



Roles of instructional leadership in the improved implementation of the entrepreneurship education curriculum in the Senior Phase in South Africa

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Abstract

In this study, we determined the roles of instructional leadership in promoting the implementation of the entrepreneurship education (EE) curriculum in the Senior Phase in selected schools in South Africa. Instructional leadership is the instructional behaviour of all stakeholders charged with learners' instruction in the school. In this study, these stakeholders are the principals, department heads, and teachers tasked with improving and promoting teaching and learning. To enhance EE, there is a need to revisit the role of instructional leaders (for this article the principal, departmental heads, and teachers) in promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum in the Senior Phase (Grades 7, 8 and 9) schools. The study employed Goal Setting and Task Performance Theory by Locke and Latham (1990), a quantitative research approach, and a cross-sectional design. The study population was comprised of all public secondary schools offering Grades 7, 8, and 9 in the Ngaka Modiri Molema district of North West Province, South Africa. The population of schools in this area is 437, of which 51 schools were conveniently selected. Data was collected using a questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics. The primary findings of this study showed that principals did not prioritise the roles of instructional leadership to bring about an improved implementation of the EE curriculum in the Senior Phase. The instructional level requires the principal, as the primary instructional leader, to communicate these roles to department heads and teachers. We conclude that principals at the macro level ought to create and communicate the broad vision to the departmental heads and teachers at meso and micro levels for an effective curriculum implementation. We also recommend that principals should delegate some of the school administrative work to focus more on instruction since this is the core of instructional leadership.

Keywords: curriculum implementation, distributed leadership, entrepreneurship education, instructional leadership, senior phase

Introduction

Instructional leadership entails establishing specific objectives and instructional strategies, overseeing lesson plans, allocating resources, assessing learner activities, and having department heads (DHs) routinely evaluate teachers to foster learning and development (Bhebe & Nyathi, 2019). Mustari and Nurhayati (2024) posited that instructional leadership also involves the multilayered responsibilities and function execution of various crucial stakeholders in the education system. Since instructional leadership can result in effective teaching and learning, it can be inferred that these tasks may result in diverse perspectives and practices of instructional leaders in schools. Understanding the connection between instructional leadership and teaching and learning is crucial for improving learners' performance (Naz & Rashid, 2021).

In this study, we sought to promote the implementation of the entrepreneurship education (EE) curriculum in South African schools for a better outcome. The literature proposes that one of the primary challenges South African schools face is the role played by instructional leadership in promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum (Ramchander, 2019). As Hallinger and Murphy (1985) have explained, these instructional leadership roles include defining the school mission, managing the instructional programme, and promoting a positive learning climate. Defining the school mission involves two leadership roles, namely framing and communicating the school goals (Gordon & Gordon, 2017). Managing the instructional programme involves three leadership roles: supervising and evaluating instruction; coordinating the curriculum; and monitoring learners' progress (Chabalala & Naidoo, 2021). Promoting a positive learning climate in a school is about developing an effective culture of continual improvement at school where rewards are aligned with purposes and practice (Lijun & Te, 2024). The need for instructional leadership in promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum exists against a background of curriculum transformation in most countries, and South Africa in particular. According to Nader et al. (2019), the new curriculum and the transformation of the education system mean altering the expectations and roles of instructional leadership.

The literature on leadership systematically questions the degree of the impact of the school on learner outcomes and whether the extent of the outcomes can be attributed to the leadership shown in a school (Lingam & Lingam, 2023). This question also applies to EE. School leadership, specifically instructional leadership, significantly improves teaching and learning outcomes and leadership is regarded as a vital precondition for the success of an organisation (Ahmad & Ahmad, 2024). Hence, developing such vital human capital, emphasising the quality of instructional leadership roles, is fundamental to promoting EE in the Senior Phase, which, in South Africa, consists of Grades 7, 8, and 9. Studies have been conducted on the roles of instructional leadership in relation to the academic achievement of learners, and some on EE, mostly in tertiary institutions. We aimed to determine the roles of instructional leaders in the promotion of the implementation of the EE curriculum in the Senior Phase.

Research objectives

The research objectives were

- to determine the perceived roles of principals, DHs, and teachers in promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum in the Senior Phase; and
- to determine the performance of these instructional leaders in what is expected from them in their roles in promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum in the Senior Phase.

Research questions

The research questions were:

- What are the perceived roles of principals, DHs, and teachers in promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum in the Senior Phase?
- What is the performance of these instructional leaders in assuming their expected roles in relation to promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum in the Senior Phase?

Theoretical framework

In this study, we adopted the theory of Goal Setting and Task Performance by Locke and Latham (1990) to explore the roles of instructional leadership in promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum among Senior Phase learners. We use this theory since it recognises individual performance as a predictor of the attainment of desired organisational objectives. In this case, it is the goal setting and task performance of the instructional leaders. Klinck et al., (2023) pointed out that organisations require high-performing individuals to meet their goals and deliver the products and services in which they specialise, despite any stress. Schools are organisations that focus on implementing the teaching and learning of a curriculum to achieve the desired national educational outcomes as reflected by learner attainment. Interpreted in the context of goal setting and task performance theory, instructional leaders are responsible for implementing the curriculum to achieve the desired educational goals. The theory distinguishes between behavioural and outcome aspects of performance.

Abun et al., (2021) explained that behavioural aspects relate to the actions performed by an individual in the workplace to cope with stress and achieve the set organisational goals. Behavioural aspects in the context of instructional leadership encompass the tasks that instructional leaders perform in the school, such as facilitating teaching and learning, planning lessons, assessing learners, managing the classroom, and portraying leadership in instructional activities. This theory is described as the tasks that one is employed to perform in an organisation (Abun et al., (2021). Interpreted from the instructional leadership perspective, the employees of an organisation should possess skills and competencies that enable them to perform their tasks. Marshall et al., (2024) maintained that goal setting and

task performance theories enable individuals to undertake a complex series of actions that integrate skills and knowledge to produce a valuable result.

We suggest that when a principal advances their level of performance in fostering the implementation of EE, they are able to organise DHs, teachers, and resources more efficiently. This will lead to DHs and teachers increasing their respective levels of performance, which will produce EE learners equipped with entrepreneurial skills. In a nutshell, DHs and teachers can improve their performance and productivity through the principal's increased level of performance in relation to the identification and performance of instructional roles as expected at the macro level. In the following section, we present a literature review that focuses primarily on exploring instructional leadership, distributed leadership, and EE.

Literature review: Instructional leadership

In this study, *leadership* refers to the ability of a group of people (principals, DHs, and teachers) in a school system to coordinate and direct the teaching and learning activities and procedures. Their influence levels vary: the principal possesses the highest influence and should work with the other parties to achieve the desired result since the principal is at the macro (highest) level, DHs are at the meso-level (mid-level), and teachers are at the micro level (lowest level). These three leaders are called *instructional leaders* in this study. The instructional roles of the principal, as put forward by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), include framing and communicating instructional goals, developing instructional programmes, and promoting a positive learning climate. However, principals, DHs, and teachers perform these roles at their various instructional levels (macro, meso, and micro).

The concept of instructional leadership emerged during the nineteenth-century review system in North America, Australia, and England (Enebe et al., 2024). In the 1970s and 1980s, the principal was considered the primary source of educational competence (Chitiga, 2018), and any action the principal took to improve teaching and learning was seen to be effective (Enebe et al., 2024). The principal's role was to standardise an effective teaching practice while maintaining sound prospects for teachers and learners, coordinate the curriculum, supervise instruction, and monitor learners' progress. Instructional leadership is a mix of supervision, curriculum development, and staff development that enhances school improvement (Lani & Pauzi, 2024).

In the past, the school principal was the only one regarded as playing the role of instructional leader (Hallinger et al., 2020). According to Ikram et al. (2021), teachers, DHs, and assistant principals as instructional leaders received minimal attention in the 1980s. Very little discussion existed of instructional leadership as a shared characteristic or function. Nowadays, instructional leadership tilts towards shared functions distributed among principals, DHs, teachers, and other members of the school for the effective actualisation of the school goals (Botha, 2016; Tenha & Makamure, 2024). We focus on these shared roles of school role players. Principals do not work in isolation, their work is intertwined and interconnected, and they are asked increasingly to collaborate (Tenha & Makamure, 2024).

Researchers agree that instructional leadership can ensure successful school instruction. Manaseh (2016) described an instructional leader as one who goes above the conventional school administration role and puts more time into curriculum implementation and advancing knowledge, while also improving assessment and instruction. Chitiga (2018) asserted that the core function of educational leadership is tied to instruction. Similarly, throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, instructional leadership was defined in relation to the activities performed by the principal or those delegated to others to increase student learning (Ng, 2023). Principals should articulate the aims of education, create visions and goals, and develop processes to achieve these aims. Their strategies include providing essential resources, evaluating and monitoring teachers, and coordinating and supervising staff programmes. Therefore, it is plausible to conclude that a leadership model focusing on the principal is not ideal in an education system marked by complexity, variety, and pressures on teachers and learners to improve academic achievement (Schlebusch, 2020).

It is crucial to find ways to motivate more teachers to take up leadership roles and give them the tools and support they require to transform the existing individualistic pedagogical, teaching, and learning methods (Huber & Pruitt, 2024). This poor performance may be traced to principals' deficiencies in implementing their roles, especially in curriculum monitoring and fostering participative leadership. When an individual (principal) single-handedly manages a school, the system tends to malfunction compared to a school where roles are distributed (Szeto & Cheng, 2017). This indicates the collaborative roles of principals, DHs, and teachers in promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum, thus highlighting the need to review distributive leadership.

Distributed leadership is collective; all staff members work together to foster the smooth functioning of the school activities to reach a common goal. We use the terms *distributed* and *collaborative leadership* interchangeably. Distributed leadership is most inclined to affect organisational transformation favourably (Makanjuola et al., 2024). However, this leadership identifies many leaders whose activities are shared broadly in the organisation. Printy and Liu (2021) described distributed leadership as developing a shared vision among all the role players and living the dream with them. This leadership is characterised by participative, shared, and democratic leadership and effective teamwork during which principals and teachers consider options, rather than offering commands or criticism (Printy & Liu, 2021) and cooperate as communities of learners in service to their students.

Distributed leadership has gained international prominence. It is encouraged because it contributes to classroom achievement through collaborative decisions and contributes positively to school change (Botha, 2016). Harris et al. (2022) asserted that positions of power are not limited to those in leadership as in the conventional leader-follower model, where a leader leads followers who are mostly silent and submissive. Distributed leadership entails that all teachers should and can lead and contribute to leadership (Heikka et al., 2021). Teachers are encouraged to be involved in decision-making regarding teaching, learning, and assessment in a school where distributed leadership is well implemented (Szeto & Cheng, 2017), enhancing learner accomplishment and facilitating curriculum implementation.

Consequently, we advocate improving the implementation of the entrepreneurship education (EE) curriculum in the Senior Phase. Principals need to increase their adoption of distributed leadership so that the strengths and potential of DHs and teachers can be harnessed to create new school initiatives. According to Al Hassanieh (2020), evidence has shown that distributed leadership significantly influences organisational growth because structural and cultural barriers are removed. When principals are responsible for all school operations, inefficiency and underperformance in the teaching and learning process are likely to be the norm. Distributive leadership is more effective and efficient since it allows for the principal to delegate duties and collaborate with other school community members to achieve a better result regarding promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum in the Senior Phase.

The EE curriculum provides learners with better knowledge of entrepreneurship ideas, and trains and encourages them to pursue entrepreneurial endeavours (Al Balushi, 2023). It can help learners become more entrepreneurial by improving their mindset. Furthermore, a self-empowerment education develops learners' entrepreneurial mindset and skills to create value for themselves and the economy. As a veritable instrument in the hands of the younger generation, EE instils innovativeness, creativity, and problem-solving skills to help them identify opportunities around them and key into them for reward. The EE curriculum has been implemented in the Senior Phase, and we seek an improved implementation of this subject to enhance learners' entrepreneurial mindset and problem-solving abilities. EE is a part of Economics and Management Sciences (EMS) which is comprised of Financial Literacy, Economics, and EE. It is crucial to impart these skills constructively during the Senior Phase because it is more economical to develop essential educational abilities during the early school years when the potential value of learners' time is the lowest (Tandika, 2020). More importantly, the Senior Phase is the foundation of EE in South Africa, the first stage in which EE is introduced in the school curriculum. The numerous challenges that beset EE in South Africa (see Du Toit & Kempen, 2020; Ramchander, 2019) will have a positive ripple effect across all educational levels in the country if adequate measures are taken at this stage. In turn, it will lead to the production of university graduates who are ready to face the demands of the twenty-first century. Therefore, numerous studies contend that EE should begin at a young age to develop learners' entrepreneurial attitudes (Tandika, 2020), teach them the fundamentals of the field, and help them develop respect for self-employment opportunities.

Ramchander (2019) posited that despite the richness of EE for learners and society, the South African education system has failed to produce learners with entrepreneurial skills since EE is more theoretical than practical (Du Toit & Kempen, 2020). The number of graduates who cannot get employment in the public sector is high, and the capacity of the public or private sector to absorb graduates is not guaranteed (Ramchander, 2019), which may also be the case at the school-leaving level. Hence, an urgent need exists to investigate how the implementation of the EE curriculum can be enhanced through the instructional leadership role of principals, DHs, and teachers.

Methodology

We followed a quantitative research approach and employed a descriptive research design to investigate the roles of instructional leadership in promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum in the Senior Phase. According to Ghanad (2023), a descriptive research design establishes the frequency at which something occurs or the relationship between two variables. Zikmund and Babin (2013) underlined the need for a descriptive research design when one is characterising objects, people, groups, organisations, or settings. Ghanad (2023) advocated using a descriptive research method to find links between variables or examine group differences.

The study population was comprised of all the public primary and secondary schools in the Ngaka Modiri Molema district of North West offering Grades 7 to 9, a total of 437 schools. The five sub-districts in the Ngaka Modiri Molema district, with the number of schools attached to them, form the clusters for this study: Ditsobotla (82), Mahikeng (150), Ramotshere-Moilon (92), Ratlou (68) and Tswaing (72) (Department of Basic Education, 2022). Of these, 51 schools were conveniently selected. The study engaged three instructional leaders per school (one principal, one DH, and one teacher). In schools where there was no DH, two teachers were selected. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data and was distributed to 153 respondents. In total, 148 questionnaires were received back from 51 principals, 37 DHs, and 60 teachers and five questionnaires were not returned. The distribution and collection of the instrument proved to be a challenge since some of the schools were in a remote location. The principal researcher visited the schools and distributed the consent forms and questionnaires to the respondents. This was done mostly during a break, so that they could be collected before the break was over. There were exceptions to this since some respondents did not complete the instrument during the break, resulting in repeated school visits—more than three times for some schools. The overall distribution and collection of the instrument took four months.

Data analysis

Statistical analyses were done vigorously to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument and the data analysis. Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability of the constructs of the questionnaire to measure its internal consistency. The appendix shows that the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the constructs was at least 0.8, showing that all factors were reliable. Izah et al. (2023) stated that the Cronbach alpha value should be at least 0.7 to be regarded as acceptable, although a value of 0.6 could be acceptable (see Dasgupta et al., 2017). Tables 1, 2, and 3 present the findings from the principals, DHs, and teachers respectively. The same questionnaire items were used for the three respondents, as seen in the appendix. The results provided below are arranged from the highest mean score to the lowest in ascending order.

Results

Data was collected using a four-point Likert scale where the average of each rating was presented. The responses were ranked as 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: agree and 4: strongly agree. The calculated means (averages) of the findings from the responses relate to the Likert scale: 1.0–1.5 = strongly disagree; 1.6–2.5 = disagree; 2.6–3.5 = agree; and 3.6–4.0 = strongly agree. Therefore, Tables 1 to 3 were interpreted using the mean score, arranged in ascending order from the highest to the lowest in line with the responses. The items of the instrument range from number 9 to 20.

Table 1

Instructional leadership roles played by principals in promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum

Item no.	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
9.	The instructional leader created a clear vision for the teaching and learning of EE.	2.34	1.041
10.	The instructional leader supervises the promotion of the implementation of the EE curriculum.	2.34	1.053
18.	The instructional leader evaluates the implementation of the curriculum to promote EE.	2.39	1.020
19.	The instructional leader is actively involved in the implementation of the EE curriculum.	2.43	1.038
17.	The instructional leader monitors learners' progress to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum.	2.47	0.958
20.	The instructional leader ensures the promotion of the implementation of the EE curriculum through mentoring and coaching learners.	2.55	1.045
14.	The instructional leader ensures he/she undergoes professional training to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum.	2.57	0.858
16.	The instructional leader provides teaching and learning materials to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum.	2.65	0.982
15.	The instructional leader ensures a positive learning culture for improving the implementation of the EE curriculum.	2.99	0.877
13.	The instructional leader communicates clear goals to improve the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.00	0.873
11.	The instructional leader formulates goals to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.05	0.798
12.	The instructional leader coordinates the promotion of the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.08	0.714

Table 1 presents the instructional leadership roles played by the principal in promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum. Principals at the macro level should engage in setting

the vision of the school, curriculum organisation, teacher evaluation, and collaboration (Ogden, 2017). The findings, as reflected by the means 3.08 (item 12), 3.05 (item 11) and 3.00 (item 13), show that most of the respondents agreed that the principal coordinates, formulates, and communicates goals for promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum. These findings are consistent with the functions expected from principals at the macro level, as per the *Personnel Administrative Measures* (PAM) issued in 2016 by the Department of Basic Education. According to these guidelines, the principal, who is at the topmost level in the school, should coordinate, formulate, and communicate clear goals at the school level that trickle down to the DHs and teachers. However, there was disagreement that principals play a sufficient role in creating a vision for EE teaching and learning, supervise EE, and evaluate, as shown by the means 2.34 (item 9), 2.34 (item 10) and 2.39 (item 18). These findings indicate that the principal might not have played an effective role in creating a vision, supervising, and monitoring learners' progress to promote the implementation of EE and are therefore inconsistent with the expectations of principals at the macro level in the school. The principal, as the general overseer of the school, should coordinate, formulate, and communicate goals and play a role in creating a vision, supervising, and monitoring the academic exercise of the whole school to foster the implementation of EE. The DHs and teachers, at the meso and micro levels were also assigned the same responsibilities. PAM (Department of Basic Education, 2016) states that these responsibilities should be performed at their respective managerial levels. The principal performs these roles at the school level, DHs at the departmental level, and teachers at the classroom level.

Table 2

Instructional leadership roles played by DHs in promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum

Item no.	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
9.	The instructional leader created a clear vision for the teaching and learning of EE.	2.92	0.742
10.	The instructional leader supervises the promotion of the implementation of the EE curriculum.	2.95	0.741
18.	The instructional leader evaluates the implementation of the curriculum to promote EE.	2.97	0.799
19.	The instructional leader is actively involved in the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.00	0.680
17.	The instructional leader monitors learners' progress to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.02	0.760
20.	The instructional leader ensures the promotion of the implementation of EE through mentoring and coaching learners.	3.06	0.818
14.	The instructional leader ensures he/she undergoes professional training to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.10	0.697
15.	The instructional leader ensures a positive learning culture for improving the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.11	0.770

Item no.	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
16.	The instructional leader provides teaching and learning materials to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.14	0.738
11.	The instructional leader formulates goals to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.26	0.486
12.	The instructional leader coordinates the promotion of the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.27	0.567
13.	The instructional leader communicates clear goals to improve the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.32	0.537

Table 2 shows the various instructional leadership roles played by DHs. The respondents agreed that DHs are doing what is expected of them regarding EE curriculum implementation. At the meso level, DHs should have control of the department by directing and assisting teachers' classroom activities (Kaseorg & Uibu, 2017). The DHs are involved in the planning and goal setting for their departments. The findings, as portrayed by the highest means 3.32 (item 13), 3.27 (item 12), 3.26 (item 11) and 3.14 (item 16), indicate that the DHs play the most critical role in communicating clear goals, coordinating the curriculum, formulating goals, and providing teaching and learning materials to ensure the promotion of the implementation of the EE curriculum. Similarly, the means of 2.97 (item 18), 2.95 (item 10) and 2.92 (item 9) show that the respondents agreed that the DHs play a role in evaluating, supervising, and creating a clear vision for promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum. This result indicates that the DH, at the meso level, performs various instructional roles at the departmental level: supervising; evaluating; presenting a clear vision; professional training; mentoring; and coaching to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum. The findings indicate that most of the respondents believe that the DH performs most of these instructional leadership roles, as outlined in PAM (Department of Basic Education, 2016), to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum.

Table 3

Instructional leadership roles played by teachers in promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum

Item no.	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation.
16.	The instructional leader provides teaching and learning materials to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.28	0.626
14.	The instructional leader ensures he/she undergoes professional training to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.29	0.525
15.	The instructional leader ensures a positive learning culture for improving the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.30	0.577
9.	The instructional leader created a clear vision for the teaching and learning of EE.	3.32	0.470

Item no.	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation.
10.	The instructional leader supervises the promotion of the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.32	0.481
17.	The instructional leader monitors learners' progress to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.33	0.486
12.	The instructional leader coordinates the promotion of the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.34	0.491
11.	The instructional leader formulates goals to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.35	0.493
13.	The instructional leader communicates clear goals to improve the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.36	0.497
18.	The instructional leader evaluates the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.39	0.490
20.	The instructional leader ensures the promotion of the implementation of the EE curriculum through mentoring and coaching learners.	3.41	0.493
19.	The instructional leader is actively involved in the implementation of the EE curriculum.	3.44	0.498

Table 3 shows various instructional leadership roles teachers play with their corresponding means. At the micro level, teachers are charged with implementing the curriculum in the classroom. Mutual interaction between and among these three levels allows teachers to work together to address difficulties and get feedback, assistance, and support (Heikka et al., 2021) for improved implementation of the EE curriculum. The findings show the mean ranges between 3.28 and 3.44, indicating that the respondents have a higher agreement and meaning that teachers perform instructional roles that promote the implementation of the EE curriculum. The findings show that items 19, 20, and 18 have estimated means of 3.44, 3.41 and 3.39, respectively, showing that the respondents agreed that teachers are actively involved in implementing the curriculum and mentor, coach, and evaluate learners to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum. Moreover, the findings on items 15, 14, and 16, with estimated means of 3.30, 3.29, and 3.28, respectively, show that teachers ensure a positive learning culture, undergo professional training, and provide teaching and learning materials to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum. The results show that the respondents agreed that the teacher performs these instructional leadership roles to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum. From the foregoing, it is clear that teachers embrace PAM (Department of Basic Education, 2016) and Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum.

Discussion

This study revealed that principals coordinate, formulate, and communicate clear goals for promoting an improved implementation of the EE curriculum. It showed that principals ensure a positive learning culture and provide teaching and learning materials to enhance the implementation of the EE curriculum. However, principals do not effectively prioritise the roles of creating a clear vision, nor of those of supervising, evaluating, being actively involved in, and monitoring learners' progress. Clearly, the respondents perceive that principals do not regard these roles as vital for improved implementation of the EE curriculum. Ng (2019) proposed that defining the school mission reflects the instructional leader's responsibility for creating jointly a context-based vision for the school, ensuring that other school stakeholders are aware of it, and ensuring that teaching and learning activities are aligned with the vision. Hence, it is ideal for the principal, at the macro level, to communicate the general instructional vision to the DH, who will communicate it to the teacher to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum. Similarly, for DHs and teachers to be effective in their instructional roles, they should understand the broad school vision from the principal to draw up their departmental and classroom visions. Kipasika (2024) found that leaders' academic development is ensured by the creation of a clear vision and formulating and communicating this along with articulating relevant goals. Put differently, the principal's most pressing role at the macro level is to create and communicate the vision for effective teaching and learning in the school; this can be likened to a compass that gives direction to the user. For DHs and teachers at the meso and micro levels, respectively, the creation and communication of a vision establishes an understanding of what is expected of them and how it is to be achieved, in conjunction with the other instructional roles of the principal. The principals' failure to prioritise the vision may be one of the reasons why the EE curriculum is not sufficiently implemented. For improved implementation of this curriculum, it is essential that the principal prioritises creating an instructional vision to enable the role players to focus on and effectively promote the implementation of the EE curriculum.

The literature indicates that principals should oversee all the instructional activities in the school. Stronge and Xu (2021) found that instructional leaders oversee all instructional activities, such as supervising, monitoring, and evaluating instruction and curriculum-based activities at school. Sijako (2017) concurred that to enhance curriculum implementation in schools, the principal should inspire other school management members by monitoring and supervising DHs and teachers to ensure the need for effective instructional leadership. Most actions that offer instructional support to classroom teaching and learning fall under supervising, monitoring, and assessing instruction and the curriculum. However, the findings of this study show that principals do not prioritise some of these roles, which constitutes a drawback to realising the implementation of the EE curriculum in the Senior Phase.

Although there is distributive leadership in place, this does not translate to effective principal leadership. As can be seen relative to the findings on the ineffectiveness of the principal to perform some of their roles, DHs and teachers performed well. In an ideal situation,

distributive leadership is meant to result in having every participant equally involved in the affairs of promoting the implementation of EE curriculum.

As examined in this study, the DH's role in promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum was expounded using Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional leadership roles. Mampane (2017) confirmed that DHs oversee learners' performance and teachers' skills and knowledge and are subject specialists managing departments, leading curricula, and addressing teachers in the department. This study's findings confirm that the DHs were actively involved in learners' entrepreneurial activities, monitored learners' progress, mentored and coached learners, underwent professional training, provided a positive learning culture, provided teaching and learning materials, formulated goals, and coordinated and communicated clear goals for promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum in the Senior Phase. It is interesting to note that the respondents acknowledged all the roles analysed in this study that DHs assume at their departmental level to improve the implementation of the EE curriculum in the department. DHs go about their role by drawing from the broad or general roles of the school put in place by the principal, even though the principal does not follow through on these roles as can be seen in the findings. These school roles are narrowed to the department level for teachers and learners.

These observed findings align with those of Kalane and Rambuda (2022), who found that managing teaching and learning involves DHs maintaining and promoting a culture of teaching and learning by communicating clear goals and coordinating and monitoring instructional practices with the constant provision of teaching and learning materials to improve learners' performance. The findings are also consistent with those of Bhebhe and Nyathi (2019), who affirmed that instructional leadership involves setting up clear goals and instructional strategies, managing curricula, monitoring and allocating resources, and evaluating learners' and teachers' activities regularly to promote curriculum implementation. It can be deduced from the foregoing that DHs, in most cases, perform their roles as instructional leaders to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum in the Senior Phase.

Furthermore, the findings show that teachers perform these instructional roles to facilitate improved implementation of the EE curriculum. Teachers are actively involved in EE teaching and learning as follows: they mentor and coach EE learners; evaluate EE instruction; communicate clear goals; formulate goals and coordinate, monitor, supervise, and create a clear vision for EE teaching and learning. This finding is consistent with the requirements of PAM (Department of Basic Education, 2016) in affirming that teachers, as curriculum implementers, take on a leadership role in their subject areas to plan, coordinate, control, administer, evaluate, supervise, and report on learners' academic progress. Since teachers are at the micro level, they should undertake operational roles to a greater extent since they understand the benefits of EE for learners and the implementation of the EE curriculum. Teachers' roles are directly linked with those of the principal and DHs; in the classroom, teachers streamline the departmental vision and goals to become more attainable and realistic to learners. Chabalala and Naidoo (2021) asserted that teachers need the assistance of the principal and the school management team (DHs for this study) to perform their classroom

roles efficiently. Principals and DHs should jointly monitor and supervise teachers' progress in the school according to Chabalala and Naidoo (2021). The performance of teachers stems from the motivation derived from the principal and DHs as they diligently assume their roles. The involvement of principals and DHs in the instructional practice of the teacher fosters the promotion of the implementation of the EE curriculum.

The findings from the DHs and teachers as instructional leaders, confirm the tenets of goal setting and task performance theory which recognises individual performance as a predictor of the attainment of desired organisational objectives. These two sets of leaders showed a high level of performance to meet the goal of enhancing the implementation of the EE curriculum in the Senior Phase. More so, this finding aligns with Hallinger and Murphy (1985) whose model of instructional leadership in relation to defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school learning climate defines critical aspects to which instructional leaders must give attention. This cannot be said of all the principals since the findings showed that the principals do not prioritise certain aspects of the roles to bring about an improved implementation of the EE curriculum in the Senior Phase. They fall short of the principles of performance theory, distributive leadership, and do not meet the standards of Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership.

Conclusion and recommendation

The main aim of this study was to determine the role of instructional leadership in promoting the implementation of the EE curriculum in the Senior Phase. Based on the findings, we conclude that it is ideal for the principal, at the macro level, to communicate the general instructional vision to the DH, who will communicate it to the teacher to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum. Similarly, for DHs and teachers to be effective in their instructional roles, they should understand the broad school vision from the principal so that they can define their departmental and classroom visions. From the literature, it is understood that leaders' instructional roles are ensured, first, by creating a clear vision and formulating and communicating these visions and goals, which, in turn, will raise the productivity of the staff as a result of motivation. The principal, as an effective leader, sets the school vision, prioritises and maintains standards through planning, organisation, leading, and control. This study showcased that these principals were not effective in carrying out some of their roles (indicating a clear vision, supervising, evaluating, and being involved in the monitoring of learners' progress) and this, to a high degree, affected the performance of DHs and teachers, thereby limiting the aim of improved implementation of the EE curriculum in the Senior Phase. The goal setting and task performance theory states that individual performance is a predictor of the attainment of desired organisational objectives and that organisations require high-performing individuals to meet their goals and deliver products and services.

Therefore, it rests with the principal, at the macro level, to create and communicate this vision for effective teaching and learning in the school to the DH and teacher at the meso and micro levels, respectively. Vision creation and the communication thereof establish an understanding of what is expected of them and how it should be achieved. The result of the

principal not prioritising the instructional vision could be one of the reasons why the EE curriculum is not sufficiently implemented. For improved implementation of the EE curriculum, it is essential that the principal prioritises creating an instructional vision to enable the other role players to promote the implementation of the EE curriculum in the Senior Phase. The study recommends that principals pay more attention to these roles and strengthen collaboration, networking, and the continuous professional development of DHs and teachers to enhance the implementation of the EE curriculum in the Senior Phase. The principal must make more effective use of distributive leadership, from the formulation of the vision and mission statement to the communication of this important aspect to fellow instructional leaders and must then involve them in realising this vision and mission and trust them to do so. The goal setting and task performance theory is not applicable only to the instructional leaders at the lowest level of the organisation since if the principal, at the macro level, does not perform the expected roles, it will be difficult for the instructional leaders at the lower levels to perform. The goal setting and task performance theory therefore requires the instructional leaders to work as a team to ensure effective improved implementation.

This study has implications for school leaders at macro, meso, and micro levels, policy makers, and stakeholders to ensure that the overwhelming administrative role of the principal is considerably aimed at allowing for more concentration on instructional matters. The study goes further to make suggestions for future research on the impact of principals' entrepreneurial knowledge in fostering entrepreneurship instruction in schools and examining the role of school vision in promoting entrepreneurship education among the middle leaders.

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest among authors.

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