachers. Nevertheless, findings of this study have confirmed that all four instructional leadership practices are associated with teacher academic performance, and they include defining school mission, managing school instructional program, promoting positive learning climate, and advancing teachers' interests; a similar argumentation also been echoed by Tortia *et al.* (2022). In Nellitawati *et al.* (2024), promoting professional development is strongly linked to teachers' outcomes, tailored to address teachers needs and changing practice, while in Sharif and Ghodoosi (2022), educational leaders not only inform teachers about opportunities for staff development, but also lead in-service training, ensuring professional development is closely linked to goals and structured to groups and individuals.

### **5.2 Instructional Leadership Strategies Used by Educational Leaders in Oshana Region**

The second question answered by the study was: Which instructional leadership strategies do school leaders use in Oshana Region? In this study, the primary issue encompassing this finding is attributed to how educational leaders have using monitoring and communication strategies to monitor teacher performance. This finding suggests that educational leaders foster a culture of open communication to establish mechanisms for feedback and to devise the best teaching and learning practices. This also confirms a similar finding of previous research studies by Buyukgoze *et al.* (2022), evidence to Nellitawati *et al.* (2024) findings that instructional leadership strategies are very critical to develop a dynamic organic centre for education to build on ideas and growth.

Rahman *et al.* (2020) have found that key strategic skills educational leaders bring to schools includes communication skill, curriculum content knowledge, pedagogy, and the ability to solve complex problems, whereas according to Smith and Holloway (2020), educational leaders foster collective commitment to focus on teaching, and learning, consider leadership at all levels; build leadership team which works widely across school in strong alignment to drive the improvement agenda.

Tarro *et al.* (2020) have found that educational leaders establish, regularly communicate clear goals and success measures at various levels, while according to Zhou *et al.* (2021), educational leaders provide regular differentiated opportunities for teachers to engage with the contemporary research-based professional development for instructional programs. According to Harris *et al.* (2022), instructional leadership strategies begin when educational leaders' focus is on make core business of teaching and learning an explicit improvement agenda for the school.

The sample of this study revealed that educational leaders use communication channels to direct teacher outcomes. That said, it should be noted that concern in this study was on the complex interplay between instructional leadership, teacher performance and/or systemic challenges, not vice versa (cf. Methodology Section). However, a possible interpretation for this finding may be that there are currently arrangements on ministerial mission, vision statement within the educational setting (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture [MoEAC], 2024). As a result of top-down

cascades of ministerial mission, vision, many educational leaders might have difficulty adapting and/or change status quo. However, these anomalies should be addressed by involving various stakeholders in the planning, implementation, evaluation and reflection process (Shapaka, 2024b). Notably, findings of the study have also consistently emphasised fostering a culture of open communication and/or collaboration amongst stakeholders. Such an initiative can also be used to remedy the situation.

### **5.3 Instructional Leadership Strategies Which Enhance Teacher Performance**

The third question answered by the study was: Which existing instructional leadership strategies enhance teacher performance? The profound issue noteworthy from the study is that educational leaders use teacher empowerment, collaborative decision-making process to ensure that teacher performance is enhanced. This finding suggests that educational leaders recognise teacher agency and/or leverage teacher collective expertise to promote greater collaboration and shared responsibility. This finding is consistent with the previous studies by Zhou *et al.* (2021), which assessed the usefulness of instructional leadership strategies which empower teachers, promote well-being, and provide learning opportunities while improving the quality of teaching and learning. The findings of this study have revealed that educational leaders use a collaborative environment and professional development to foster collaborative learning and continuous improvement. This finding correlates with the study by Rabkin and Frein (2021) on the importance of effective communication, cooperation, and trust among stakeholders. A similar study conducted by Bey (2022) has revealed how instructional leadership strategies have influenced teacher performance using the four paths model, namely rational, emotional, organisational and family paths. These findings corroborate the studies by Arnold *et al.* (2021) and Simms *et al.* (2023), which have revealed educational leaders' roles in the teachers' professional collaboration, job satisfaction and organisational commitment to improve teacher performance in the context of Namibia (Shapaka, 2025a).

### **5.4 Teacher Performance Which Associates with Instructional Leadership Strategies**

The fourth question answered by the study was: What existing teacher performance which associates with instructional leadership strategies? In this study, the principal issue that encompassing these findings is that teachers have predominantly focused on enhancing and strengthening teaching quality and their ongoing professional growth. This finding suggests that teachers enhance their commitment to perform while focusing on their ongoing professional growth. A study by Zhou *et al.* (2021) has indicated that instructional leadership strategies play a very important role in teacher performance and welcoming environment, whereas Mohamed *et al.* (2023) have found that educational leaders' instructional leadership strategies promote a conducive environment and a culture of continuous improvement. Studies such as Chen and Zhang (2022) and Karakose *et al.* (2023) have found a positive link between instructional leadership practice, teacher performance and the teaching and learning process.

Hickey *et al.* (2024) and Marshall (2024) have found that there is an urgent need to develop CPD for both teachers and educational leaders through instructional leadership development programs to contribute to increased teachers' academic achievement and educational leaders' leadership standing. Groenewald *et al.* (2024) and Karakose *et al.* (2023) have found that there is also an urgent need for policymakers/stakeholders to prioritise the cultivation of leadership pipelines to support mechanisms which address the lack of established qualifications for educational leaders to remedy leadership development and capacity building for educational leaders. A similar argumentation is also echoed by Shapaka (2026).

This study so far discusses the interplay between instructional leadership and teacher performance; gives insight into issues faced by educational leaders and/or seeks potential solutions scaffold them in overcoming them. Instructional leadership strategies shape school culture, with context-specific implications on teacher performance. Leaders' instructional leadership strategies affect teacher performance, foster a conducive environment, encourage collaboration, innovation, and/or shared responsibility, empower teachers, support a sense of community, and/or lead to positive teacher engagement and/or learning. School leaders should integrate elements of instructional leadership to support teachers, enhance job satisfaction, and promote their performance. Effective instructional leadership strategies should not be limited to one strategy, but rather a combination of strategies and components which leverage the strength of each (Joseph *et al.*, 2024). In Namibia, integrative school leadership encompasses compassion and inclusivity of instructional strategies that could best address current and/or emerging issues faced by school leaders. Eclectic instructional leadership strategies align with the nation's aspiration for a progressive, inclusive, and adaptable instructional leadership strategy that can thrive amidst rapid societal and digital changes is vital (MoEAC, 2024).

## 6. Conclusion

Based on the design used and findings of the study, it can be concluded that educational leaders' instructional leadership strategies play a role in teacher performance. This then suggests that educational leaders' instructional leadership strategies play an important part in teacher performance, which affects teacher performance, resulting in positive and negative teacher performance. It was then evident from the study that educational leaders should apply instructional leadership strategies to enhance and promote teacher performance in the Oshana region in Namibia.

In light of the study's findings, the following recommendations are made for practice: First, educational leaders should use instructional leadership to improve teachers' performance. Second, educational leaders should use instructional leadership to strike a balance between instructional strategies and avoid pitting one strategy against another. This, in turn, will help them to strike a balance between the authority of teacher expertise in curriculum and the positional authority of the educational leaders. Last, the study recommends an urgent need for educational leaders to study and learn the

application of instructional leadership, apply it to optimise success and enhance teaching and learning, which result on teacher performance.

I acknowledge that this research has limitations. Only 20 educational leaders were selected for the interview sessions, and an open-ended questionnaire in which the complex interplays between instructional leadership and teacher performance were the feature of interest. The researcher utilised the criterion-based purposive sampling technique and selected only educational leaders with seven years of experience or more in principalship. This selection might have influenced the response. Researchers attempt to explore the complex interplay between instructional leadership and teacher performance; whereby educational leaders are influential in schools. Their responses might be affected by this. The sample includes public educational leaders who volunteered to participate in the study, excluding private educational leaders. Therefore, a question of generalisability to private educational leaders is a limitation. Its scope is confined to the Oshana Region in Namibia, thereby narrowing the generalisability of its findings and limiting their broader applicability. I acknowledge the reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce bias, as educational leaders' perspectives may be influenced by their experiences and perceptions of their own effectiveness. While this study is thorough in exploring educational leaders' strategies, it does not directly measure teacher performance through standardised testing or observational metrics that could strengthen the linkage between leaders' strategies and teacher performance outcomes. However, the study has applied a multi-method approach, using more than one data collection technique and/or corresponding data analysis procedures to strengthen the analysis and possibly enhance the robustness of the findings. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendation is made for future research: future research should conduct longitudinal comparative studies across different regions and explore the complex interplay among instructional, teacher performance, and systemic challenges, since this was beyond the scope of this study.

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### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

### About the Author

Born at Okanya Village, Ongandjera, Namibia in 1967, this author became an ordinal teacher in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture in 1990, Head of Department in 2005 and school principal in 2007. Author's educational background include Doctor of Philosophy in Education in education management from University of South Africa, Pretoria, 2021, Master of Education in education management, leadership and policy studies from University of Namibia, Windhoek, 2017, Postgraduate Diploma in Education in education management from University of South Africa, Pretoria, 2007, Bachelor of Education in education management from the Rand Afrikaans University, Johannesburg, 2004, Further Diploma in Education in English language teaching from Rand Afrikaans University, Johannesburg, 2001 and Diploma in Education in English and Oshindonga from the Ongwediva College of Education, Ongwediva, 1996. The author's field of expertise and field of academic interests include education management, education leadership, school governance, education law, policy studies and language education. The author's field of publication expertise and academic publication interests focus on Southern Africa, particularly in Namibia, the Oshana Region.

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