AN ANALYSIS OF THE MANAGERIAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS UNDER UNIVERSAL SECONDARY EDUCATION REFORMS IN SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the managerial and instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in response to the challenges posed by the introduction of the policy of Universal Secondary Education (USE). Implemented in 2005 with minimal input from school principals, no research was carried out to determine the impact of USE introduction on principals' instructional leadership and managerial practices.

This study therefore represents an initial foray into understanding the challenges of school leadership in a top-down policy environment. Its main contribution lies in its analysis of the complexities of leadership in a developing country and its added value to the comparative literature on leadership practices internationally.

Using a qualitative case study research design, data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with twenty-two serving principals. Data analysis was partially based on the themes from the Grissom and Loeb (2009) guiding theoretical framework and partly on identification of emergent themes from the raw data using constant comparison techniques.

Two principal research questions and four subsidiary questions underpinned the study's execution. The main findings from research question one include: low levels of literacy and numeracy among the student population, low student motivation, insufficiently trained personnel in pedagogy and learning psychology, an overly academic curriculum, low parental engagement, inadequate instructional and infrastructural resources and insufficient autonomy for school principals.

Findings from Research Question two revealed however that principals employed varied instructional and managerial strategies to counterbalance these challenges. Creative practices included curriculum modification, innovative teaching and learning methodologies, a supportive learning environment for students and teachers, emphasis on distributed leadership and elements of transformational leadership, the use of school management teams, expanded roles for school counsellors and forging strategic external alliances. Demographic variables of gender, location and experience were negligible in importance.

Recommendations included greater autonomy and support for principals, increased funding for the policy and improved training in systemic educational leadership. The study concluded that principal support for USE is favourable, but that the success of the policy will require greater buttressing for principals in the implementation of their fledgling innovative practices.

This dissertation is dedicated to my spouse Jacqueline and my twin brother Royden, as well as my sisters Sylvia Jack, Saundra Jones, Dr. Mineva Glasgow and Glenys Spence and their families.

Acknowledgements

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List of Acronyms

ALBA	Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas
BNTF	Basic Needs Trust Fund
CARICOM	Caribbean Common Market
CCSLC	Caribbean certificate of Secondary Level Competence
CEE	Common Entrance Examination
CPEA	Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate
CVQ	Caribbean Vocational Qualification
CXC	Caribbean Examination Council
EPMU	Education Project Management Unit
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
OECD	Organization for Economic cooperation and Development
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OERU	OECS Education Reform Unit
USE	Universal Secondary Education
WTO	World Trade Organization

Chapter 1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

The focus of this study is on the managerial and instructional leadership practices that school principals undertake in an era of educational change and school reform. Concretely, the thesis examines the specific practices that secondary school principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines employ to optimize student achievement and organizational effectiveness within the framework of a recent policy called Universal access to secondary education that was introduced by the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in 2005. Among its many objectives, the policy was designed to ensure that all students of secondary school age were provided with the opportunity to receive five years of secondary schooling. The resultant influx of students brought on added layers of complexities to the leadership and managerial responsibilities of school principals (Leacock, 2009). Principals, as a consequence, had to devise a variety of strategies to deal with the changing leadership environment in schools brought on by the introduction of the new education policy. It was therefore imperative that increased attention be paid to the effective leadership role of principals in ensuring the success and effectiveness of the new policy.

The construct of effective leadership is fundamental to an examination of the leadership practices of principals in a context of educational change and educational reform. Under such circumstances, principal leadership is pivotal to the success in a school setting (Dembowski 2006). Whenever new policies are being implemented, it is usually a time of change and upheaval in most organizations and systems and as Branson (2010) and Zeeck (1997) have pointed out, one of the most important and difficult leadership responsibilities confronting contemporary school principals is leading change. Throughout the change process, the leadership of the school administrator becomes particularly important since the onus is on the principal to not only establish the

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vision for the organization, but to ensure that the school maintains its effectiveness in optimizing the teaching-learning process (Dembowski & Lemasters 2009). What strategies then do successful principals use to deal with the myriad of challenges confronting them when faced with these systemic upheavals? This is the fundamental question to be addressed in examining school leadership in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines under Universal Secondary Education reforms. Framed in this context, the purpose of this study is therefore to examine the managerial and instructional practices that the leadership of secondary schools has adopted to deal with a number of changes that that have taken place within their organizations that have significant ramifications for student learning and achievement and for the organizational effectiveness of their schools.

1.2   Managerial Leadership

Principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, as in many developing countries, exercise their managerial and leadership functions within the administrative framework of a tightly controlled classical bureaucratic system of education. While the system of education is highly centralized, the role of the principal in ensuring successful management of the school remains pivotal (Bush, 2007). The literature on school leadership consistently emphasizes the core importance of instructional leadership aspect of the school principal as being the most important function of the principal in an era that emphasizes accountability and school improvement (Hallinger 2005a, Fullan 2001). Notwithstanding these findings, in many developing countries, the traditional role of the principal as school administrator or manager is still very much in vogue (Hallinger 2005b). Cuban (1988), in referring to the managerial orientation of the principalship in the United States prior to the changing emphasis on instructional leadership, argued that the managerial or conservative orientation was deeply embedded in the principalship.

In a related vein, McFarlane (2000) has commented on the difficulties that principals face in having to juggle both their instructional and managerial roles in the current school climate of accountability and increasing government mandates. He argues that although most principals see themselves as instructional leaders, most of their time and energies are taken up with monitoring managerial tasks. Bolman and Deal

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(1997) called for a balancing of the managerial and instructional roles of principals with their claim that "the challenge of modern organizations requires the objective perspectives of the manager as well as the flashes of vision and the commitment that wise leadership provides (1997, p. 13)".

Increasingly, principals have had to wear several hats to deal with the demands of both instructional and managerial responsibilities. Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe & Myerson (2005) summarize the complexity of the principal's roles as follows: "school leaders are expected to be everything- educational visionaries, curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facilities managers, special programs administrators, expert overseers of legal, contractual and policy mandates and initiatives and they need to be sensitive to the widening range of diverse student populations and needs". (p. 10). These authors further emphasize that the two main pathways through which successful principals influence student achievement were primarily of an instructional and managerial nature. According to these authors, such principals focus on the support and development of effective teachers and on the implementation of effective organizational processes.

McEwan-Adkins (1998) identified a number of factors considered critical for the success of school principals. These factors represent a combination of instructional and managerial task behaviours and involve the following:

- Evaluating staff performance

- Setting high expectations for staff and students

- Modeling high professional standards

- Establishing and maintaining mission, vision and goals

- Maintaining a visible presence

- Establishing a safe and orderly environment

- Developing a school improvement plan

- And complying with mandated educational programs

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While many researchers have sought to establish clear-cut distinctions between the instructional and leadership roles and practices of school principals, much of the research on the principalship, in fact, points to the co-existence of both roles, a phenomenon that has contributed to the increased complexity of demands placed on current principals.   This trend in the changing roles of principals has resulted in increasing calls for recognition of the need for both strong leadership and management competencies on the part of principals (Bush, 2007). As a consequence, principals, particularly those working in bureaucratic systems, need to devise strategies that would allow their managerial and instructional responsibilities to complement and support each other rather than being in constant competition (Shellard, 2003)

Many researchers view management as a necessary prerequisite to good leadership (Lunenberg & Omstein 2008, Horng & Loeb, 2010). Other researchers argue that management is an important addition to instructional leadership (Jones 2011, Kruse and Louis 2009). Lunenberg (2010) has observed that principals play a central role in school improvement through the application of a number of management tasks. According to Lunenberg (2010, p. 1) principals bring about school improvement through the following avenues: "(a) ensuring that resources-money, time and professional development- are aligned with instructional goals (b) supporting the professional growth of teachers in a variety of interconnected ways (c) including teachers in the information loop (d) cultivating the relationship between the school and the community (e) managing the day-to-day tasks of running the school". Effective school managers work with students, parents, teachers and other stakeholders through the establishment of organizational structures and contribute to the development of people through delegation and careful monitoring of the management functions within the school (Lunenberg, 2010). However, it is the leadership functions of principals that are key in transforming schools and this accounts for the emphasis that recent researchers continue to place on the key role that instructional leadership plays in student achievement and school success (Glickman, 2010).

1.3   Instructional Leadership

Traditionally, the principal's role involved primarily system-maintaining responsibilities such as setting clear goals, allocation of resources, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans and evaluating teachers (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008). Over the years and with increased attention on accountability, the emergence of the effective schools movement and growth in student achievement, the principal's role has been revolutionized substantially to include more proactive leadership roles in transformational and instructional activities.

Cuban (2009) believes that most principals are passionate about being instructional leaders in spite of the on-going tensions among their instructional, managerial and political roles. For Cuban (2009), effective instructional leadership requires greater time investment on the part of principals to evaluate teachers and to support learning. Expanding on this notion of principal accountability for student learning, Green (2010) sees the principal as the key catalyst responsible for developing collaborative and supporting structures in the school focused on teaching and learning. Lunenberg (2010) points out establishing collaborative structures and processes for faculty to focus on improved instruction are key tasks of the instructional leader. The fundamental role of instructional leadership is to ensure the success of the school and its students. On the basis of these premises, it is therefore important to examine the practices that Vincentian school administrators employ to deal with their instructional obligations in order to improve student and organizational success under Universal Secondary Education (USE).

1.4   Statement of the Problem

The objective of this research is to examine the leadership and managerial practices that principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines adopt to deal with a recent, system-wide educational reform introduced in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines designed to radically improve educational access, equity and quality in the secondary school system. The reforms, officially called the policy of Universal Access to Secondary Education (USE) formed part of the overall educational reform thrust implemented by the

Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the Ministry of Education. The central plank of this policy was the gradual phasing out the Common Entrance Examination (CEE), a mandatory battery of tests required for entrance into secondary school. The net effect of the CEE was to ensure that scarce secondary school places were allocated to the more academically capable students, while students who did not receive a passing grade on the examination were denied the opportunity to further their education at the secondary school level. The previous CEE policy resulted in the denial of access to post-primary education to a large number of students as shown by the secondary school enrolment figures for new entrants before and after the introduction of Universal Secondary Education included in Table 1 below. This table shows the large increase in secondary school enrolments beginning in 2001, the year in which the move towards Universal Secondary school access was partially instituted.

Table 1.1   Secondary schools enrolment 1990-2009

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Male	2767	2849	2812	2872	2919	3060	3139	3181	3300	3379
Female	4167	4108	4259	4354	4402	4579	4551	4594	4698	4560
Total	6934	6957	7071	7226	7321	7639	7960	7775	7998	7939

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Male	3320	3315	3446	3792	4124	4973	5813	5560	5604	5566
Female	4547	4558	4463	4637	5267	5682	6044	6091	5821	5619
Total Enrolment	7867	7873	7909	8629	9391	10,655	11,857	11,688	11,425	11,185

Source: Ministry of Education Statistical Digest (2010).

The fundamental goal of the policy was to provide universal and unrestricted access to secondary education to all students of secondary school age. Additionally, the reform was designed to improve the general curriculum used in secondary schools and strengthen the management and delivery of secondary education by improving teacher training and most importantly, to ensure effective and efficient management of the secondary school through in-house training for school principals.

Chapman, Burton & Werner (2009), in their research on Universal Secondary reforms and principal leadership in Africa, have pointed out that school principals play a

pre-eminent role in any reform of education in order to guarantee its success and acceptance by all stakeholders. They argue that "Head-teachers, along with teachers, are the gate-keepers of educational reform and that the success of new educational programs depends on the support, enthusiasm and goodwill of school-level administration" (P. 2). Notwithstanding this caveat, school principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines were constrained to work under a system of secondary education reform in which their input was minimal.

According to Marks (2009), the policy of Universal Secondary Education was instituted without sufficient consideration of infrastructural and system capacity to accommodate such a large influx of students from the primary school system to the secondary system where the principals and teachers were unaccustomed to deal with a hugely diversified student population. More importantly from the perspective of this investigation, the policy of Universal Secondary Education was implemented with little or no input or direct involvement of principals and teachers, the stakeholders immediately responsible for the success of the policy at the school and building level. In essence, one of the key stakeholders that should have been most prominent in the execution of these sweeping reforms was largely marginalized. Nevertheless, the overall expectation of the education authorities was that the principals would find creative and innovative leadership approaches to ensure efficient student learning and smooth management of the schools.

Several researchers have pointed to the potential advantages of the expansion of secondary education to include the entire cohort of students writing the Common Entrance examinations. King (2009) and Marks (2009) have noted that the policy of universal education is a progressive move in the right direction that should redound to the benefit of all children and to the building of human capital and a skilled work force. While acknowledging the laudable goals of the reforms and the perceived benefits of the policy of universal secondary education, many commentators and educational analysts criticized the reforms on the grounds that they had resulted in a lowering of the standards and quality of secondary schooling rather than an improvement as envisaged by the policy-makers proposed aims.

Chance (2005), quoting remarks made by the leader of the official opposition political party in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, has mentioned a number of challenges and problems to the leadership of secondary school principals that were directly and indirectly attributable to Universal Secondary education reforms. The following is a sample of his largely anecdotal observations:

(1) A large number of students had entered the secondary education system without the required levels of literacy and numeracy to benefit optimally from secondary education. The inclusion of such students, rather than their exclusion as previously obtained, had raised new questions about the quality and effectiveness of secondary education.

(2) The fact that many of the students had not attained the required standards for secondary schooling had resulted in an increase in the number of school dropouts and a higher level of absenteeism and truancy in secondary schools.

It was becoming increasingly apparent to a wide cross-section of stakeholders in the Vincentian educational system that the initiative undertaken to reform and improve the education system was no longer the seamless transition that had been envisaged by the creators of the USE policy. Indeed, the stark realities of implementation meant that the workload of school principals had increased significantly and there were a number of new administrative and leadership issues confronting the secondary schools.

In the context of the situation existing in the secondary schools in Saint Vincent, it is important to directly seek out the views and perceptions of secondary school principals on the impact that these reforms have had on the school, their leaders and the teachers and on the specific managerial and instructional leadership practices that they have found effective in carrying out their leadership mandates within the context of the reforms. Discovering the extent to which secondary school principals view their work as being impacted negatively or positively by the reforms associated with the implementation of universal secondary education throughout the country will help to provide useful insights into the effectiveness of these reforms.

Given the foregoing overview, the purpose of this study is to examine the managerial and instructional leadership practices that secondary principals in Saint Vincent developed to deal with the demands placed on them by the introduction of the policy of Universal Secondary education. A secondary goal of this research is to examine and evaluate the views of principals in regard to the overall functioning of the policy of Universal Access to secondary education and some of the challenges with which they have been confronted in the execution of their leadership obligations.

1.5   Significance of the Problem

The area of principals' leadership practices under educational reform has been widely researched in many jurisdictions under a variety of different foci. Popular themes under which leadership practices have been researched include the instructional leadership practices of principals and student achievement (Quinn, 2002, Bartlett, 2008), principal leadership practice and teacher morale (Rowland, 2008), curricular and instructional innovations, the impact of educational reforms on student achievement and the impact of technology on education. Other studies have focused on whole school and other global systemic reforms. Most of this research on educational reforms has been carried out in developed, metropolitan countries.

There clearly exists a tremendous gap in the research literature on the leadership practices and strategies that principals in developing countries use in the running of schools to optimize student success and achievement. While some recent research has been carried out into different aspects of the policy of Universal secondary education in the areas of curriculum (King 2009), literacy (Warrican, 2009), student discipline (Thompson, 2009), teacher support for USE (Werner, 2011), the research in the area of principal leadership practices has not been addressed directly or indirectly.

Lesforis (2010) examined the perceptions of secondary school teachers in Saint Lucia in respect of the implementation of USE in that neighbouring country, and while her study included the views of a limited number of secondary school principals, it did not address the practices that Saint Lucian principals have been using to lead and manage their schools under the dispensation of USE. Chapman, Burton & Werner

(2009) produced a short monograph on the leadership and management dilemmas of head-teachers in Uganda. However, their treatise was an insightful but limited examination of principal leadership practices in that African nation.

This study, however, seeks to break new ground in the domain of principal leadership practices in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) school systems that have implemented Universal Secondary school access in recent years. It is hoped that this study will contribute meaningfully to the general literature on principal leadership and in particular on principal leadership in the Caribbean, an area where the dearth of research the field is clearly apparent from the small numbers of research studies identified in the domain of principal leadership.

This study seeks to fill this gap by focusing on school principals and the adaptations they have made to their practices in managing and leading their schools in a period of state educational reform. It attempts to explore the impact of these reform policies on the leadership practices of secondary school principals in the light of the much touted success of these reforms by the originators the afore-mentioned policy.

It is therefore my hope that this study will make a contribution to the existing knowledge base by highlighting the importance of school principals in the implementation and execution of systemic educational reforms. The research should also help to advance knowledge on the interrelationships between educational reforms, quality of education and the professionalism of principals operating in a reformed secondary school system.

Of crucial importance, and based on the purposes enunciated in this study, is the contribution that the research will make to the wider research on principals' leadership and managerial practice in the context of Universal Secondary Education in developing countries as more and more countries move towards the accomplishment of the United Nations Millennium Development goals of education for all. Finally, it is anticipated that the findings emanating from this study will assist in the thrust to improve overall educational quality in the school system of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

In response to these concerns and expectations, a study that enquires into the impact of Universal secondary Education policy reforms on the managerial and instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals involved in the administration of the education is therefore timely, and should provide invaluable information on the importance of effective principal leadership in small states, especially given the central role that school principals play in the delivery of education and in the efficient management of schools.

1.6 Aims of the Study

This study does not set out directly to critique the implementation of the USE policy. Rather, there are five main objectives underlying the execution of this research. The fundamental purpose of the study is to examine in a detailed manner the practices, techniques and strategies that school principals have been using to deal with the managerial and instructional realities brought on by the introduction of USE. Secondly, it is important to understand the perceptions of school principals in relation to the USE policy. The intention here is to determine the overall views and attitudes of school principals towards a policy that they for the most part are responsible for implementing on the ground but which has also had some impact on their own approaches to school management and leadership

Thirdly, the study seeks to gain some insight into the nature of the challenges that confront principals as they seek to optimize educational outcomes in their school under the USE policy. Fourthly, the investigation looks at the benefits and positive aspects of the USE policy and finally, the dissertation seeks to make a number of recommendations that may help the policy makers undertake improvements to the policy that would enable school principals and other stakeholders to benefit maximally from the policy with special emphasis on how they approach instruction and managerial tasks in their schools.

1.7   Theoretical Framework

An in-depth understanding of principals' management and instructional leadership practices for student achievement and school improvement must, of necessity, be anchored in an explanatory framework. The conceptual framework that shapes this study has been derived from a study of the task effectiveness of school principals carried out by Grissom and Loeb (2009) designed to study the effectiveness of school principal's practices on student achievement and school organizational success. This framework has been selected for the purposes of this study because it provides a comprehensive lens through which both the instructional leadership practices and the managerial practices of principals can be assessed in the context of school reform and in the particular leadership climate in which principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines operate.

Grissom and Loeb (2009) identified five broad dimensions or domains through which the effective instructional and managerial leadership practices of principals can be studied. On the basis of a comprehensive review of the leadership practices literature, discussions with principals and observations at a number of pilot schools, Grissom and Loeb (2009) identified 42 key tasks or practices in which school principals engage on a regular basis as an integral part of their work. These 42 tasks were summarized into the following five broad domains of the framework. These include: (1) The Instructional Management Dimension (2) The Internal Relations Dimension (3) The Organization Management Dimension (4) Administration and (5) the External Relations Dimension.

1. Instruction management- The instruction management domain represents the tasks or practices in which principals engage with a view to promote, support and improve the implementation of curricular programs in classrooms. Specifically, it includes the role of the principal in developing teachers' instructional capacities, planning professional development for teachers, implementing professional development and informally coaching teachers. This dimension also includes the evaluative role of the principal with respect to classroom instruction.

2. Internal relations: This second domain captures the effectiveness of principals' capacities for building strong interpersonal relationships within the school.

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Included in this dimension are principals' practices in the areas of building interpersonal relations, counselling students and parents, counselling staff about conflicts with other staff members, developing relations with students and interacting socially with staff.

3. Organization Management – This construct includes the tasks in which principals will take active and direct responsibility throughout the year as they pursue the school's medium and long-term goals. Organizational management tasks and practices include maintaining school facilities, managing budgets and resources, and developing a safe school environment.

4. Administration- The fourth dimension of the framework is labelled administration and is characterized by more routine and administrative tasks and duties and executed to comply with the District Office, the Ministry of Education or government regulations. Other tasks in this area include managing school schedules, fulfilling compliance requirements and paper-work, managing student attendance-related activities as well as student discipline and student supervision.

5. External relations- This final domain of the effective leadership practices framework relates to working with stakeholders outside the immediate environment of the school. Included in this dimension are communications with the Ministry of Education to obtain resources, working with local community members and organizations, utilizing communication with the Ministry of Education to enhance school goals and fundraising.

Grissom and Loeb (2009) believe that this framework provides a more holistic view of school leadership since its main focus is on integrating principals' practices across multiple dimensions. Hence, rather than creating a pseudo-dichotomous distinction between management and instructional leadership, the framework provides a broader view of school leadership that embodies the management behaviour of principal aligned with their leadership roles in instruction. I selected this model to investigate the leadership practices of Vincentian school principals since this analytical framework is more consistent with the realities of school leaders working in a centralized system of

education based on a traditional bureaucratic hierarchy (Bush, 2007). The framework therefore reveals that the instructional leadership role is necessary for student achievement, but also identifies those principal management practices that can promote school achievement. A great deal of research supports the notion of a strong correlation between instructional leadership and managerial leadership practices (Murphy 1988, Marks & Printy, 2003). Grissom and Loeb (2009) argue that their framework is consistent with research advocating the importance of instructional leadership by principals for school success. This conceptual model of instructional and managerial practices constitutes fundamentally the guiding framework for this study.

1.8   Research Questions

The overarching aim of the present study is to explore how universal secondary education reform has impacted on the work, the performance and the managerial and instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in relation to school improvement and student achievement. It seeks to examine in-depth the extent to which secondary school principals have had to adapt their leadership and management approaches in the wake of sweeping reforms made to the entire secondary education system with the introduction of Universal Secondary Education. In essence, the study attempts to evaluate the leadership practices of Vincentian secondary school principals of Universal Secondary Education and their perceptions of the extent to which their effectiveness has been enhanced or hampered by educational reform. A secondary aim of this study is to solicit the views of the secondary school principals about the overall functioning of Universal Secondary Education reforms, its major challenges for principals and the extent to which these reforms have had a positive or negative effect on the overall functioning of the education system of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

In the light of the foregoing issues highlighted in the previous sections, the following section seeks to establish the theoretical lenses through which an in-depth examination of Vincentian secondary principals leadership practices can be examined in the context of the reforms that have been enacted. In keeping with this overview, two principal research questions and four sub-questions have been formulated to guide and

provide structure to this research into the leadership practices of secondary school principals under Universal Secondary Education Reform:

(1) What are the specific managerial and instructional leadership challenges that Vincentian secondary school principals face in implementing the policy of Universal Secondary Education?

(2) What managerial and instructional leadership practices have Vincentian secondary school principals employed to deal with demands of Universal Secondary Education?

The four sub-questions include:

Are there any differences between the managerial and instructional leadership practices of principals in high-achieving schools compared to low achieving-schools?

Are there any differences between the managerial and instructional leadership practices of male and female principals under USE reforms?

Are there any differences between the managerial and instructional leadership practices of experienced and new principals under USE reforms?

Are there any differences between the managerial and instructional leadership practices of rural and urban secondary school principals under USE reforms?

1.9   Definitions of Terms Used in the Study

Instructional leadership practices- These represent the "set of tasks in which principals engage in order to promote support and improve teaching and learning programs in the school. These include practices   used in developing teachers' instructional capacities, planning professional development for teachers, implementing professional growth, informally coaching teachers, evaluating curriculum, using assessment results for program evaluation and formally evaluating instruction and providing instructional feedback". (Grissom and Loeb, 2009: 15)

Managerial leadership practices- These are defined as a combination of routine administrative practices engaged in by principals as well as management tasks that principals execute to achieve the school's medium and long-term goals. Included in this set of tasks are practices in student records, assessment and reporting, discipline, attendance-related activities, managing school budgets and resources, school facilities, fulfilling compliance requirements, maintaining a safe school environment and managing external relations with parents and the external school community (Grissom and Loeb, 2009).

Universal Secondary Education Policy- An education policy designed and introduced by the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines intended to improve and extend access to secondary education for the entire student population transitioning from primary schools and on the basis of a selective examination referred to as the Common Entrance Examination. It involves assigning top-performing students to the more prestigious secondary schools while lower-performing students are distributed throughout the remaining secondary schools.

Principals' Managerial challenges- Issues and problems of a non-instructional nature that impact the day to day management and administrative climate of the school. These include a broad spectrum of issues ranging from principals' relationships with the internal management of the school including students, teachers and other school-related personnel to external elements including parents, the community and senior education management supervisors and administrators.

Principals' Instructional Leadership challenges - Issues and problems affecting the effective and efficient delivery of teaching and learning, professional development and the improvement of the entire instructional program in a principal's school.

High-achieving schools - Secondary schools that receive the students with the highest levels of performance on the basis of the Common Entrance Examination (CEE). Students at these schools consistently receive high pass rates from year to year on the basis of the results of the Caribbean Secondary School Examinations (CSEC) administered externally by the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC), the official examining body for secondary school terminal exams in the Caribbean.

Low-achieving schools- For this study, these schools include all other secondary schools that receive students who did not perform at a sufficiently high level to gain acceptance to the high-achieving schools. Performance on the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) secondary school terminal exams tend to be generally lower and less consistent than for the high-performing schools.

1.10 Rationale for the Study

"Principals play a vital role in setting directions for their schools and for ensuring that their organizations are productive workplaces for teachers and vibrant learning communities for children" (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe & Myerson 2005, p. 8). Additional research is therefore a necessity to determine those leadership practices with the greatest likelihood of contributing to student success especially in relationship to local contexts (Davis et al., 2005). A study that investigates the leadership practices of secondary school principals working under USE policy reforms is not only timely in terms of the need to provide some formal research evaluation of this largely untested and uncontested novel education policy but is ground-breaking in that it provides the spring-board for research into an area of secondary education that has not been heretofore well researched in the context of the Eastern Caribbean.

Universal secondary education has been the subject of research in several African countries including Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania that have collectively enacted policies to expand overall access to education. However, although an analogous phenomenon of access and expansion has been instituted throughout the countries that make up the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, a search of the literature has revealed that empirical research in these countries is either non-existent or in a very fledgling state.

This paucity of research on the leadership practices of secondary school principals under Universal Secondary Education reforms, coupled with the lack of empirical evidence to substantiate the effectiveness of the USE education reforms fully justify the need to provide answers to governments, the education authorities, principals, teachers and other stakeholders on the workings of the USE policy and its impact on the

quality of education as seen through the perceptions of principals involved in the day-to-day implementation of the policy at the building level.

Justification for this study has also been derived from recommendations made by two authors on Universal Secondary Education in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and in the Eastern Caribbean. Marks (2009) has pointed out that the education system in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has been negatively impacted by "the failure to conduct research on educational reforms and interventions". She has also specifically pointed to the urgent need to provide an empirical evaluation of USE and in particular, "the process, the achievements and weaknesses of USE….in order to inform policy development" (p. 67). An examination of the policy through the self-reported experiences of the secondary school principals is one way of evaluating the "suitability of leadership practices in schools faced with significant challenges for change" (Davis et al. 2005, p. 10).

King (2009) has pointed the scarcity of empirical data on Universal Secondary Education reform in the light of the "huge financial inputs and the wide media coverage of the reform" (p.36). He has also emphasized the importance of effective monitoring, support and evaluation to "*ensure that the educational reforms instituted in the Caribbean are sustainable" (p.37) He* has also pointed however that although the reforms are laudable and should be sustained, there have been obstacles in planning and effective implementation of the reforms at all levels. The rationale for this study is therefore based on the identified need to examine and evaluate empirically and in depth the leadership practices of secondary school principals and the strategies they have used in dealing with the significant changes brought on by the adoption of this highly touted policy.

1.11 Study Limitations

This investigation into the leadership practices of principals is not without certain limitations. One limitation of this study is its focus on capturing the perceptions of one group of stakeholders on their practices with respect to a policy that impacts multiple stakeholders. The study is limited to the perceptions of principals in regard to their own

instructional and managerial practices. However, the fact that the perceptions of other stakeholders such as deputy principals, teachers, parents, students, government officials and other external agencies were not included has meant that other relevant views and perspectives   may differ from those of the practicing principals interviewed. The exclusion of the views of these other stakeholders represents a natural limitation on the range of views required for a comprehensive evaluation of principals' leadership and managerial practices. Notwithstanding this apparent shortcoming, it is anticipated that the use of thick description, supplementary official documents and in-depth interviewing will, at a minimum, broaden the insights to be gleaned from this investigation.

In addition, the use of a self-reporting method such as interviews may contain elements of response bias or limited perspectives on certain issues that may curtail the usefulness of the findings generated from the data.

Another limitation of the study is the difficulty of making definitive generalizations to other countries that have implemented universal secondary education policies. Due to specific country contexts among countries of the OECS implementing USE, it may be somewhat farfetched to generalize on principals' instructional and leadership practices in other contexts, albeit that there may exist certain similarities. This does not however preclude the findings from being a good reference point or springboard from which similar evaluations can be made in kindred educational systems. The study however does not purport or lay claim to providing such generalizations. Its broad contribution however is that it can be used as a benchmark to judge the relative effectiveness or ineffectiveness of principals' leadership practices in jurisdictions where similar circumstances and conditions prevail.

1.12 Study Delimitations

The study is restricted to examining the instructional and managerial leadership practices of secondary school principals and their perceptions of the challenges posed to their leadership by the policy of USE. The study does not set out to evaluate the success or failure of the policy or to evaluate the policy in general. The study does not attempt to assess the actual implementation of the policy or the effectiveness of its implementation.

The scope is on the leadership practices and behaviours of school principals and the challenges encountered in working in a USE-policy environment.

The population of the study constitutes another important delimitation. The exclusive focus of the study is on the perceptions of current practicing secondary school principals and therefore does not take into consideration other administrators such as educational officers, deputy principals, primary school principals other system administrators. This means that the perspectives of other key stakeholders who may hold divergent views are not investigated in this particular study.

1.13 Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 sets the background for the study by providing an overview of the policy of Universal Secondary Education and the context surrounding its introduction as part of the thrust to reform the Education system of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. It also provides an overview of the role of secondary school principals and the central responsibilities assigned to principals in ensuring the successful implementation and execution of the policy.

The purpose and significance of the study are also outlined in this section. The main focus here is on the principals' perceptions of the policy of universal secondary education and on the leadership practices that principals have been using to deal with the demands placed on their management of the schools with the implementation of the USE policy. Two central research questions and four supplementary questions have been identified to guide the study. Finding empirical answers to these questions therefore constitutes the nucleus of this investigation.

Chapter 2 contains a synthesis of previous works that have been carried out on Universal Secondary Education and on the leadership practices used by school principals. An attempt is made to relate the review of previous studies on leadership practices to the problem statement in Chapter 1. The literature review seeks to synthesize the major themes on principal leadership practices and to identify

connections between the literature and the central research questions underpinning the study.

Chapter 3 provides an in-depth description of the research design and a justification of the methodology used to execute the study. It contains a description of the interview instrument used, a description of the research site and of the principals and schools selected for the study. An outline is also provided of the data collection and analysis procedures, the position of the researcher and the ethical guidelines used to protect the participants as well as measures adopted to guarantee that the issues of trustworthiness are adequately accounted for.

The analysis and presentation of the data can be found in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. The major themes emanating from the interview data are categorized and presented in Chapter 4 and 5 of the research. Chapter 4 contains a presentation of the key themes emanating from research question 1 that sought to determine the major challenges confronting Vincentian secondary school principals under Universal Secondary Education. Chapter 5 presents the themes related to the other main research question: What are the specific instructional and managerial practices that Vincentian secondary school principals employ to manage their schools under the policy of Universal Secondary Education?

Chapter 6 includes a summary of the main research findings and an attempt is made to connect these findings back to the research questions and the review of the literature found in Chapter 2. This is followed by an in-depth discussion and evaluation of the findings of the study in relation to the previous literature on principal instructional leadership and managerial practices. Implications for policy and practice are also highlighted and recommendations are made on aspects of the policy that could be improved and that could impact positively on principals administrative and leadership approaches.

1.14 Summary

This chapter provides an introduction into the study of principal leadership in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. It seeks to examine in detail those specific instructional and managerial practices that school principals have used to manage secondary schools in the light of the implementation of a government instituted educational policy known as Universal Access to Secondary Education. The chapter provides a description of the problem, the research questions and establishes the need for the research and the relevance and contribution of the proposed study. The boundaries of the study are also established and potential limitations to the research described. This sets the stage for an exploration of the relevant literature surrounding Universal Secondary Education and the leadership and managerial practices of school principals.

Chapter 2.   REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1   Introduction

The purpose of this study was to empirically examine the leadership practices of secondary school principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in the wake of sweeping reforms to the educational system with particular emphasis on the introduction of Universal Secondary Education policy. Specifically, the theoretical basis of the study is anchored in the leadership and managerial practices framework of Grissom and Loeb (2009). The review of the relevant literature focuses on an overview of the education system of Saint Vincent, a brief apercu of the policy of Universal Secondary Education, a summary of key leadership theories relevant to the study, school reform and principal leadership and a synthesis of a number of key studies centred on effective and successful education leadership practices. Literature on the important areas of gender and principal leadership practices as well as the leadership practices of principals in high achieving and low achieving schools are also examined.

The final section of the literature review synthesizes a number of key leadership and managerial constructs carried out by principals in the domains of instructional management, school internal and external relations and school management and administration. The review is rounded off by a brief glance into the issue of support for school principals as they enact their managerial and leadership roles and practices.

2.2   The Context and Setting of the Study

This study of principal leadership practices is based on the experiences of secondary school principals working in the new policy environment of USE in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The research seeks to evaluate the leadership practices that secondary school principals have been utilizing to ensure effective teaching and

learning under the challenges and constraints placed on principals working in a changed policy environment. To provide some background to the setting of the study it is important to examine the social, political, economic background of the country. This general overview will be followed by an examination of the education system, the policy environment of USE and an overview of the leadership roles of principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is a small, independent, democratic country located in the Caribbean Basin approximately 100 miles to the west of the island of Barbados and between the islands of Saint Lucia and Grenada. The territory is located within the Eastern Caribbean and is part of that group of islands referred to as the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Geographically, the country constitutes an archipelago of islands, with the main island of Saint Vincent and a number of smaller islands and cays, known collectively as the Grenadines (UNESCO, 2015, Ministry of Health, 2013). The entire configuration of islands of the map of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (Wikipedia, 2015) can be seen in Figure 1 in the Appendix N section of the study. The population of Saint Vincent based on the 2015 estimates was 109,400 persons distributed throughout its 389 square kilometres (World Bank, 2015). Ethnically, the population is diverse with a mixture of peoples of African descent and smaller proportions of inhabitants of East Indian origin, aboriginal Caribs, and Whites of European extraction completing the ethnic composition of the country.

Throughout its early history, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was settled by the French, who later ceded the colony to the British in 1783 as part of the Treaty of Versailles that concluded the period of European colonial rivalry in the Caribbean. Saint Vincent remained a colony of Britain until 1979, when it became an independent, self-governing country, following a fourteen year period of associated statehood (Commonwealth Yearbook, 2014). The system of government is a unicameral parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy based on the Westminster parliamentary model and enshrined in the 1979 Constitution. Saint Vincent has been very proactive in regional and political integration initiatives and is both a member of Caribbean Economic Community (CARICOM), The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America (ALBA), the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) and the

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regional political sub-grouping the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, an informal umbrella body made up of the Windward and Leeward Islands (Commonwealth Yearbook, 2014, Embassy and Permanent Mission of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 2015).

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has been classified as a lower middle income country on the basis of the United Nations Human Development Index.   According to the 2009 International Monetary Fund (IMF) statistical report, the country has a Gross Domestic product (GDP) of $ 567 million and a per capita income of $ 5,291. (International Monetary Fund, 2009). The economy of Saint Vincent has traditionally been dependent on agricultural production, particularly the export and cultivation of bananas. The banana industry has been severely impacted by the trade liberalization policies adopted by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and its contribution to the country's GDP has declined from 12.6% in 2000 to 7.2 % in 2009 (International Monetary Fund, 2009).

Recent attempts at diversification have resulted in increasing economic dependence on the growing services sector, particularly, tourism, off-shore financial banking and construction. The manufacturing sector remains comparatively underdeveloped as the government has been relatively unsuccessful in its thrust to attract new investments in this secondary sector. The economy remains fairly fragile due to its over-dependence on its mono-cultural export crop, bananas and the constant threat of devastation due to tropical storms, hurricanes and the black sigatoka disease and other tropical pests. Unemployment remains relatively high with an unemployment ratio of 22 per cent (Central Intelligence Agency, 2008, World Bank Institute, 2015).

According to Marks (2009), it was "against the backdrop of poverty alleviation, human resource development, social and economic advancement…. that St. Vincent and the Grenadines moved to accelerate educational reform efforts in 2001" (Marks 2009, p. 57). The introduction of universal access to secondary education became the strategic policy bulwark through which it was anticipated that economic and educational growth would be optimized, thereby placing the country on the pathway to improved economic and social development

2.3 The Education System of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

The education system of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has its roots in the British education system and its current structure of pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels is reflective of its colonial legacy. The entire educational infrastructure is comprised of 69 primary schools, 26 secondary schools, and four tertiary institutions grouped under one umbrella body referred as the Saint Vincent Community College. Government schools at the primary and secondary provide free tuition to all students (UNICEF. 2013. UNESCO, 2015).

Education was made compulsory for all children under the age of sixteen in 1992. A number of denominational and private schools still exists and while they are allowed to charge a nominal fee to students, the Government of Saint Vincent has undertaken to provide financial support to these schools through the payment of salaries and through annual funding grants. These schools are classified as assisted secondary School (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Education Bill, 2005; MOE National Review Report, 2015). The policy of Universal Secondary access was instituted in all secondary schools throughout the country under the special funding arrangements that the government had negotiated with all schools including the private and denominational secondary schools.

The Education Act of 2006 is the legal document that provides the framework for the formulation and elaboration of educational policy in Saint Vincent. Management of the education sector is carried out through the auspices of the Ministry of Education with the Chief Education Officer having oversight for the planning, execution, dissemination and evaluation of all educational policy, including the policy of universal secondary education.

The mission of the Ministry of Education is that of providing life-long education for all citizens. (Simmons & Jackson, 2008) This philosophy has been central to the policy of USE, which emphasizes the "right of all learners to gain access to an education which has equity within well-resourced and well-managed educational institutions" (MOE, 1999). Under its span of control are 69 primary schools, 26 secondary schools, the Saint

Vincent Community College, an umbrella amalgamation of the Teachers' College, the Technical Institute, the School of Nursing and post-secondary Advanced Education. There are also a number of multipurpose centers and Adult Education programs catering for adults unable to attend secondary schools. Figure 2 in Appendix P provides a more comprehensive overview of the structure of the Education system of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

2.4 Overview of Universal Secondary Education

Secondary education has been a reality in all countries of the Eastern Caribbean since the early years of the nineteenth century. Traditionally, access to secondary education had been limited for a very long time to the children of the elite and to those who were sufficiently economically well positioned to afford the cost of secondary schooling. Later, a minority of students with exceptional academic talent were allowed entrance to secondary schools by dint of their performance at the Common Entrance Examinations. However, large sections of the populace remained excluded from secondary schooling.

This under-representation of a significant sector of the nation's young people from secondary schooling had resulted in slower economic growth and an inability to compete internationally in an era of globalization. Wolff and Castro (2005) have pointed out the need for countries in the Caribbean to make their education systems more relevant to the demands of modern-day economic realities by not only expanding their education systems quantitatively, but also qualitatively, by focusing on revised curricula and higher learning standards which have undergirded universal secondary education in more developed countries.

Cognizant of the deficiencies in the extant education system and the need to increase secondary school access to meet labour market demands and the call for increasing equity and social justice in education, the governments of the countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) espoused a common educational reform policy referred to as Universal Secondary Education. These reforms formed part of an overall education strategy designed to progressively phase out the Common

Entrance Examination, a selective battery of high-stakes tests that had been used for decades to determine the limited number of students who were allowed into secondary education on the basis of their performance on this terminal examination administered at the end of the primary school stage of schooling. The failures of that system to meet the educational needs of a significant representation of the student population contributed to the impetus towards Universal Access to Secondary Education.

Access to secondary education has long been viewed as a right in many societies. In other societies, including Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, this taken-for-granted right assumes the proportions of a welcomed privilege. The goals of universal secondary education have been extolled by many commentators in the Caribbean and in other countries where it has been fairly successfully implemented. Universal secondary education has been touted as central to poverty alleviation and a key engine of economic growth (Glewwe, Zhao & Binder 2006; Gonsalves, 2008). Cohen and Bloom (2005) acknowledge that a concerted effort at universalizing secondary education has a salutary effect in the reduction of birth-rates in countries where rapid population growth impedes economic development and depresses living standards.

Cocks (2007) has highlighted a number of positive benefits that resulted from the implementation of Universal Secondary Education in Uganda in 2007. These benefits include a doubling of secondary school enrolment rates and a reduction exceeding fifty percent in the drop-out rate among secondary school students. Bloom and Hobbs (2008) have underscored the psychological and sociological spin-offs of universal secondary education for children from socially-deprived backgrounds who hitherto were virtually excluded from secondary schooling due to the unavailability of sufficient places to accommodate all students deserving a secondary education. In short, one of the laudable goals of universal secondary education was the creation of additional places for all graduates of primary education.

In keeping with the United Nations Millennium development goals of 2015, many researchers have been focusing on the key role that universal secondary education plays in overall national economic and social development on a global scale. Cohen (2008) and (Cohen and Bloom, 2005) contend that secondary education must be

universally available. They advocate the importance of promoting universal secondary education since most of the benefits of education do not accrue until students have had ten years or more of schooling. They also contend that primary schooling becomes more attractive if high quality secondary education is available and accessible.

In support of their advocacy of the universalization of secondary education, Cohen and Bloom (2005) identify three changes which are deemed necessary if universal secondary education is to become a global reality by the middle of this century: (1) Open discussions, nationally, regionally and internationally on what people want universal secondary education to achieve- that is, the goals of education. (2) A commitment to improving the effectiveness and economic efficiency of education (3) a commitment to extending high quality education to all children.

Analogously, Steward and Edwards (2005), in a study of universal secondary education in Dominica, have acknowledged that targeting the secondary school system for universal secondary education has resulted in a more equitable distribution of school places, improved relevance of curricula and improvement in student retention as well as improved results in the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) examinations.

2.5   Universal Secondary Education – Increasing Access

According to Miller (2009) and Knight & Obidah (2014) the policy of Universal Secondary Education was a government-sponsored initiative taken collectively at the Heads of Government conference of Caribbean Community (CARICOM) leaders. The intent was to provide school places to the entire cohort of secondary school age children. The introduction of USE into Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was also premised on the notion of increased economic growth, social and economic development and on the fulfillment of the Millennium development goal of Education for All by 2015. The perceived lags in economic and social development required an expansion in the number of students moving from primary to secondary school.

According to the Unity Labour Party Manifesto (2010) "Secondary school education was generally of low quality and restricted access prior to the introduction of

USE. Only 39% of 12-year old students were at secondary school and between 1991 and 2000, secondary school enrolments had only increased by an average of 34.3 students per year"(p.1). With the thrust into USE, secondary school enrolment increased by 48.4% from 7,867 students in 2001 to 11,688 by 2008. Expanding access to secondary education involved significant expenditure on the upgrading of secondary schools, the building of new secondary schools and the conversion of a few primary schools to secondary schools. Overall, 16 schools underwent changes to accommodate the influx of new entrants, while 4 multi-purpose centres and 6 laboratories were constructed as part of the USE infrastructural plan.

The introduction of USE and the subsequent infrastructural expansion has resulted in a considerable increase in spending on education from the public budget. Actual spending on education in 2009 surpassed 89 million Eastern Caribbean dollars (Ministry of Education Statistical Digest, 2010). With the additional financial outlay for USE, educational expenditures now account for 10.2% of government expenditure on education and a significant 18.1% of its Gross Domestic Product (World Bank Institute, 2011).

2.6 Transitioning Students from Primary to Secondary Schools

In this study, it is important to provide some insight into the USE framework by examining the process of transfer of students from the primary to the secondary schools. It is equally important to assess the way in which the results of this process impact on the leadership and management of secondary schools in Saint Vincent and the other Eastern Caribbean countries espousing the move towards USE.

During the latter half of the twentieth century, the education authorities throughout the Caribbean region used the Common Entrance Examinations (CEE) as the mechanism of selection through which students were moved from primary to secondary school at the age of eleven. Leacock (2009) describes it as a screening test used to determine the apportionment of limited school places to a select number of academically-gifted students for entrance into the traditional grammar type schools,

which are a legacy of the British colonialist approach to education. The Common Entrance Exam consisted of a battery of tests in English Language and Composition, Mathematics and General Studies designed to determine the placement of the academically inclined vying to occupy the number of limited places on offer at the secondary schools.

With the introduction of USE and with an increase in the overall number of secondary school places, the Common Entrance Examination was maintained primarily as a placement mechanism. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, students achieving the highest scores on the examination were placed in two select, prestigious grammar-type schools, while those students with lower performances were placed according to their schools of preference based on a rank-order system. Generally, those with middling scores were placed in a few other urban schools that had acquired reputations as good schools. Geographical zoning was hardly factored in except in cases where parents saw a cost-benefit advantage in sending their charges to a school within reasonable proximity (Marks, 2009). The end result of this skewed placement policy was an over-abundance of the lower-ranked students being placed in the rural and suburban schools dispersed throughout the country.

Marks (2009) has commented on the ramifications of this approach to student placement and transfer on the undergirding conceptual foundations of equity and equality that underpinned the introduction of Universal secondary education. Marks (2009) argues that the democratization of the USE process was undermined by students not being placed in schools of their choices and that the inequality in the distribution of resources and available curricular options were counterproductive to the tenets of equity and equality on which USE had been founded.

Similarly, Thompson (2009) has noted that the current allocation of students to secondary schools has led to the perception that the traditional secondary schools are superior to the newer secondary schools. Leacock (2009) has highlighted the damaging psychological effects of this practice on the morale of teachers, students and principals at those second-tiered institutions. From the perspective of challenges posed for the principals of secondary school, Leacock (2009) points out that "these practices, steeped

in tradition, contribute to the challenges Eastern Caribbean countries face with the introduction of USE" (p. 27).

2.7   The Flip-Side of Universal Secondary Education

The foregoing research has focused on the numerous benefits that can be derived from the efficient implementation of Universal secondary education. Other researchers have shown that when universal secondary education is badly conceived and implemented that there are negative repercussions for students, principals and teachers and for the entire educational system. In reviewing the literature on Universal Education in the Caribbean region and in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in particular, it is apparent that there is a fundamental dichotomy of views on the merits of universal secondary schooling. The extant research shows that too much emphasis has been placed on expanding access at the expense of providing a high quality of secondary education. (Knight 2014, Jules 2009, Blom and Hobbs 2008, Wolff and Castro 2005,). This phenomenon has prompted Jules (2009) to make the observation that "the universalization of education in the Caribbean has introduced new elements of uncertainty in education that carries profound implications for the content, process and pedagogy of secondary education (p. 5)".

These views echo similar themes by Miller (2009, 1996) who contends that mass secondary or universal secondary education has led to the inclusion of illiterate children into secondary schools, a phenomenon that had never existed under the traditional exclusionary system of education in the Caribbean. He further contends that this expansion en masse of the secondary education system had raised new problems in respect of the quality and effectiveness of secondary education and had resulted in a perceived decline in educational standards throughout the region.

Other writers have cautioned about the inappropriateness of expanding secondary education to large numbers of students while maintaining the vestiges of the old, discredited forms of secondary schooling (Jules 2009, Blom and Hobbs 2008). Significant research findings have pointed to the threats to educational quality that often follow the implementation of large-scale access in secondary schooling. Sperling and

Balu (2005) evoke the experiences of several African countries after they abolished school fees and expanded universal access to education. They conclude that major expansions of access to education can lead to serious declines in quality often reflected in increased pupil-teacher ratios and ill-equipped classrooms. Cohen and Bloom (2005) have raised a similar concern in their treatise on the quality of secondary education in developing countries. They have noted that in spite of an overall increase in attendance rates, the quality of secondary schooling remains lower in developing countries compared to developed countries based on a range of inputs, outputs and practices examined.

The context of implementation of Universal Secondary education has also revealed a number of challenges rooted in the fact that the primary education system has, to a large extent, been unable to provide students in Saint Vincent with the foundational skills required for entry into secondary schooling. Research conducted by the OECS education reform strategy unit (OERU) (2006) highlights three distinct challenges to the effective implementation of Universal Secondary Education at the level of the student cohort. These include identified deficiencies in reading abilities of a number of students preparing to enter secondary school, students' academic readiness and notable ability gaps among students within and across the feeder primary schools.

The challenges facing universal secondary education have therefore been both of a financial and a non-financial nature. UNESCO (2015) notes that the lack of adequate financing constitutes the greatest obstacle to the provision of quality education for low income countries such as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines In their study of the financial costs of achieving universal secondary education in developing countries, Glewwe et al. (2006) concluded that the financial cost of achieving universal secondary education through the provision of enough school places is particularly onerous for low income countries. However, they recommend that a combination of cost reform, repetition rate reduction and increased national commitment will go a long way in making universal education a reality.

However, it appears as though the greatest challenges to Universal Secondary Education and to school principals are primarily of an administrative and pedagogical

nature. Blom and Hobbs (2008) have pointed out that " the policy of universal secondary education has presented many challenges to school administrators who have had to adapt to ensure sufficient classroom space, available qualified teachers and different teaching methods to accommodate all pupils, including those that are less prepared or who are experiencing learning difficulties" (p. 16-17). Knight (2014) examined how policies such as USE can create challenges for secondary schooling, if not properly managed. Other researchers and writers have pointed to insufficient teacher training and inadequate pedagogical methods as obstacles to the successful implementation of Universal Secondary Education. Miller (2009, 1996) has been vociferous in his call for a change in the outdated pedagogy if schools are to develop the capacity to address the ethical and behavioural issues confronting them. He has also called for more modern technology to be employed in instruction under USE.

An examination of the challenges facing education in general and the challenges brought on by the implementation of USE in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has been documented in the Draft Curriculum and Assessment Framework 2005. The report indicates that the phased introduction of USE, which was completed in 2005, has led to:

- An increased intake that overflows into largely under-resourced secondary schools

- A greater diversity of abilities and maturities in students entering secondary schools; especially in terms of numeracy and literacy

- A risk of the further marginalization of the already disadvantaged students

- A recognition of low performance, especially in literacy and numeracy, of primary students especially males

- Inappropriate curricula to meet the needs and interests of the more diverse student population

- Over-stretched scarce resources - human, material, physical to meet the increased numbers, diversity and needs of students

- A further fragmentation of the current curriculum and subject curricula as different secondary schools adopt different coping strategies (Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 6)

The document further points out that the introduction of USE would pose many challenges for teachers and principals, as highlighted in this excerpt: "As the universal secondary education policy is applied, there will be a heavy influx of additional students. The Common Entrance Exams which regulates the flow of students from primary to secondary schools will be phased out, thus even the lowest performing students from primary education will enter secondary school. This poses a sizeable challenge and has generated great concerns among teachers and principals" (p.4).

Secondary school principals clearly have a key role in the successful functioning of USE. Saint Lucia, a neighbouring OECS country, which introduced USE in 2006, has acknowledged the indispensable contribution of secondary school principals and has conscientiously focused on strengthening the monitoring and supervision systems by training all secondary principals and vice-principals. This situation contrasts sharply with the case of Dominica, another OECS territory that recently introduced USE. Joseph (2009), in his analysis of USE in Dominica, points out that "65% of all secondary teachers are untrained for the job and senior teachers and principals are not showing keen interest in taking advantage of the opportunities for a career upgrade". (p.2). In Saint Vincent, emphasis is being placed on training for more principals in order to improve the management of schools and their ability to deliver quality secondary education under USE.

Based on the challenges inherent in a complex web of system-wide educational reform, it is important to know how principals are dealing with the expanded responsibilities and roles that accrue to them under this new mandate to govern their schools effectively and efficiently. In other words, the crux of this study is to evaluate the actual managerial and instructional strategies that principals have applied in their efforts to ensure an acceptable level of student learning and functioning of their schools in the face of the numerous constraints and challenges identified in the literature.

As pointed out by Norton (2009), Universal Secondary Education has put tremendous pressure on the physical and human resources of secondary schools and the amount of remedial work needed to bring students up to the required level is too taxing for principals. Given these observations, it would be enlightening to discover the extent to which principals believe that they are personally capable of coping with the demands of this new system and what strategies and leadership practices or initiatives they have developed to deal with the realities of this sweeping educational change.

2.8 The Expanding Role of Secondary School Principals under Universal Secondary Education

Much of the recent research on the principal leadership has accumulated evidence that the traditional role of the principal has evolved significantly during the past decades on account of rapid social, political and economic changes (Ediger 2014; Portin & Jianping 2005;Mulford 2003). The general consensus from the research literature is that contemporary schools have been expanding and that principals are given broader responsibilities in supervising more teachers and for coordinating a more complex curriculum. In the Caribbean region, a review of the current research shows that there has been a gradual evolution of the roles of Caribbean principals away from the stereotypical portrayal of principals as gatekeepers and enforcers of directives and policies from the higher echelons of the bureaucratic system apparatus.

Several researchers have commented on the traditional inertia characteristic of Caribbean principals in the past. While this critique may be a contestable generalization, it nevertheless points to the bureaucratic nature of regional educational governance systems. Borden (2002) described Caribbean principals as "middle level managers who acted as transmitters of rules" (p.5). Moura and Levy (2000) addressed the marginal role that principals had played as agents of change in the educational system. Daley-Semper (2014) claims that "there is little evidence of the impact of 'good' leadership on student outcomes (p.2)," based on her experiences in Caribbean schools. Similarly, Optalka (2004) observes that the bureaucratic centralization of the education system in many developing countries has meant that the role definitions of the principal are based primarily on administrative and managerial functions. However, other researchers, while

acknowledging the bureaucratic inflexibility and decision paralysis so evident in the education systems of some developing countries, have acknowledged that instructional leadership functions are becoming important for school improvement in many reform-minded countries (Fink & Silverman 2014; Mombourquette & Bedard 2014, Miller 2013, Hallinger, 1994, Lockheed, 1993).

This trend in the evolving role of Caribbean principals towards broader leadership responsibilities has been borne out by research in other USE-denominated jurisdictions. Research carried out in Nigeria and Uganda, two African countries that have been grappling with the implementation of Universal Secondary Education reforms, reveals that many principals are moving away from an over-emphasis on their administrative and managerial roles to an increasing involvement in instructional activities.   Lunenberg (2010) and Tongeri (2003) found that many principals are placing greater priority in ensuring greater instructional quality. This new trend of integrating leadership in instruction has prompted Arikewuyo (2009) to conclude for many principals in Nigeria ensuring quality instruction is now a major part of their administrative function.

 In the Caribbean region, Leacock (2009) identified a number of challenges that have impacted significantly on the leadership role of secondary school principals in the OECS with the advent of USE. One such challenge resides in the domain of providing quality education through the application of relevant and appropriate curricula. Acknowledging that under USE, the needs of students were more likely to be diverse than prior to its implementation, Leacock (2009) contends that in designing relevant curriculum, principals "needed to strike a balance between the type of academic curriculum valued by society and the learning needs of those that pass through the secondary school system" (p.7).

By contrast, prior to the introduction of USE, the role of the principal in curricular matters was more straightforward in that a standard academic curriculum based on offerings of the external Caribbean Secondary Education Council (CSEC) examining body was all that was needed to be administered. Leacock (2009) concludes that on account of the rigid selection criteria applied at the Common Entrance Examination (CEE), students were able to pursue high academic offerings with reasonable success

and the role of the principal was more predictable when managing a more homogeneous student population.

The advent of USE resulted in a greater influx of students, a phenomenon with which school principals had been unfamiliar under the restricted access practices that had dominated secondary schooling prior to the implementation of USE. Leacock (2009), while extolling the virtues of increased access and inclusiveness of the USE policy, points out that providing optimal physical conditions conducive to teaching and learning, had had a major impact on the work and role of school principals under USE. By drawing a link between the physical environment and students' self-worth, Leacock (2009) claims that educational quality under USE is not guaranteed by merely offering school places, but that students should be given the opportunity to grow and learn. The new challenge then for school principals was to ensure that they created the physical conditions and space necessary for productive learning.

The success of the USE policy was therefore intertwined with the ability of principals to efficiently manage and lead the reform process at the level of the school. This in turn depends on their particular philosophy and approaches to management and leadership. An examination of some key underlying leadership theories will help to put in perspective the leadership practices of principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

2.9   Related Theories of Leadership

Several models or theories of leadership have been advanced in recent decades that attempt to explain the various leadership practices of school principals in relation to change and policy innovations designed to improve the performance of schools. Of particular relevance to this study are the following contemporary theories of effective school leadership: Transformational leadership (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2005a) Instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2003) and Managerial leadership. These educational leadership models identify the school principal as one of the key players in educational change and in the implementation of reform efforts in schools, as well being the chief executive responsible for efficient operations of the school organization.

2.10 Elements of Transformational Leadership

According to Sullivan and Decker (2005) transformational leadership is defined as "a leadership style focused on effecting revolutionary change in organizations through a commitment to the organization's vision" (p.1). Transformational leadership has been associated with leadership practices designed to facilitate change in organizations. Developed mainly from the work of Burns (2003), Bass (1998) and Avolio & Bass (2002), transformational leadership has become synonymous with the ability of leaders to motivate followers to attain the vision of the organization. Nayab (2010) postulates that the strength of transformational leadership resides in its ability to redefine peoples' missions and visions and renew their commitment to the organization's goals. Many writers on transformational leadership have identified four major characteristics. These critical factors include: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Bass, 1998; Burns (2003). Lowrey (2014), in a Canadian study, examined the importance of principal efficacy as a pre-requisite for successful transformational leadership. Additionally, theories of transformational leadership also focus on five common leadership characteristics: creative, visionary, interactive, empowering and passionate (Rowland, 2008).

Leithwood (1994) played a pioneering role in his application and analysis of the tenets of transformational leadership to the specific conditions existing in educational organizations. He argues that the essence of transformational leadership should be focused on the commitment and capacity of all members of the organization. Yukl (1998) has adopted a similar stance by arguing that transformational leaders build commitment to the organization's objectives and empower followers to achieve those objectives. Based on Leithwood's conceptual model of transformational leadership, principals pursue three fundamental goals: (1) Helping staff develop and maintain a collaborative professional culture (2) Fostering teacher development and (3) helping teachers. Concretely, according to Leithwood (1994) the transformational principal achieves these objectives through building the school's vision, establishing school goals, offering individualized support, modeling best practices and important organizational values, demonstrating high performance expectations, creating a productive school culture and developing structure to foster participation in school decision-making.

Transformational leadership is often juxtaposed in the research literature with transactional leadership. While transactional leadership focuses on the role of supervision, organization and group performance and the nature of exchanges between leaders and followers based on a system of rewards, transformational leadership highlights empowerment, inspiration and getting everyone involved in the decision-making process. Transformational leadership, therefore, is about inventing new ideas. These individuals continually change themselves; they stay flexible and adaptable; and continually improve those around them. The transformational leader encourages followers by acting as a role model, motivating through inspiration, stimulating intellectually, cultivating support from their communities and giving individualized consideration for needs and goals (Chubb 2014, Bass, 1985)

Transformational leadership empowers people to greatly exceed their previous levels of accomplishment. This dynamic and innovative leadership style mobilizes and motivates an entire organization from top to bottom. True transformational leaders put passion and energy into everything that impacts on the forward movement of the organization. They care about people and want people to succeed. The result is individual, group and organizational achievement beyond expectations. The importance of these precepts of transformational leadership has been demonstrated in several research studies. Dassault, Pavette and LeRoux (2008) found significant correlations between principals' transformational leadership skills and teacher collective efficacy in a Canadian study. Singh and Lokotech (2005) noted from their South African study that the democratic, transformational styles of primary school principals help to transform the human resource management dynamics in the schools, thereby leading to greater productivity and organizational success.

In conclusion, Onorato (2013) and Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) have convincingly shown that transformational leadership is the style of leadership most suited to school leadership in periods of reform. Rowland (2008) pointed out that its greatest impact lies its potential for building high levels of commitment among teachers and for fostering the capabilities of teachers to respond to the challenges of reform. Overall, transformational leaders balance their attention between action that creates progress and the mental state of their followers. Perhaps, more than other leadership

approaches, they are people oriented and believe that success comes first or last through sustained and deep commitment. The onus is on school principals to augment the managerial efficiency embedded in transactional leadership to the system changing strengths of transformational leadership to ensure the optimal outcomes for their schools in terms of student achievement and teacher motivation and efficacy.

2.11 Instructional Leadership Practices

One of the fundamental dimensions of principal leadership practice that has a direct impact on the work and welfare of students and staff in schools is the construct of instructional leadership. Instructional leadership involves related sub-dimensions including co-ordinating the curriculum, creating opportunities and conditions in which teachers can improve their practice and monitoring the quality of classroom instruction (Camburn, Huff, Goldring & May 2010). Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) view it as the domain where principal can gain maximum benefit for student learning in schools. For Gray and Lewis (2013) empowering new principals in practical instructional leadership training is a potent avenue for fostering improved teaching and increased student achievement.

The educational leadership literature continually emphasizes that one of the key roles of the school principal is that of instructional leader (Gray & Lewis 2013, Quinn 2002; Sanzo, Sherman & Clayton, 2011; Fullan 1991). The key consensus in the literature is that effective principals are synonymous with effective instructional leaders. Hanny (1987) expresses this claim in the following way: "the principal must be knowledgeable about curriculum development, teacher and instructional effectiveness, clinical supervision, staff development and teacher evaluation (p. 209). Fullan (1991) has looked at instructional leadership even more holistically when he suggests that principals' should participate in the instructional process through discussions with teachers about instructional issues and through their observation of classroom instruction. He further emphasized the need for greater interactions with teachers in the instructional process, more in-depth examination of student data and the overall monitoring of student progress as integral to the process of school improvement.

Under universal secondary education, the role of the principal as instructional leader has taken on even more significant proportions. While the traditional administrative role of the principal remains significant, principals working under secondary education reforms have the expanded mandate of making instructional quality a top priority by taking the necessary actions to promote growth in student learning and striving for excellence in education. As a testament of this expanded mandate, the OERU (2006) Principal Leadership Desk Manual indicates that one of the key areas of responsibilities for principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is that of providing instructional leadership to teachers.

Lambert (2003) has indicated that the effectiveness of the instructional leader depends primarily on the "leader's ability to create an environment where strong professional collaboration, frequent dialogue, and shared norms for improving classroom instructional practice exist". The instructional role of the principal as educational leader takes on even greater significance in a period of educational reform. Under universal secondary education, principals are confronted with the challenge of providing a diversified instructional climate to cater to the needs of the wide-ranging variability in the educational needs of the schools' student populations. This point is emphasized by Flamini (2010), who argues that the role of the instructional leader "is paramount in ensuring that equitable and empirically-supported practices are an integral part of the instructional process (p. 2)". He further contends that the leadership ability of the principal is paramount in a period of reform as the principal is required to act as an agent of change rather than in the classical role of school manager.

Based on the notion of the role of the principal as change agent in the domain of instructional practice, Flamini (2010) examined how the school principal can contribute to the creation of a high-performing school. He found that instructional leadership in schools of diversity must focus on school and classroom teaching practices in order to advance students towards higher levels of learning. His findings also emphasized the pivotal role of shared leadership among teachers, staff, students and parents as key to successful instructional leadership. He therefore advocates the use of empirically-supported teaching methods as a school collective strategy fundamental to sustaining high levels of student achievement.

In a related vein, Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) found that shared leadership and a sense of professional community had a positive impact on teacher classroom instructional practice. Valentine and Prater (2011) found that principal leadership behaviours promoting instructional and curriculum improvement were linked achievement. These findings were also borne out in high-poverty schools that experienced improvement in student achievement. Jacobson, Brooks and Giles (2007) examined the practices that three principals used in confronting the demands of their high-poverty communities. The salient findings from their study were that these principals established self-nurturing environments for children and adults, maintained high expectations for student performance and held students, faculty, staff and parents accountable for meeting those expectations.

A review of the literature on instructional leadership models reveals several frameworks that have been developed to explore the principal's behaviour in this area of leadership. In this review, three well-known models are examined. Based on a synthesis of the literature on school effectiveness and a survey of 10 elementary school principals, Hallinger and Murphy (1985) and Hallinger (2003) produced a comprehensive model of instructional leadership that emphasized three broad categories that were further classified into 20 specific dimensions. These categories included: (1) Defining the school's mission (2) Managing the instructional programme and (3) Promoting school climate.

Defining the school's mission was conceptualized in terms of framing and communicating the school's goals clearly to students, teachers, staff and parents. Managing the school's instructional programme included such practices as supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum and monitoring student progress. Principals created a positive school climate by protecting instructional time, maintaining high visibility, providing teaching incentives, enforcing high academic standards, and providing incentives for students.

Having synthesized the literature from effective schools, school improvement, staff development and organizational change, Murphy (1990) presented a refined and expanded model of instructional leadership practice. He identified four characteristics of

effective instructional practices of school principals in this revised model. These characteristics include: developing a mission and goals and translating them into professional practice, manage the educational production function, promote an academic learning climate and develop a supportive work environment (1990, p. 165). In recent years, Hallinger (2009) has continued to demonstrate empirically the salutary effects of instructional leadership in its reincarnated form, dubbed 'leadership for learning'.

Weber (1996) elaborated an instructional leadership model that addressed the need for instructional leadership irrespective of the school's organizational structure. His model is particularly relevant in an era of shared educational leadership and site-based management. Weber (1996) model is consistent with the focus of the two previous models and it identifies five dimensions. These include: Defining the school's mission, managing curriculum and instruction, promoting a positive learning climate, observing and improving instruction and assessing the instructional programme. These three models highlight the importance of principals focusing on three key aspects of instructional leadership. These include defining and communicating the school's goals, monitoring and providing feedback on the teaching and learning process and emphasizing the importance of professional development.

The foregoing theorists were however more one-dimensional in their examination of instructional leadership. Waters et al. (2003, 2005) in their seminal meta-analysis of the effects of leadership practices on student achievement, advocated a balanced leadership framework that positioned instructional leadership at the core of student success. Their study resulted in the identification of 21 leadership responsibilities that aligned with student achievement. In the instructional leadership literature, this framework provides a rigorous analytical tool that school leaders can use to continually enhance student achievement.

Finally, the work of Kathleen Cotton (2003) has complemented the research of the other theorists mentioned above in important ways. In a comprehensive review of 81 research reports, Cotton (2003) identified 25 practices or strategies available to principals to improve student achievement. These practices included elements of both

instructional and transformational leadership. Cotton (2003) argues that the main role of the principal was instructional improvement, but that this role should be broadened to include practices such as relationship building, delegation of responsibilities, community support and even fundraising. The key contribution of Cotton's work is that it identifies several positive principal practices that contribute to the creation of an effective school.

2.12 The Managerial Elements of Leadership Practice

Recent research into principal leadership has pointed out the complementary nature of leadership and management roles for school principals in an era of reform and increasing accountability (Grigsby, Schumacher, Decman & Simieou, 2010). Shellard (2003) has highlighted the importance of both a managerial role and an instructional role for school principals. In addition to the key role in managing the curriculum and the school's instructional program, successful principals pay attention to the proper management of the school as an organization. This key responsibility of the principal has been emphasized by DiPaola and Hoy (2008) in this statement about the managerial role of the principal: "principals are expected to set clear goals, allocate resources to instruction, manage the curriculum, monitor lesson plans and evaluate teachers" (p.10). Hence, in order to optimize effective organizational outcomes and student achievement, it is necessary for principals to balance instructional and managerial responsibilities to ensure that they are complementary rather than in direct competition (Shellard, 2003).

Other researchers have pointed to the importance of the managerial aspects of leadership practice that are necessary for developing organizational capacity. Day (2009) emphasized that principals need to balance management and leadership as part of the complexity of the principal's job. He argues that leaders cannot afford to ignore their managerial responsibilities to create safe, secure learning environments, to manage resources to support a learning organization and to facilitate that school system in its endeavour to provide teaching and learning.

Similarly, Grisson and Loeb (2009) studied the specific skills that principals need to promote school success. Based on five measures, they found that principals' organization management skills consistently predicted student achievement growth and

other success measures. On average they found that principals were more effective developing relationships with students, communicating with parents, developing safe environments, dealing with concerns from staff, managing schedules and using data to inform instruction.

A growing cadre of researchers have found that too much emphasis on administrative leadership has impacted negatively on the capacity of many principals to execute their instructional leadership role (Fennell, 2002 Oplatka 2004; Rayfield & Diamantes 2004). Oplatka (2004) conducted a comprehensive review of the instructional and managerial characteristics of principals in developing countries and concluded that the volume of administrative and managerial tasks has been an obstacle to the performance of instructional leadership tasks on the part of the principals studied in Asia and Latin America. She has also cited the constraints placed on principals operating in a centralized bureaucratic education system and the lack of autonomy and the fact that their powers are limited by the rules of the system. These systemic restrictions have resulted in principals in developing countries adopting more administrative and managerial functions, with instructional leadership functions assuming a secondary role.

Sindhvad (2009) in a Philippines' study found that the principals in her investigation were not prepared for their new roles as instructional leaders. Earlier, Chapman and Birchfield (1994) also found that many principals in their study in Botswana were more prepared to adopt a stance heavily weighted towards management and administration. They found that the managerial roles of principals were primarily focused on managing school finances and resources, maintaining discipline, ordering equipment, determining staffing needs, allocating staff and ensuring that teachers keep accurate records. In spite of these findings, Optalka (2004) attaches a caveat to this perceived trend with the admission that the role of school principals in both developed and developing countries has been in constant evolution and that the instructional management dimension of the principal's work is taking on greater importance as calls for accountability in schools have increased.

In another international study on the importance of managerial practices as an integral part of the repertoire of the leadership skills and behaviours of successful school

principals, Crow (2007) found that one of the significant practices that principals use to move their schools forward is that of enriching and developing the school's organizational capacity. Promoting the school's organizational capacity involves the school leader addressing basic management needs such as safety and order. Indeed, Giles (2005) considers effective managerial practices by principals as "the first step in winning the support of parents and teachers" (p. 35).

Crow (2007) concludes that the initial normative approaches to instructional leadership were flawed in that they underestimated the importance of the role of management in creating the organizational capacity to support student learning. The current consensus is that in a good school, management and instructional leadership exist simultaneously (Horng & Loeb, 2010). Rather than ignoring managerial responsibilities, successful principals incorporate managerial approaches as essential to the complexity of leadership practices that principals need to exercise especially in challenging schools (Crow, 2007).

Kruse & Louis (2009) have also stressed the hybrid nature of school principals' responsibilities in providing both leadership and managerial functions in contemporary schooling. He stresses that the core responsibilities of the school principal include leadership and managerial support in planning, implementation, evaluation and improvement of the educational institution. Kruse & Louis (2009) have subsequently identified four core areas of a principal's managerial responsibilities. These include (1) Fostering supportive relationships (2) managerial leadership (3) School safety and (d) Leadership for student learning. For this author, the hiring of quality teachers and the implementation of improved teaching practices are extremely effective ways in which a principal can blend his managerial and leadership responsibilities to achieve an effective learning environment.

2.13 Effective Leadership Practices of School Principals

The central facet of this research is on the importance of the leadership practices of school principals in successful school reforms. Research has shown that successful school reforms depend on the motivations and capacities of the local school leadership

(Leithwood & Jantzi (2005b). The vast research on school leadership continuously points to the central role that effective leadership plays in the successful teaching and learning outcomes with the school organization. Davis et al. (2005) emphasize the vital and multifaceted role that principals play in ensuring that schools are productive and positive workplaces for teachers and vibrant learning environments for students.

Additionally, Cotton (2000) and Ubben and Hughes (1987) noted that there was a strong correlation between effective school practices and administrative leadership. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) discovered from their research on effective schools that principals exert a powerful influence on teaching quality and student learning. While much of this influence was indirect, effective leaders ensured that resources were available to teachers to teach well.

The role of school principals has evolved significantly in recent decades from that of building manager to that of leadership for pedagogy as described by both DeNisco (2015) and Sergiovanni (1996). This emphasis on leading for student learning has resulted on a greater focus of leadership practices for instructional improvement. Davis et al. (2005) argue that effective school leaders influence student achievement through two important pathways: (1) the support and development of effective teachers and the implementation of effective organizational processes. Usdan, McCloud & Podmostko (2000) argue that effective school leaders need to hone their practices in the areas of instructional leadership that focuses on strengthening teaching and learning, professional development, data-driven decision making and accountability. Secondly, they emphasized the key role of community leadership and visionary leadership as fundamental components of the effective leadership practices of school principals.

The research examined has consistently emphasized three key aspects of principal leadership that matter in all educational institutions. According to Davis et al. (2005), these include: (1) developing a deep understanding of how to support teachers (2) managing the curriculum in ways to promote student learning and (3) developing the ability to transform schools into effective organizations that foster powerful teaching and learning for all students.

In a ground-breaking study on the principalship, Leithwood et al. (2004, 2009) have outlined three set of core leadership practices: (1) developing people- This practice entails enabling teachers and other staff to do their jobs effectively, offering intellectual support and stimulation to improve the work of the school and providing models of practice and support. (2) Setting directions for the organization- effective principal practices here include developing shared goals, monitoring organizational performance and promoting effective communication. (3) Redesigning the organization, a practice that focuses on the creation of a productive school culture, modifying organizational structures and building collaborative processes.

The research literature has also emphasized that there exists a wide range of successful and effective leadership practices and that there are a number of individual, collective and societal forces that influence leadership outcomes. Crow (2007) conducted a number of analyses of leadership practices in an international context and discovered that there exist a number of similarities and differences in effective principal leadership practices based on context. Crow (2007) examined successful leadership practices in the international context along three dimensions: instructional leadership, organizational capacity and culturally responsive practices.

Effective practices subsumed under instructional leadership included a focus on the professional development of teachers, promoting shared leadership and decision-making, sharing pedagogical and curricular knowledge with teachers, developing the personal and professional capacity of the staff and building relationships. Crow (2007) also reported that in an Australia study of the direct and indirect leadership practices that influenced student outcomes that the principal's direct relations with students and working directly in the classrooms turned out to be critical leadership practices.

Research into successful principal leadership practices has examined how leaders enrich and promote the school's organizational capacity to enhance overall student learning. Citing comparative research carried out in the United States and England, Cook (2007) notes that successful principals created various types of structures to enhance organizational capacity. These practices involved creating

leadership teams, distributed leadership, and professional development strategies such as mentoring.

Cook (2007) also found that addressing basic management issues such as safety and order were crucial principal practices that resonated with teachers and parents. This finding is in direct contradiction to the assumptions of many proponents of effective leadership research who believe that successful principals do not focus on management issues. Cook (2007) concludes that addressing managerial needs is essential to organizational capacity and further supports successful leadership practice especially in challenging schools. Cook (2007) also identified a number of culturally responsive leadership practices that enhance student learning. Focusing on the qualities of care and respect, Cook (2007) states that "the qualities of appreciation, recognition, compassion and the valuing of not only students but their home and families are critical qualities of the successful leaders' practices" (p.5). Interestingly, these culturally responsive leadership practices are often ignored in normative discussions of how successful leaders contribute to student learning and school improvement (Cook 2007).

Much of the current research on the effective practices of principals has been based on findings emanating from Kouzes and Posner (2002) Leadership Practices Inventory. Pringle and Cox (2007) found a strong correlation between the leadership practices of elementary school and the academic performance of successful schools and these findings coincided with the conclusions of Bass (1999) and Cotton (2003) who both concurred that leadership was the primary factor in raising student achievement and in the success and failure of institutions such as schools. Kouzes and Posner (2002) believed that successful leadership was underpinned by five specific leadership competencies observed from their survey of the most effective leaders.

Kouzes and Posner (2002) refer to these as "exemplary practices" of successful leaders. Kouzes and Posner (2002), for their part, have elaborated five practices or domains of leadership against which the effectiveness of principals can be assessed. The first domain, known as modelling the way, is centred on the concept of the principal setting an example for others to follow. Pringle and Cox (2007) interpret this leadership practice as the core values and beliefs through which principals lead and which are

manifested in the way people are treated and how goals are pursued. Concrete manifestations of this leadership practice include the principal's participation and involvement in staff development and the showing of love appreciation and respect for children.

Kouzes and Posner (2007) isolated as their second key leadership practice the concept of Inspiring a shared Vision. This involves the leaders' belief that they can make a difference in the organization. These principals are able to inspire their staff and strive for a common goal. Based on a critical review of Kouzes' model conducted by Cox and Pringle (2007), the leadership practice of Inspiring a shared vision "is consistent with principals setting ambitious goals and possessing a vision that all children will do well" (p.4). The third domain, enabling others to Act, examines the leader's ability to foster collaboration and team-building. It involves the leader's practice of involving subordinates in decision-making and the maintenance of an atmosphere of trust and dignity. The next domain, referred to as challenging the process centres on the leader's willingness and ability to change the status quo. Leaders are willing to look for innovative ways to improve the organization.

Cox and Pringle (2007) point out that this stance is absolutely essential for a principal seeking to improve the academic standing of a school. Kouzes and Posner (2007) final category of Encouraging the heart involves recognizing subordinates for their contribution. Successful principals therefore create a culture where the accomplishments of staff members will be appreciated and celebrated by the school community.

2.14 Leadership Practices of Principals and Gender

In this study, the issue of the leadership practices of principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is also important within the overall framework of Universal Secondary Education. It would be enlightening to examine if there are any noticeable findings in relation to the way that male and female principals exercise their leadership practices under the policy.

Previous research in the area of the leadership practices of male and female principals have been generally controversial and in some instances conflicting. Many researchers in this area have found significant differences in the way that female and male principals exercise leadership (Rosener 1990; Smith 2011). As a case in point, Hutton and Gougeon (1993) studied teachers' perceptions of leadership communications of male and female principals in the Calgary School District. Their findings indicated that teachers perceived female principals as more effective in communicating their authentic values and verbal expectations than male principals.

Nogay and Beebe (2008), in an Ohio study of principals' behaviour seen through the eyes of teachers and superintendents, found that female principals scored higher on all sub-scales of Hallinger's Principal Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) than their male counterparts. By contrast, Lumby and Azaola (2011), in a South African study of female principals, reported that there were generally negative views of female leadership capacity and that leadership by female principals was viewed stereotypically as "a maternal approach to leadership" (p.1).   Using a more gender-neutral approach, Smith (2011), studied principals with negative and positive attitudes towards school headship, and concluded that positive head teachers were motivated by strong values focused on pupil achievement and were agents of change who needed to occupy positives of power to achieve their leadership mandate.

Some researchers have claimed a certain superiority of female principals' approach to leadership on the other hand. Kropiewnicki and Shapiro (2001), citing the work of feminist researchers such as Gilligan, explored the ethic of care as a leadership attribute among female principals. Their findings revealed the existence of the ethic of care in all principals in such areas as "teaching, learning, dedication to students, efforts to create child-centred schools, empowering others, listening and resolving difficult conflicts fairly". (p.1).The implication of this research is that female principals, as a general rule, applied ethical perspectives of care in managing staff and students under their tutelage.

 Other researchers such as Stelter (2002) have touted female principals' natural socialization in skills that emphasize participative leadership, collaborative group

management and the quality of interpersonal relations, while characterizing male principals as goal-oriented and aggressive. Similarly, Agezo (2010) examined leadership practices of female principals in Ghana considered effective in school improvement. He found that the female principal studied were transformational leaders who created work environments that promoted creative thinking and implemented new cutting edge programmes.

Giese, Slate, Brown, & Tejeda-Delgado (2009) studied the leadership practices of female principals in Texas in the domains of relationship building and decision-making, influencing people and seeking information. Their findings also revealed that the study participants supported employees by being helpful, involved their employees in decision-making practices and motivating their employees. These practices as well as complementary factors such as good listening skills, communication skills, trustworthiness and honesty were considered of primordial importance in the success of these female principals.

The research on gender differences in leadership approach is however inconclusive and far from unanimous. A number of other researchers, while noting some differences in male and female principals' leadership practices, reported more similarities than differences in the modus operandi of the school principals studied. Burns and Martin (2010) studied the effectiveness of male and female principals using an invitational leadership style in school settings and found that statistically differences in gender were not significant when applied to invitational leadership.

Eckman's (2004) study found that male and female principals shared similar experiences and used a range of similar skills and approaches to the leadership of their schools. Stelter (2002) in a cautionary note about the importance of gender in leadership, believes that the leader's contribution to workforce and organizational effectiveness is ultimately more significant. Indeed, Mertz and McNeely (1995) concluded that the role and nature of the job were determinative of principals' behaviour and practice rather gender after their observations effective female principals tend to differ very little from their male counterparts.

The literature synthesis overall sounds a cautionary note that gender may not be as important to principal leadership practices as has been emphasized in previous research studies but may be more situationally and individually specific. And this conclusion seems to be in harmony with Kruger (2008) who believes that a mix of masculine and feminine leadership elements encompasses a broader repertoire of flexible leadership skills. This dovetails with the earlier claims of Rosener (1990), who argued more than two decades ago that transformational and participative leadership qualities are not the exclusive provinces of female leaders since numerous male leaders have displayed evidence of these positive leadership attributes. The study will therefore examine the extent to which these prior findings harmonize or diverge in the case of Vincentian principals working under Universal secondary Education.

2.15 Leadership Practices of Principals in High Performing Schools and Low Performing Schools

The leadership practices of principals in high and low performing schools are examined in the section of the synthesis of the literature on the instructional and managerial practices of school principals. The literature on leadership practices of principals in this area of focus tends to produce controversial findings. Generally, the literature is unequivocal and consistent in its findings that principal quality is of overriding importance in all types of schools (Leithwood (2010). Elmore (2006) studied the phenomenon of low-performing schools and the reasons why many of these types of schools fail in their reform efforts. He attributes the failure of low performing schools to poor decision-making in regard to their goals for school improvement, rather than to lack of effort or low motivation on the part of school leaders. However, what is less clear-cut from the literature is whether principal quality is connected directly or indirectly to high and low performing schools or whether there are different principal practices in high performing schools and low performing schools.

This section of the literature review examines previous research on these questions in the light of the fact that the schools in this study tend to fall on a continuum ranging from high performing schools that accommodate the top performers at the

annual Common Entrance Examinations to the lower performers, several of whom were not successful at the Common Entrance Examinations.

Rice (2010) examined the relationship between principal quality and school type. She notes that principal quality is extremely important in all schools, but particularly so in high-poverty and low-performing schools. One interesting finding in her study was that principal quality was unevenly distributed across schools, but that high-poverty low-performing schools also had lower quality principals. Wakelyn (2011) attributes the phenomenon of low-performing schools or schools that fail to meet their academic achievement targets to a combination of three fundamental underlying factors: weak school leadership, inadequate skill levels among teachers and insufficient high-quality teaching materials. He however suggested that there are a number of proactive steps that can be taken to improve the performance of these schools. These suggestions are similar to those made by Timar and Chyu (2010). In their study of how states can respond to low performing schools, they noted that organizational characteristics, including principal leadership, participation in decision-making and the establishment of coherent plans and goals were particularly effective in raising student performance.

In keeping with these perspectives, Kearney and Herrington (2011) conducted research on the approaches that high-performing principals used to achieve success in traditionally low-performing schools. These researchers discovered that high-performing principals provided stable leadership over time and took steps designed to increase school support structures. In addition, they undertook measures to increase trust and paid attention to increasing relationships at all levels of the various school constituencies. This approach was accompanied by strategies to reduce threats to school success. Johnson, Uline & Perez (2011) conducted a study of high-performing principals who used their expertise to raise student academic achievement in urban schools stereotypically viewed as under-performing. Their findings revealed that these expert principals focused on classroom observations, creating a classroom climate conducive to learning and taking measures to increase student engagement with instructional tasks.

Other researchers have emphasized that principals with the appropriate knowledge, skills and dispositions are what low-performing schools need to bring about sustained improvement. Finnegan and Stewart (2009), based on their study of school leadership in low performing schools in Florida, discovered that the principals of those schools that moved off probation in a short time, had been able to effectively articulate their school's vision, provided support for resources for teachers and were also able to provide sound management of their schools, the establishment of a collaborative vision and the fostering of commitment to their school's collective goals.

Current research has suggested strategies that school districts and education authorities can use to close the achievement gap between high-performing and low-performing schools. Lake and Hernandez (2011) suggest that successful high-performing schools use such practices such as focusing on school culture, ongoing diagnostics and interventions, strong parental involvement an extended school day and a strong focus on professional development as part of their repertoire of effective practices. They advocate that the adoption of some of these proven procedures would be beneficial to lower-performing schools. A similar study undertaken by Masumoto and Brown-Welty (2009) in rural California in three high-poverty, high-performing schools identified focus on instruction, standards and expectations, strengths of the teaching staff and development of multiple support systems for students with varying needs contributed significantly to school-wide success.

A great deal of current literature on school quality deals with the ability of many principals to turn schools around from low–performing to high-performing institutions. Duke and Salmonowicz (2010) studied how one turnaround female principal in her first year was able to transform a low-performing elementary school into a top-performing school. Her three priority areas of focus included the revamping of an ineffective instructional programme, the institution of a culture of accountability from teachers and the development of an effective reading programme. From the literature, it appears that strong, focused principals do make a significant impact in the endeavour to turn low performing schools around.

The building of a positive culture has been highlighted by Rhodes and her colleagues (2011) as the cornerstone for transforming low-performing schools. Culture supported by social structures, team building, professional development and a community with core values, principal and teacher co-leadership and strong relational trust were viewed as the pathways to help turnaround a failing school. Wilcox and Angels (2011) went a step further and examined a number of commonalities that characterized schools with consistently high performances compared to other schools. They identified four interrelated practices characteristic of these schools. These included rigorous curriculum and expectations, innovative instructional programmes and practices, transparent communications and strategic decision-making using varied evidence.

In conclusion, the research evidence points to the challenges that principals experience in trying to improve student achievement in high-poverty, low- performing schools. At the same time, there is overwhelming evidence that high-quality principals can make a tremendous impact on turning schools around. Ylimaki, Jacobson & Drysdale, (2007) demonstrates the great impact that successful principals have been able to make on an international level in their study of 13 high poverty schools in Australia, England and the United States. These authors found that the principals in their study used very similar leadership practices and traits to make a difference and improve student performance. They found that these principals applied the best instructional practices, redesigned school structures when necessary and facilitated collaboration. They also show similar traits in "persistence, empathy passion, flexible and creative thinking" (p. 21). They conclude that with courage and sound leadership knowledge and skills, it is possible for principals to positively impact the climate and culture of all schools, even low performing and challenging schools.

2.16 Key Areas of Principals Leadership and Management

Several jurisdictions have identified a number of core areas of leadership and management which are generic to the success of the role of the principal. Wright and Gray (2007) have defined a school administrator as an educational leader that promotes the success of all students and has identified six key areas or standards deemed

foundational to the principal's role. Included among these standards are (1) facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported (2) advocating, nurturing and a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth,(3) ensuring management of the organization, operations and resources for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment (4) collaborating with community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

This final section of the literature review looks at the leadership and managerial practices in key areas of importance including curriculum and instruction, the management of teachers and other personnel including their professional development and training, student support, school discipline and special services, parental involvement and community relations, financial and facilities management and the need to support principals in an era of reform.

2.17 Curriculum and Instruction

The research literature from developing countries on the   managerial practices of principals points to the predominant focus of a plurality of principals on the accomplishment of managerial and administrative tasks to the marginalization of their practices in the area of curriculum and instruction. However, Sharma (2010) in a study of Malaysian principals suggests a blending of these roles as greater emphasis is being placed on academic standards and accountability. Sharma (2010) attributes this increased emphasis on curriculum and instruction to the greater awareness of principals that instructional quality should be the top priority of their schools and that the real purpose of the school is to serve the academic needs of the students.

 Day et al (2013) and Whitaker (1997) identified several essential skills that principals need to be successful as curriculum and instructional leaders. They need to be a resource provider, an instructional resource, a good communicator and have the ability to create a visible presence. Other researchers have found that the principal's level of engagement in curriculum and instruction has had a beneficial effect on teacher

performance and teacher confidence in the classroom (May and Supovitz, 2011; Yavuz and Gokan, 2010). This has led Morrison and Cooper (2009) to conclude that the leadership of school principals is crucial in school-based curriculum change and that the principals are key players in motivating staff and alerting their communities to educational issues. Clearly, the empirical research overwhelmingly proclaims that principal leadership does have a predominant influence on the quality of instruction found in schools.

Printy (2010), in a review of both qualitative and quantitative studies of principal influence on instructional quality, found that in a number of these studies principals' instructional leadership competency had a high level of impact on school level outcomes, particularly student achievement.

Other researchers (Smith & Addison, 2013) have noted that much of the principal's success in curriculum and instruction tends to be through the indirect effects of their role in managing the teaching staff and the organization as a whole. Hallinger and Heck (1999) concluded that the indirect influence of principals in this domain was mediated through teachers and instructional strategies. Similarly, Leithwood (2004) ranked school leadership as second in importance to teacher effects as a key determinant in student achievement. These findings were later corroborated by research carried out in developing countries. As a case in point, Borden (2002) tested an indirect effects model of the relationship between Paraguayan principals' characteristics and their instructional leadership and school outcomes. Prominent among her findings were higher levels of achievement in schools where principals took a leading role in instruction, a greater level of teacher appreciation for such instructional leaders and lower repetition rates where principals were available to improve instruction. These observations have led to a call for greater support for principals in their instructional leadership roles in developing countries.

Curriculum and instructional efficiency however do not develop without principals establishing the organizational structural framework and the tone and ethos conducive to teaching and learning. Garson (2000) is unequivocal in his call for the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning as the cornerstone for the improvement of quality

education in schools. Kruger (2003) sees a direct link between a sound organizational culture and the academic achievement and the professional development of teachers. Through expert leadership in the domains of curriculum and instruction, principals can shape the organizational culture of the school by "emphasizing the academic aspects of staff development, involving educators in decision-making, providing resources, supervision and provision of instructional time" (Kruger, 2003: 5).

2.18 School, Home and Community Partnerships

The creation of strong partnerships between the school, the home and the community has been found to be another area of practice important for leading educational change and for enhancing student achievement (Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009) (Protheroe, 2011). Effective principals are community leaders who also work with parents on strengthening home –school partnerships that ensure that the learning needs of students are adequately met. Partnerships that succeed in engaging parents with the learning of their children have been shown to contribute to improved student outcomes (Biddulph, Biddulph & Biddulph 2003). Robinson et al. (2009) have pointed that parental-school relationships, when properly monitored, have been found to be very effective on student achievement particularly in high-performing schools.

The literature on strategies to improve parental involvement in the education of their children especially of students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds is very abundant. In fact, Griffith (2001) contends that principals, on account of the centrality of their leadership roles in schools, are best suited to influence factors associated with the non-involvement of parents. From his study of the different leadership roles that influence parental involvement of socio-economically disadvantaged students, Griffith (2001) found that the role of instructional leader was associated with a higher level of parental involvement than other roles such as missionary or administrative manager.

Kerr (2005) examined the role that parental councils and principals working collaboratively can play in increasing the involvement of parents in the school and in their children's education. One of his key findings was that principals who worked

collaboratively with school councils to stimulate parental involvement have an indirect impact on student achievement. Telem (2003) also found that the principal has a central role in promoting parental involvement in schools. Leithwood (2006) have therefore postulated that pupil learning is enhanced when parents support the goals of the school; imbue their children with high expectations. The role of principals is to liaise with parents and to provide optimal learning conditions for the students.

The research on parental involvement and its impact on student achievement is controversial in that some researchers argue that the limited expertise of parents or the promotion of personal interests may detract from the smooth functioning of the school as an organization. Mohajeran and Ghaleei (2008), in an Australian study, found that parental involvement in schools was often attributed to factors such as school structure, the leadership style of the principal, school climate, low trust between the school and parents or concerns about parental status and power. Bearing these downsides in mind, the research evidence overwhelmingly points to the school principal as a facilitator an enabler of potent school –community relations. Labahn (1995) argues that there are many avenues to improve parental involvement at the secondary level, but that the success of any such programs is inextricably tied to the support and encouragement of the principal. This bridging role of the principal is echoed by Campbell (1992 p. 3) who emphasizes that "ultimate responsibility for creating harmony between the home and the school rests with the principal"

Effective communication with parents is a key aspect of the managerial functions of principals in fostering parental involvement for school effectiveness. Using open-ended interviews, Angelucci (2008) studied the principal's role in promoting parental involvement in selected elementary schools in Pennsylvania. His findings revealed that the principal's visibility, communication abilities, the ability to gain teachers' commitments and the skill in garnering parents' trust were paramount to successful principal promotion of parent involvement. These findings dovetail with similar findings made by McNeil and Patin (2005) that principals need to establish a climate of trust and collaboration as well as effective communication with parents as a first step in parental involvement in schools.

The practices that principals utilize to develop a positive school climate are fundamental in the promotion of parental and community involvement in the school. Schubert (2010) found in her research on principal management practices and parental involvement that principals who made the effort to institute practices that encouraged parent participation had the greatest degree of school success. This has lead Schubert (2010) to conclude that good managerial practice of principals in this domain requires developing a vision and implementing plans to build partnerships between families and communities and the school. In summary, while the literature on parental involvement remains polemical, it is clear that the principal can contribute largely through proactive management practices to encourage greater parental involvement and to support families and community to build strong links between the school and those external entities.

Research on school- community external relations has shown that there exists a correlation between school improvement and the school's focus on education teaching and learning (Fockett, 1992). Leithwood et al. (2006) have also found that the ability to articulate the school's pedagogic vision to external entities has resulted in greater cooperation between external entities and the school's academic programs.

2.19 The Management of Staff – Related Issues and Professional Development

One of the key avenues through which principals influence the school organization is through the management of the school human resources, the teaching staff and other ancillary personnel. In education, research evidence has found that that the effectiveness of principals in managing the school personnel has contributed to overall organizational health and student learning. According to Milanowksi and Kimball (2010) the effectiveness of principals in carrying out their human capital functions influences the effectiveness of a school's faculty.

Pont, Nusche and Moorman (2008) studied ways of improving school leadership in 22 OECD countries. They identified four domains of leadership responsibilities that were key to improving student learning and achievement. They specifically highlighted

the importance of supporting, evaluating and developing teacher quality as one of the cornerstones of improved school leadership. They emphasized that school leaders can achieve this objective by adapting the teaching program to local needs, promoting teamwork among teachers and engaging in teacher monitoring, evaluation and professional development.

Developing an effective school faculty requires that principals pay attention to several areas aimed at ensuring the optimal welfare of staff. The literature on principals' management of staff welfare identifies the   following responsibilities: Promoting a collegial culture to promote team effectiveness and to encourage individual development (2) facilitating the professional growth of staff by promoting teacher efficiency in student welfare and assessment, curriculum development planning and evaluation, classroom management   and teaching skills (3) Implementing specific programs for the development of staff who experience difficulties (4) Supervising the implementation of teaching and learning programs   and associated teaching strategies.

Research into principal support for the teaching staff has discovered that principals can be very effective if they place emphasis on three levels of support for both beginning and seasoned teaching staff. Stansbury and Zimmerman (2000) found that personal and emotional support, task or problem-focused support and critical reflection on teaching practice were areas in which principals' effectiveness in management of teaching staff aided in staff improvement. Similarly, Gersten, Baker & Lloyd (2001) argue that support from principals has strong direct and indirect effects on virtually all critical aspects of teachers' working conditions (p. 557)

In respect of staff management, the research points out that one of the fundamental roles of the principal is that of building staff morale (Whitaker, Whitaker & Lumpa 2009). As a prelude to morale building, principals need to create a school culture in which teachers can feel supported and principals need to ensure that teachers are successful. This has prompted Robbins and Alvy (1995) to conclude the practices of principals in high-performing not only include the establishment of a clear goals and a proactive vision, but also motivating and encouraging teachers by assisting them with the resources to perform their jobs professionally.

Kimball (2011) has conceptualized the role of the principal in the 21st century as that of a "strategic talent manager". He argues that the instructional role of the principal should be tied more closely to the strategic management of teacher talent. Principals acting the capacity of strategic talent managers are involved in "acquiring and developing talented staff as well creating the conditions in which staff fully commit time and energy" (Kimball 2011, p.1). He concludes that instructional leadership is only part of the principal's responsibilities for the strategic managing of teacher talent. The principal must ensure that the school has the teaching talent to effectively execute the school's instructional program. Principals therefore need to focus on human capital functions of recruitment, selection, induction, mentoring, professional development and performance management of the teaching staff as part of their strategies for effectively managing schools and student achievement.

Horng and Loeb (2010) have concentrated on the importance of organizational management for instructional improvement as the most effective way for current principals to obtain optimal returns from their teaching staff. They argue that principals focused on organizational management hire high quality teachers, provide them with the appropriate resources and supports and create opportunities for teachers to be successful in the classroom. Louis et al. (2010) have reached similar conclusions that school leaders affect student learning by influencing teachers' motivations and working conditions.

Researchers from the Wallace Foundation investigated principal leadership practices important for improving instruction from the perspectives of both principals and teachers as well as the concept of shared leadership. Emerging from this research was the notion that principals influence on teachers motivation and working conditions had the greatest impact on student achievement than other factors such as the principal's ability to influence teachers' knowledge. Two specific practices related to the management of the teaching staff were identified as having a great impact on improving instruction: Keeping track of the professional development needs of teachers and creating structures and opportunities for teachers to collaborate.

Collaboration between principals and teachers is an essential prelude to the building of trust for the effective management of staff relations. Edgerson and Kristonis (2006) have argued that building trust is fundamental in maintaining healthy and positive relationships between principals and teachers. Citing research by Gimbel (2003), they advocate that principals build one-to-one relationships with teachers through strong communication and support strategies that promote trust.

2.20 Management of Students and Student Welfare

The management of student welfare and issues constitutes one of the areas of greatest responsibilities for school principals in today's complex educational environment. Student issues involve the management of educational programs for students, student welfare, student discipline, student attendance and a number of issues surrounding meeting the special needs of student in order to ensure equitable and optimal outcomes for student participation and achievement.

Mackewan and Damer (2000) have established a cause-effect relationship between student achievement and the overall welfare of students. Noting that current research points to a close correlation between student achievement and strong instructional leadership, these researchers put forward the view that in "school environments where teachers are trained and supported, they transmit their sense of efficacy to the students" (p. 2). They concluded that students who are respected and well taught are motivated to learn and interact with adults positively.

The research literature emphasizes the establishment of a safe and orderly school environment as a pre-requisite for effective management of the school and the student population. Cotton (2003) points out that effective principals establish this type of environment by exhibiting personal warmth and accessibility and by establishing and communicating high behavioural standards from students, while providing support for disruptive students.

Principals therefore need to establish a sense of community in order to improve the overall welfare of students within the school organization. Leithwood et al. (2004)

point to the establishment of a sense of community as essential in the process of engaging and motivating students and establishing affective bonds between teachers and students. The literature on effective school leadership and management consistently points to the need for the establishment of a proactive school culture as being fundamental for student motivation and student achievement.

The establishment of well-defined school goals and the effective communication of those goals to students and teachers are indirect ways through which principals increase student motivation and the academic well-being of students. Indeed, Wilson (2013) describes successful school leadership as executed success "that leads to high student achievement" {p.1). Three decades previously, Leithwood and Montgomery (1984) noted that at the apex of successful school leadership are principals who are "devoted to a legitimate set of comprehensive goals for students and who seek out the most effective means for their achievement" (1984, p. 51). It is through the establishment of an effective culture of learning that principals contribute most effectively to the management of the welfare of students.

In a related vein, Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) examined a number of student-related leadership practices that that contribute to the optimization of student welfare in contemporary education. They specifically examined student welfare practices related to serving the increased student diversity in schools. These researchers recommend initiatives such as reduced class size, parent education programs and the building of rich curricula delivered innovatively as effective avenues to serve diverse student populations. They also recommend equitable implementation of these policies as a way to build on the social capital of these diverse student populations, thereby contributing to increased welfare of students.

2.21 Creating a Safe Atmosphere and Environment

The management of students is intertwined with the related issues of school safety and school discipline. According to Education Digest (2014) schools need to have clear discipline policies and codes of conduct, while providing support for at-risk students. Historically, Gaustad (1992) argued two decades earlier that school discipline

has two main goals (1) to ensure the safety of staff and students and (2) to create an environment favourable to learning. These two issues constitute a major responsibility for principals in exercising their managerial role and today school leaders still consider them to be some of their top priorities. Indeed, McNeil and Prater (2000) stress the necessity of establishing a disciplined student environment as a prelude to establishing and maintaining a worthwhile learning environment. Feuerborn, Wallace & Tyre (2013) encouraged the use of positive behaviour support in promoting learning, while Fullan (1998) recommends that principals be equipped with the necessary problem-solving skills to deal with this vital area of their management work. Shouppe and Pate (2010) and Delaney (1997) have argued that the leadership style of the principal is key to establishing positive school relationships conducive to establishing a climate of discipline in the school.

Behaviour management has become an increasingly important issue for school administrators and policy makers around the world (Lewis 2006). The issue of student discipline in secondary schools in the Caribbean has become of such growing concern that the OERU had commissioned a study in 2006 to study this growing phenomenon and its impact on the teaching and learning climate of secondary schools in the OECS. The findings revealed that disciplinary problems remained severe, but that these problems could be mitigated by improved supervisory practices and a more strategic approach to discipline management at the level of the school.

Fields (2008) examined an innovative approach to the management of student behaviour in Queensland, Australia and advanced three recommendations that principals and system administrators could use to improve discipline in schools. These included (a) establishing well-defined standards of behaviour for the school community (b) linking teaching, learning and behaviour so that quality teaching and effective behaviour management are seen as integral to the school's primary goal of teaching and learning and (c) placing emphasis on constructive relations among all members of the school community (Fields, 2008: 30).

2.22 Management of School Resources

The management of human, financial and material resources constitutes one of the major responsibilities of school principals. As the resource manager of the school, principals have the critical responsibility to find ways to best utilize the resources allocated to them (Chan and McCLeod. 2005). According to Horng and Loeb (2010) principals with strong organizational management are effective in hiring supporting staff, allocating budgets and maintaining positive working and teaching environments. Chan and McCLeod (2005) argue that school facility management is an important aspect of the daily operations of a school and that principals should receive adequate training in this key area of administration given the responsibility to ensure a safe and healthy school environment.

The management of school finances is another area that has received attention in the research on the managerial role of school principals, especially under the greater autonomy extended to principals under reforms such as site-based management. Hansraj (2009) in a study of the financial management roles of South African principals noted that equipping school managers with financial skills was an integral part of effective school management. He argues that the acquisition and management of school finances requires a high level of accountability from principals and that equipping principals with financial skills is crucial to effective and efficient school management.

Sinchuri (2013) and Levacic (1995) indirectly tie the efficient resource management of principals to the creation and maintenance of a good learning environment. Levacic (1995: 110) concludes that the managerial roles of principals encompass linkages between the allocation of financial and physical resources and the resulting educational outputs and outcomes. Pont, Nusche and Moorman (2008) have identified strategic financial and human resource management as being foundational to the improvement of school leadership practice. They have gone a step further by suggesting that at the policy-making level the financial management skills of principals should be enhanced through increased training to school leaders, the establishment of the role of financial manager within the school's leadership team and the provision of support services to schools.

A great deal of principals' leadership in schools is more indirect than direct. Coldren and Spillane (2007) have pointed out that principals influence an array of school processes not by their own actions per se but by the way they organize the school system, resources and tools at their disposal. While in many jurisdictions principals do not have control over major budgetary allocation such as teachers' salaries, principals do have increased control of discretionary areas of the school budget particularly in autonomous or semi – autonomous schools. This increase in financial and human resources management has prompted Pont et al. (2008) that "the strategic use of resources and their alignment with pedagogical purposes can help focus all operating activities within the school on the objective of improving teaching and learning"(p.55). The downside of assigning financial and property management duties to principals however has been an increase in workload and more onerous in cases where principals lack training or expertise in these areas of management.

In summary, the research evidence reveals that the strategic use of school resources has been shown to be associated with improved school outcomes particularly when the use of such resources such as staffing and teaching purposes are aligned to the school's pedagogical goals (Robinson 2007).

2.23 Shaping the School's Culture and Formulating and Implementing an Educational Vision

Several researchers on educational leadership have pointed to the importance of establishing a definitive educational vision and clear goals as the overarching role of school principals and administrators (Hallinger, 2003; Duignan 2006, Coldren and Spillane, 2007). A few decades ago, Cross and Cavazos (1990) pointed out that the most significant manifestation of the principal's leadership was the ability is to guide the staff and the school community towards the establishment of a mutually accepted collective vision. More recently, McGhee (2001) has indicated from his research on the principal's roles and responsibilities in a new school that the vision of the principal is the central factor in the success of a new school. He argues that the first responsibility of a principal is to possess and articulate a vision followed by providing a safe school

environment and a positive school climate and facilitate the development of a positive school culture.

The school's vision and mission are closely interlinked with the culture of the school. School culture reflects the values, traditions and beliefs of the school community which underlie the relations among students, teachers, parents and principals (Adeogun & Olisaemeka 2011; Cross and Cavazos, 1990). They identified five avenues through which principals can create and mould a positive school culture and make educational excellence a part of such a culture. These include: developing a vision of what the school should be, selecting staff with corresponding values, setting a consistent example of core values in daily routines, facing conflict rather than avoiding it and nurturing the traditions, ceremonies and symbols that reinforce school culture (Cross and Cavazos 1990, p.4). Principal therefore are responsible for shaping the school's culture and for emphasizing those positive elements that influence the learning, discipline and morale of students and teachers.

The researchers Kohm and Nance (2009) looked at teachers and collaborative school cultures. They found that teachers who worked in schools with strong collaborative school cultures behave differently than those who depended solely on administrators to create the conditions for them. However, Allen (2003) found that even in the most collaborative of cultures, principals remain the key to shaping underlying values, norms and beliefs central to the school. School principals are therefore viewed as morale builders (Almanzar 2014; Deal and Peterson (1998), creating the conditions where teachers and students feel supported safe and confident and where the focus is on growth and high achievement.

Peterson and Deal (1998) in their assessment of the impact of positive and toxic school cultures conclude that strong cultures are created through the efforts of good leaders. These leaders that include principals, teachers and even parents and the community, shape and maintain positive values and have a shared purpose. In the absence of such proactive leadership, school cultures can become unproductive. By paying attention to the symbolic aspects of their schools however, "leaders help to develop the foundation for change and success" (Peterson and Deal, 1998, p.5).

Recent research into changing school culture has focused on the role of shared leadership in promoting positive school culture (Louis and Wahlstrom, 2011). Citing their 2004 study into school leaders' impact on student learning, Louis and Wahlstrom (2011) found that changing a school's culture in positive ways required shared or distributed leadership that involves many stakeholders in school improvement and instructional leadership where administrators take responsibility for improvement at the classroom level.

By way of summary, the general consensus in the literature is that shaping the school's mission, vision and culture are critical elements of a principal's leadership effectiveness. Fundamentally, schools that promote a culture of excellence, a culture of trust and a culture that fosters shared norms and values have been found have better outcomes. This observation has led Louis and Wahlstrom (2011: p.1) to conclude that "schools with stronger cultures are more adaptable, have higher levels of student and teacher motivation and commitment, are more cooperative and better able to handle conflicts, have greater capacity for innovation and are more effective for achieving their goals". The catalyst for such positive results are those principals who conscientiously adopt those strategies that build shared norms and values that result in a culture of cooperation and collaboration.

2.24 Supporting Principals in their Instructional Leadership and Managerial Roles

Notwithstanding the pivotal roles that principals play in leading and managing instruction and the school organization, the complexity of the principal's roles requires these professionals to be adequately supported in the performance of those roles. While most of the current research literature focuses on principals' support for teachers and other organizational stakeholders, a number of researchers have looked at the issues surrounding support for principals and head-teachers. Swaffield (2008) has studied this crucial issue surrounding the leadership and managerial roles of principals in some depth.

Swaffield (2008) begins with the initial premise that the proliferation and evolution of distributed forms of leadership has not reduced the centrality of the principal as the centrifugal force in improving school effectiveness. She identifies the increasing responsibilities, the associated stressors, the isolation, the climate of accountability and the need to answer to multiple constituencies as the major pressure points that make support for practicing principals imperative in helping them to maintain a critical perspective on their work.

Swaffield (2008) has indicated the need for the creation of supportive partnerships between principals and other professionals as critical to sustaining current principals under their current workload and other constraints. She specifically mentions support of local education officers, consultants and collaboration and sharing of professional expertise among principals as potent sources of principal support. Her 2005 research found that principals and education officers had a shared agenda for school improvement and a sense of working together in pursuit of the same outcomes (Swaffield 2005).

The primordial forms of support found in the literature for maximizing principal support included mentoring and coaching (Bush and Glover, 2004: Male, Bright &Ware, 2002), peer support and networking (Earley, Evans, Collarbone, Gold and Halpin. 2002: Brown, 2006), critical friendships and school improvement partners. Flintham (2005) in his writings on peer support for principal sustainability, has noted that principals involved in this type of professional leadership training have felt that their overall leadership in their own schools has improved significantly as a result of the support they have received. Swaffield (2007) found that mentoring and coaching were particularly valued by novice principals as well as induction activities for those newly appointed. Her overall conclusion was that supportive partnerships are valued by all principals, and not only those experiencing particular difficulties or crises.

2.25 Summary of the Literature Review

The core purpose of this study is to examine the instructional and managerial practices of secondary school principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines working

under Universal Secondary Education reforms. A comprehensive review of the relevant literature was undertaken in relation to the study's central concerns. The foregoing review of the literature pertinent to this study focused on three broad theories that underscore the instructional and managerial practices of secondary school principals. These theories included transformational leadership, instructional leadership and managerial leadership and the existing empirical research relevant to the practices of school administrators.

An in-depth overview was provided in respect to the evolution of the policy of Universal Secondary Education, situating it initially in its broader international and regional literature and contexts. The policy was subsequently evaluated within its implementation in the educational frame-work of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and a background perspective was provided into its current operations. Subsequently, the review examined effective leadership practices of principals as gleaned from previous research into effective schooling and other writings on the successful leadership of school principals. In keeping with research sub-questions three and four, the review of literature also examined the previous research findings on the leadership practices of male and female school principals. The following section examined the research pertaining to the leadership and managerial practices utilized by principals in high and low performing schools to determine the similarities and differences identified in prior research in those domains.

The concluding sections of the review examined in detail a wide cross section of the core instructional and managerial tasks essential to the work of school principals. Specifically, the review focused on the core technological areas of instructional leadership including leadership for teaching and learning, curriculum leadership, the professional development of the teaching staff as well as a number of managerial roles focused on the management of students, school resources management, relations with parents and the wider school community, development of the school as an organization and the core issue of school culture and formulating and enacting a vision for the school. The review concluded with an examination of contemporary research on the vital issue of support for principals in the execution of the leadership and managerial roles.

Chapter 3.   METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

This chapter contains a description of the study and its central purposes, the research questions being investigated, the study design, a description of the population and sample involved in the research, my role in the investigation, site description and accessibility as well as the data collection procedures. The chapter also outlines the approach to data analysis and how issues such as trustworthiness and credibility were addressed. The final section looks at ethical issues in the conduct of this qualitative case study inquiry.

3.2   Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate and describe the instructional and managerial practices that principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have been applying to efficiently and effectively manage the schools during a time of transition and change brought about by the implementation of Universal secondary Education reforms. The study also sought to determine the perceptions of the secondary school principals on the extent to which they believe that they have achieved success or otherwise in creating an efficient management culture and structure and an educationally effective climate conducive to smooth functioning of the school organization and geared towards increased student achievement. To achieve the study's objective, two main research questions and four sub-questions have been duly formulated to guide the execution of the research. The main questions are as follows:

(1) What are the specific managerial and instructional leadership challenges that secondary school principals face in implementing the policy of Universal Secondary Education?

(2) What managerial and instructional leadership practices have secondary school principals employed to deal with demands of Universal Secondary Education?

The following sub-questions were also addressed:

Are there any differences between the managerial and instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in high-achieving schools compared to low achieving-schools?

Are there any differences between the managerial and instructional leadership practices of male and female secondary school principals under USE reforms?

Are there any differences between the managerial and instructional leadership practices of experienced and new secondary school principals under USE reforms?

Are there any differences between the managerial and instructional leadership practices of rural and urban secondary school principals under USE reforms?

3.3   Research Design

This section presents a brief description of the proposed research design, including the rationale for its use, the setting and population being studied, the instrumentation employed and the data analysis techniques.

A qualitative case study research design, through the medium of semi-structured interviews, was employed to collect rich, in-depth data from a representative sample of principals drawn from the four administrative jurisdictions into which the education system is currently subdivided. On account of the relatively small number of secondary schools operating throughout the country, the decision was taken to include the entire population of secondary school principals in this study. As a consequence, it was anticipated that a total of 26 principal interviews would be conducted, representative of the urban-rural divide and the traditional elite schools versus the newer secondary schools that have been established as part and parcel of the overall reform strategy under universal secondary schooling.

This study, which employs a qualitative descriptive case study research paradigm, was designed to examine the self-reported instructional and managerial leadership practices and behaviours of Vincentian secondary school principals working in a school system that had recently implemented a new education policy of Universal secondary education. The study sought to probe and evaluate the effectiveness of these practices on student achievement and overall management of the secondary schools. The main data-gathering method employed in this investigation was in-depth semi-structured interviews.

Cowger and Menon (2010) advocate the use of qualitative research designs when the researcher is primarily seeking understandings of human behaviour from the actors' own frame of reference. They further argue that when first-hand knowledge of the empirical social world is being sought within their natural setting that the application of qualitative procedures are paramount in gathering relevant data. Qualitative methods are targeted at the collection of rich, in-depth data and in-depth interviews are particularly relevant for this type of qualitative study as they focus on the rich, detailed descriptions of the experiences of the participants and provide insights into the culture, behaviour, motivations and practices of the subjects or phenomena being studied (Ferdinand 2015, Onuoha, Ferdinand & Onuoha, 2015)

Several researchers have written on the usefulness of case study research designs. Raeburn, Schmied, Hungerford and Cleary (2015) have posited that case study research designs provide a methodological framework to investigate phenomena in their everyday contexts. Yin (2009), suggests that case study research, with its philosophical underpinnings, provides a framework for exploratory research in real-life settings. Similarly, Cronin (2014) espoused the use of case study research inductively as an all-encompassing theoretical framework. Adding to its theoretical usefulness, Payne, Fields, Rolls, Hawker and Kerr (2007) point out that case-study research designs are appropriate for examining processes and outcomes in educational settings as well as or the exploration of multiple perspectives. As a culminating point in the discussion of the merits of case study research, Cronin (2014) emphasizes that case study allows the study of real-life settings both rigorously and systematically. As such, from the perspective of this study, case study research is well-suited for studying the context,

environment and practices of principals working within the ambit of the policy of Universal Secondary Education.

Given the foregoing overview of qualitative case study research designs, the organization of this chapter is presented along the following lines: (a) a rationale for the use of an in-depth qualitative research design (b) the research questions, setting and population studied; (c) the instrumentation used; (d) a description of the procedures employed and (e) the data analysis techniques.

3.4 Rationale for the use of a Descriptive Qualitative Case Study Research Design

A descriptive qualitative case study research approach was employed as the procedure for carrying out this study. Given the nature of the research questions that attempt to gain insights into the nature of the leadership practices employed by Vincentian secondary school principals in their quest to effectively lead their schools under the new policy of Universal secondary education, I believe that a qualitative case study design using in-depth structured and unstructured interviews is deemed the best approach to investigate the research questions. The use of a qualitative case study research design provides a number of benefits for deeper exploration of a problem and for deeper understanding of theory. Sydenstricker-Neto (1997) advocates the use of a qualitative approach on the grounds that it is likely to increase the quality of the final result and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the analyzed phenomena. Hoepfl (1997) argues that there are several considerations when deciding to adopt a qualitative research design. Primarily, a qualitative case study research design allows the researcher to understand how the study participants perceive their own experiences and the meanings they attach to those experiences.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) claim that qualitative methods can be used to better understand any phenomena about which little is yet known. In the context of this study, very little research has been carried out on the leadership practices of school principals working under the Universal secondary education policy environment. Strauss and Corbin (1990) also argue that a qualitative approach is a particularly potent approach

that can be used to gain new perspectives or more in-depth information on an area where information may be difficult to convey quantitatively or where quantitative measures cannot adequately describe or interpret a situation. Hence, one sound reason for using a qualitative case study approach in this study is the likelihood of producing better results in terms of both scope and quality (Hoepfl, 1997).

Sandelowski (2000) states that qualitative descriptive research designs are suitable when straight description of phenomena is desired and when the goal of the research is a comprehensive description of events in the everyday reality of the research participants. Sandelowski (2000) further asserts that qualitative descriptive case study designs are "amenable to obtaining straight answers to questions of special relevance to practitioners and policy-makers" (p.337). Descriptive qualitative research is also useful to build on exploratory research, especially when there exists little research in a particular area. The fact that principals' perceptions of USE and its relationship to their leadership practices have not been extensively studied allows the application of this method to gain insights into the daily experiences of Vincentian school principals.

In this study, I believe that such an approach is justified on the grounds that the majority of the key informants involved in the study have worked for an extended period of time in the educational system, have had varying experiences in the implementation and execution of the USE policy, possess first-hand experiences of the challenges encountered in promoting the policy and are in the position to provide enlightenment on the practices that they have found effective or ineffective in executing the policy. Consequently, given the nature of the research questions and the privileged position of the principals to provide deep insights into the phenomena under study, a qualitative case study approach using the voices and perspectives of the key participants appears to be the most productive and illuminating avenue for research compared to other possible methods of research such as questionnaires or other quantitative pathways.

3.5   Using Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviewing is one of the prevailing data collection techniques associated with qualitative case study enquiry. Hoepfl (1997) tells us qualitative interviews may be used

as the primary strategy for data collection or in conjunction with observations, document analysis and other techniques. According to Patton (1990), qualitative interviewing utilizes open-ended questions for individual variations. He also mentions three types of qualitative interviews: 1) informal, conversational interviews 2) semi-structured interviews and 3) standard, open-ended interviews.

This particular case study employed in-depth semi-structured interviews, involving a mix of structured and open-ended questions. In-depth interviews assume that the individuals involved have unique knowledge of the phenomena or situation being investigated (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006). Generally, in-depth interviews are particularly useful for gathering a variety of data about a topic. In-depth interviews focus on rich, detailed descriptions of the experience of the participants and may be structured, semi-structured or open-ended (Bloomberg & Volpe 2008). This model of qualitative interviewing is more flexible and has greater potential for yielding information that would not be gleaned from more structured forms of data collection such as surveys or structured interviews. The use of semi-structured interviews has been wide-spread as evidenced by the range of studies that have made carried out through this modality.

Several researchers have studied the instructional and managerial practices of school principals through the medium of semi-structured or in-depth interviewing techniques. Mohd Nor, Pihie & Ali (2008) employed qualitative in-depth interviews to study the leadership practices of rural principals in excellent, average and poor schools in Malaysia. From their study, they found that principals emphasized three main instructional leadership practices. These included improving the teaching and learning programmes, enhancing school culture and networking.

Qualitative case studies employing semi-structured interviews have also been used to examine female leadership practices in China (Zhong and Ehrich, 2010). In Tanzania, Ombok and Oyoo (2011) used a narrative inquiry approach based on administering a number of semi-structured interviews to study how female head teachers experienced leadership in schools and the challenges they experienced in striving for effective performance in school management and administration. Semi-structured interviews have also been employed to study the instructional leadership roles of Turkish

school principals (Yavuz and Bas, 2010) and the professional experiences of male and female principals in Greece (Brinia, 2012).

Other researchers have used semi-structured interviews to study the effective leadership practices of school principals through the eyes of other stakeholders. Schafer (2004) studied the leadership practices of a Catholic School principal in New South Wales using semi-structured interviews with teachers and other stakeholders. Similarly, Murdoch (2002) used semi-structured interviews to study the issues, challenges and concerns of private primary school principals in New South Wales and found the technique very effective in trying to understand the realities of the work practices of principals involved in teaching as well as administrative duties.

Salfi (2011) employed a similar approach in studying the successful leadership practices for school improvement with a cross-section of Pakistani secondary school principals. These studies all provided useful insights into the strategies that school principals used in exercising instructional leadership and the management of day to day activities in their schools. The effectiveness of using semi-structured interviews as a research strategy has been highlighted by Davis (2005) who describes semi-structured interviews as the construction of human and social knowledge grounded in the reality of the informants, which provides insight into reality of people in the research situation. Davis (2005) views this approach as a good way of studying effective educational leadership skills.

In summary, semi-structured interviews have been widely used to examine the managerial and instructional leadership practices of principals from a broad base of varying perspectives and have been a useful investigative tool in eliciting useful information into the leadership and management practices of school principals.

3.6 Research that Used Semi-Structured Interviews to Study Policy Implementation

Semi-structured interviews have also been utilized in a number of settings to study policy implementation. In the domain of principal leadership, Deek (2006) used

qualitative case study research methods through the modality of semi-structured interviews to study principals' reactions to the 2004 Texas school Nutrition Policy. Semi-structured interviews were used to elicit the views of twenty-three principals and one assistant principal in respect of the success of a new School Nutrition Policy.

Research conducted in England and China that examined the implementation of a policy of inclusive education in secondary schools utilized semi-structured interviews as the main vehicle for data collection. Thorpe and Shafial-Azam (2010) investigated teacher perceptions of inclusive education in two mainstream primary schools in England in order to give insight into the workings of the inclusion policy and inclusive practice in British primary schools. A similar study was conducted in Hong Kong by Hue (2012) who used semi-structured interviews and qualitative case study research methods to examine teachers' views on the policy of inclusivity in secondary schools in Hong Kong.

Stamler (2010) conducted research into policy-making and policy implementation using a qualitative case study research design. The study examined how the beliefs of district leaders in three urban school districts in Ohio shaped policy design and implementation in the schools districts under investigation. Data were collected via the administration of semi-structured interviews with district leaders and other policy informants. The outcomes from the analysis revealed an alignment between policy choices and district leaders' beliefs. The use of semi-structured interviews was an appropriate vehicle for eliciting the views of the districts leaders as determinants of the policy's design and implementation.

One good demonstration of the use of interview data in policy analysis and implementation was carried out by Alexiadou (2000) in a study of policy implementation in educational organizations in England. Based on her study of change within further education colleges carried out by managers and teachers in two English Further Education Colleges, Alexiadou (2000) provided a framework for de-constructing, interpreting and synthesizing interview data into accounts of policy implementation. Her paper constitutes a practical example of how semi-structured interviews and data

analysis could be used in researching policy implementation of the level of institutions through the actions of individual actors such as managers and teachers.

Qualitative case study research designs often focus on the need to build an ambiance of trust and respect between the researcher and the participants (Muijs, 2004). In addition to collecting data, the direct interviews with the principals presented an opportunity to focus on building rapport and establishing a climate of researcher and participants as collaborators on an issue of national importance to school principals and other stakeholders interested in the issues surrounding Universal Secondary Education.

The semi-structured interviews sought to collect descriptive information on the perceptions and experiences of principals working under USE. More importantly, these interviews included exploratory questions framed around the main research questions and were designed to delve more deeply into the issues; the leadership practices of secondary school principals. The interview phase therefore represented an opportunity for principals to provide insights into the leadership practices and behaviours that they found effective in dealing with the realities of educational policy change. Given the nature of the research questions that sought information on principals' insight into the challenges they face under USE and the leadership strategies they used in dealing with these challenges, it was deemed by this researcher that qualitative semi-structured interviews would provide the most appropriate avenue for answering such questions (Braun & Clarke 2006; Hewitt & Cramer, 2008)

3.7   Participants and Setting

The population for this study is comprised of all the principals of secondary schools operating under universal secondary education in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. There are 26 secondary schools in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 19 of which are wholly government-owned while the remaining 7 are either government-assisted or privately-owned. The total secondary school student population at the end of 2012 stood at 10,419 students as shown in Appendix L. Appendix L provides the growth rates of the secondary school population from 1995 to 2012. Traditionally, secondary schools in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines fall into two distinct categories, older

established secondary schools and newer secondary schools. There are four traditional academically oriented grammar schools that receive those students with the highest achievement scores on the Common Entrance Examination, which is the bench-mark used for admission into secondary schools. These schools are also located in the urban district of Kingstown.

Additionally, there are four other secondary schools of lower prestige situated in the urban area. The remaining 18 schools are distributed throughout the three rural administrative districts. These schools are primarily the recipients of the student population that had lower achievement scores on the Common Entrance transitional examinations. To ensure a balanced representation of all schools, all secondary schools were included in the sample thereby allowing representation from the high achieving secondary schools as well as the lower performing secondary schools. The schools included in the investigation reflect a mix of rural, semi-urban and urban schools and should result in a comprehensive representation of principals from the various types of schools and districts that have adopted the USE policy.

In this qualitative case study, a total of 26 secondary school principals were invited to participate in an in-depth interview on the impact of USE on the instructional leadership and managerial practices of school principals as well principals' perceptions of the challenges encountered while working under the conditions brought about by the implementation of USE.

Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend three fundamental criteria for the selection of a good sample in qualitative research. In this study of Vincentian school principals, one criterion for selection is the fact that the principals are in a position to provide rich and comprehensive data to answer the research questions and sub-questions posed. This is in keeping with Miles and Huberman (1994) who recommend that "the sample should be likely to generate rich information on the type of phenomena that need to be studied" (p.34). The principals in this study clearly meet the requirement of being appropriate informants based on their knowledge, understanding and experiences of the Universal Secondary Education policy.

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Miles and Huberman (1994) also indicated that the participants in the study should be able to provide believable descriptions of the phenomena experienced. The subjects in this study are all secondary school principals and are representative of a range of experience, background, school type, diversity of student population and communities. These criteria therefore enabled them to provide credible insights in the workings of the policy and on their own leadership practices.

As part of the initial data collection plan, a letter of invitation to participate in the study was sent to all the principals of the secondary schools in operation throughout the country. I envisaged that the inclusion of all school principals would provide a comprehensive range of views that should help to boost the credibility of the study findings as well as provide a wealth of data that would provide answers to the research questions under examination. Through the process of comprehensive inclusion of principals from all the school districts, the likelihood of a more comprehensive sample should result in greater trustworthiness and more credible findings as envisaged by Miles and Huberman (1994) who advocated choosing a sample that would help to improve the generalizability of the study findings.

3.8   Interview Protocol

Interviews were conducted over a two-week period during the months of May and June, 2012. The interview protocol questions were developed based on the review of literature on principal leadership practices and on the theoretical framework based on Grissom and Loeb (2009) and the review of the literature on the policy Universal Access to Secondary Education.   The interview protocol (Appendix A) was finalized based on the main research questions and was reviewed before final administration to the principals.

The interview protocol was piloted using the services of two past secondary principals, one that managed a top-performing elite school during the initial years of USE implementation and a counterpart from a rural, low SES secondary school that had also

experienced the move towards USE. The purpose of this piloting phase was to test the adequacy and appropriateness of the questions and to ensure that they were applicable to the context of USE in the various school districts. Additionally, Knox and Burkard (2009) recommend the use of the pilot interview as a good practice for further refinement of the interview questions. Following the testing of the interview questions, minor adjustments were made in the wording of a few questions. The testing provided an opportunity to gauge the length of the interviews as well as to anticipate possible issues that may have arisen during the administration of the instrument.

In addition to the interview questions, the first part of the protocol was devoted to the collection of demographic data of the schools as well as of the participants. The school factors included size of school. School size is based on the student population and for the purpose of this study, schools have been categorized as small schools (population of 400 or fewer students) and large schools (populations in excess of 400 students). This classification is based on the Ministry of Education enrolment statistics for 2011-2012 and is included in Appendix M. Schools have also been categorized as wholly–owned government schools and Government-assisted schools Seven secondary schools are currently designated as Assisted Secondary schools, while 19 secondary schools are wholly-government owned (Ministry of Education Statistical Digest, 2012) The analysis also included schools that have been classified as traditional high-achieving schools and newer secondary schools with lower levels of student achievement. School classification is based on the performance of secondary students on the external CSEC examinations for the period 2001-2011 and can be found in Appendix N.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, there is a direct correlation between the salary scale and years of experience. Principals reach the top of the salary scale after five years in the position and are considered experienced principals once this benchmark is attained. (Government of Saint Vincent Estimates of Revenues and Expenditure, 2012). Based on this classification, for this study, principals' demographic characteristics included years of experience in the principalship and years at the current school. Principals with less than five years' experience are categorized as inexperienced principals, while those with five or more years of experience are denominated

experienced principals. Gender of principal is the other demographic indicator of note used in the analysis of the results.

3.8.1   Development of the Interview Protocol

The interview protocol (Appendix A) was developed with the aim of linking the underlying instructional and managerial leadership practices theories from the review of literature with more specific interview questions designed to elicit the views of the secondary school principals on various aspects of the instructional and managerial challenges experienced in their work settings as well as the different leadership practices and strategies they have been using to respond to the perceived or identified instructional and managerial goals of their institutions. The following tables have been developed from the research literature. A total of twenty-four questions were identified and linked to the two main research questions and the four subsidiary research questions that undergird the study. Table 3.1 below shows the relationship between the research questions and the corresponding interview questions.

Table 3.1   Research questions-interview questions matrix

Related Research questions/Sub-questions	Interview questions
Research question 1 (1) What are the specific managerial and instructional leadership challenges that principals face in implementing the policy of Universal Secondary Education?	Describe some of the managerial challenges that you have had to deal with as you have worked under the policy of Universal Secondary Education. What are the instructional challenges that you have had to deal with in shaping the learning climate in your school in working under the policy of

	USE?
	How is the staff of your school organized?
	What are the responsibilities of each role with regard to implementation of USE?
	How did their roles change as a result of the implementation of USE?
Research Sub-questions (i), (ii), (iii) (iv)	How have your roles and responsibilities as a principal changed since the implementation of the policy of Universal Secondary Education?
	Has the composition of the student body in this school changed since USE? Can you provide some concrete details?

Related Research questions/Sub-questions	Interview questions
Research question 2 What managerial and instructional leadership practices have principals employed to deal with demands of Universal Secondary Education?	Can you describe some of the strategies that you have been using to manage the instructional programme of your school?
Research question 2 Research Sub-questions (i), (ii), (iii) (iv)	Can you provide some insight in to your programme for the professional development of teachers?
	What strategies do you employ to create an effective learning climate in

	your school?
	Can you give me an overview of your relationship with the Ministry of Education and other external agencies affiliated to the school?
Research question 2	Have these strategies changed since implementation?
	What instructional and curricular approaches have you used to deal with the change in the diversity of the student population under USE?
	How do you use assessment and evaluation data?
	Can you give me some insight into the approaches you have been using to manage staff relations and other school personnel?
	What approaches do you use to deal with non-academic student issues (such as student discipline, student welfare & support services etc.) at your school?

Interview questions	
Related Research questions/Sub-questions	
Research question 2	How would you describe your approach to instructional leadership and management?
	Do you ascribe to a particular leadership theory?
	Do you have programs or activities in place to create family and community involvement in your school? Can you describe them?

	How do you manage interpersonal relations between staff members?
	Can you give me some examples of how you manage relations between staff and students?
	How do you employ the resources of your school to optimize the teaching and learning objectives of your school's programme?
	What measures have you taken to ensure a safe school environment?
	What links do you see between your instructional and managerial strategies and student outcomes?
Research question 1 **Research question 2** Sub-questions (i), (ii), (iii), (iv)	Are there any other issues that you would like me to know about in relation to instructional leadership and school management at this institution?

In the development of the interview protocol, it is important to link the research questions to the underlying leadership theory and the relevant research literature in order to ensure that the research questions are grounded in theory and to ensure that the information elicited from the principals is related to their experience as well as to leadership practices identified in the literature. Table 3.2 below presents a graphic snapshot of the linkage between each interview question and the related instructional leadership theory, managerial leadership theory or the literature source informing the development of the research question used to elicit the key data sought from the respondents. These relationships are shown below.

Table 3.2   Derivation of interview questions

Theory/ Literature Source	Interview questions
Managerial Theory 1- Grissom and Loeb (2009) -Triangulating Principal Effectiveness	1. Describe some of the managerial challenges that you have had to deal with as you have worked under the policy of Universal Secondary Education.
OECD (2007) Leadership Development for Schools	2. What are the instructional challenges that you have had to deal with in shaping the learning climate in your school in working under the policy of USE?
OECD (2007) Leadership Development for Schools	3. How have your roles and responsibilities as a principal changed since the implementation of the policy of Universal secondary Education?
Managerial Theory 2 Yukl's (1998) Taxonomy of Managerial Behaviours	4. How is the staff of your school organized?
King (2009) Leacock (2009)	5. What are the responsibilities of each role with regard to implementation of USE?
King (2009) Leacock (2009)	6. How did their roles change as a result of the implementation of USE?
Instructional Leadership Theory 1 Leithwood et al. (2009) Core Leadership Practices. Instructional Leadership Theory 2 Hallinger's (2003) Model of Instructional Leadership. Instructional Leadership Theory 3 -Waters et al. (2005) Meta-analysis.	7. Can you describe some of the strategies that you have been using to manage the instructional programme of your school?
Theory/ Literature Source	**Interview questions**
Waters et al. (2005) Meta-analysis Hallinger's (2003) Model of Instructional leadership	8. Can you provide some insight in to your programme for the professional development of teachers?
Leithwood et al. (2009) Core leadership Practices Hallinger's (2003) Model of Instructional Leadership Waters et al. (2005) Meta-analysis	9. What strategies do you employ to create an effective learning climate in your school?
Leacock (2009)	10. Have these strategies changed since implementation?

Leacock (2009)	11. Has the composition of the student body in this school changed since USE? Can you provide some concrete details?
King (2009) Leacock (2009)	12. What instructional and curricular approaches have you used to deal with the change in the diversity of the student population under USE?
Marks and Printy (2003) Integrated Leadership Approach. Grissom and Loeb (2009) Triangulating Principal Effectiveness.	13. How do you use assessment and evaluation data?
Grissom and Loeb (2009) Triangulating Principal Effectiveness	14. Can you give me some insight into the approaches you have been using to manage staff relations and other school personnel?
Grissom and Loeb (2009) Triangulating Principal Effectiveness	15. What approaches do you use to deal with non-academic student issues (such as student discipline, student welfare & support services etc.) at your school?
Bush (2003, 2007) Theories of Educational Management.	16. How would you describe your approach to instructional leadership and management? Do you ascribe to a particular leadership theory?
Leithwood et al. (2009) Core leadership practices Waters et al. (2005) Meta-analysis	17. Do you have programs or activities in place to create family and community involvement in your school? Can you describe them?
Grissom and Loeb (2009) Yukl (1998) Taxonomy of Managerial behaviours	18. How do you manage interpersonal relations between staff members?
Theory/ Literature Source	**Interview questions**
Grissom and Loeb (2009) Yukl's (1998) Taxonomy of Managerial behaviours	19. Can you give me some examples of how you manage relations between staff and students?
Leithwood et al. (2009) Core leadership Practices Cotton (2003) meta-analysis	20. How do you employ the resources of your school to optimize the teaching and learning objectives of your school's programme?
Grissom and Loeb (2009) Yukl's (1998) Taxonomy of Managerial Behaviours	21. Can you give me an overview of your relationship with the Ministry of Education and other external agencies affiliated to the school?

Cotton (2003) Meta-analysis	22. What measures have you taken to ensure a safe school environment?
Cotton (2003) Meta-analysis Grissom and Loeb (2009) Triangulating Principal Effectiveness	23. What links do you see between your instructional and managerial strategies and student outcomes?
Grissom and Loeb (2009) Leithwood et al. (2009) Core Leadership Practices. Hallinger's Model of Instructional Leadership Waters et al. (2005) Meta-analysis Cotton (2003) Meta-analysis	24. Are there any other issues that you would like me to know about in relation to instructional leadership and school management at this institution?

To provide a more succinct and concise picture of the relationship between the theory base and the twenty- four research questions, the following matrix provides a summary of the various key theories and the interview questions derived from the application of those theories and the relevant sources of literature.

Table 3.3   Interview questions theories and literature matrix

Instructional Leadership Theories		Managerial Leadership Theories		Other Literature Sources	
Instructional Theory	Interview Questions	Managerial Theory	Interview Questions	Literature Source	Interview Questions
1 Leithwood et al. (2009)	7,9,17,24	1 Grissom & Loeb (2009)	1,13,14,15,18,19,21,23	1 OECD (2007)	2,3,24
2 Hallinger (2005)	7,9,24	2 Yukl (1998)	4,18,21	2 King (2009)	5,6,12,24
3 Waters et al. (2005)	8,9,17,24	3 Bush (2003)	16	3 Leacock (2009)	5,6,10,11, 12,24
4 Marks & Printy (2003)	13,24	4 Cotton (2003)	22,23		

3.9   Data Collection

Formal data collection for this study began during the month of May 2012. Prior to the commencement of field work a series of mechanisms had to be put in motion to ensure that the data collection phase was executed within the approved guidelines set by the Office of Research Ethics at Simon Fraser University and within the guidelines set by the Ministry of Education of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for the conduct of research with human subjects.

To comply with these requirements and to ensure the smooth execution of the research process a formal letter requesting permission to conduct research in the secondary schools in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was drafted and sent for approval to the Chief Education Officer at the Ministry of Education, Kingstown on April 17, 2012. A copy of this letter can be found in Appendix B.

 A subsequent email from the Chief Education Office on May 9, 2012 indicated her willingness to write the letter of approval and authorization to enable the commencement of the field work. This was followed by a formal letter of authorization in which permission was granted to carry out the field work according to the procedures stipulated in the letter of application. A copy of the official letter of approval from the Chief Education which was issued on April 19, 2012, can be located in the Appendix C to the study. The receipt of this letter represented the penultimate phase in the approval

process for research clearance from the Office of Ethics Research. On receipt of this final document by the Office of Research Ethics on May 17, 2012, formal approval to conduct the study was granted through a letter issued by Dr. Hal Weinberg, the Director of the Office of Research Ethics at Simon Fraser University. The official ethics approval letter granting such permission has also been included in the Ethics Approval page in the prelude to the study.

Once clearance for the study had been secured from the Office of Research Ethics, an email was sent to all principals of the secondary schools containing an attached letter to the principals which can be found in the Appendix F to the study. The email was also accompanied by the interview protocol and by the consent form (Appendix E). These documents provided a detailed explanation of the study, its objectives and the expected roles of the principals in the execution of the research. The email also asked principals for confirmation of their willingness to participate in the research and to designate a convenient time and suitable venue for the completion of the interview. Only two principals responded by return email to this request. One principal indicated her willingness to participate in the study and requested a follow-up telephone call to the school to finalize the date and time of the interview. The other response indicated that the principal was tentatively willing to provide the interview. However, further clarification of the purpose of the study was requested since in the opinion of that principal the study was more appropriate for schools where there were severe literacy problems rather than at that school where the students had all placed highly on the Common Entrance Exam. Further clarification was made to this principal that purpose of the study was to examine the leadership practices of all school principals irrespective of the academic performance or background of the student population.

This initial low response rate resulted in a change of strategy for contacting the principals and using the schools and principals contact information provided by the MOE, I made a series of telephone calls to each of the principals to finalize arrangements for the interviews. This approach proved to have a greater rate of success. Most of the principals acknowledged that they had received the communication that had been sent to them by electronic mail and by circular through the courtesies of the MOE. Arrangements for interviews were therefore established with the respective

principals as shown in the attached schedule of principal interviews located in the appendix G to the study. Collection of data proceeded fairly smoothly once these logistical arrangements were worked out. In the final analysis, a total of 22 principals completed face to face interviews. Two principals chose to write in responses to the interview questionnaires because of difficulties in their scheduling that prevented an interview in person. The brevity of these written responses did not allow for in-depth analysis and as a consequence, I decided to exclude them from the analysis since they did not provide the wealth of information captured in the face-to-face interviews and were not in harmony with the main data collection methods employed in the study. The other two principals did not show an interest in granting interviews and in keeping with the process of providing voluntary consent, were deemed non-participants in the study.

3.9.1   An Overview of the Data Collection Experience

In carrying out research of this nature, the issue of gaining entry to the research site and the research participants is a major consideration to the success or failure of the research effort. In this particular study, gaining entry to the field was greatly facilitated by the assistance provided by the administrative personnel at the Ministry of Education in Saint Vincent. This researcher did not encounter many obstacles in gaining access to the secondary schools or to the key informants earmarked for data collection. The Chief Education Officer assisted in the process by sending a general letter in the form of a circular to all active principals of the 26 secondary schools selected for the research. The letter served as official notification that permission had been granted to conduct the study under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. Principals were encouraged to give their support and collaboration to the research effort.

Logistical support was also offered by the Ministry of Education through the collaborative efforts of the Education Officer responsible for secondary schools. This individual provided a complete and comprehensive list of the contact information of the schools in terms of email addresses and telephone numbers. This information proved to be particularly useful in helping to arrange the specific dates and times for the interviews with the respective principals on an individual basis and at times convenient to each respondent. Through the auspices of the Ministry of Education, I was granted an

impromptu opportunity to deliver a brief presentation of the research before a gathering of school principals during their regular scheduled monthly meeting between officials of the Ministry and the principals. This fortuitous opportunity allowed me to present a brief synopsis of the objectives of the study and to ask for the collaboration of the principals in the research exercise. I was able to highlight the importance of the study and used the opportunity to answer brief questions from the audience in relation to portions of the study on which they needed further enlightenment and clarification. The exercise provided an opportunity to build rapport with many of the principals as well as to lay the groundwork for a smoother entry into the research site.

The data collection exercise was reasonably successful as the majority of principals was generally accommodating and expressed an interest in the study. A large proportion of the participants felt that the research was timely and relevant in the current context of the USE policy and many expressed the desire to be apprised of the results when the final report of the study became available. The data collection exercise commenced during the second to last week in May and lasted for a period of six weeks culminating the last week of June, shortly before the end of the school year and before the busy period of graduation and promotional meetings in which all principals were involved. The timing of the interviews was also appropriate as many of the principals had short periods of downtime during the schools' end of year examinations that allowed them to accommodate me into the generally hectic schedules. Overall, the interviews were between fifty to seventy-five minutes duration.

In summary, data collection for this study evolved comparatively smoothly due in large measure to the collaboration of the Ministry of Education and the cooperation of the majority of school principals. Once the logistical hurdles of arrangement of times and venues were cleared, interviews were carried out at the offices of the various principals. These were audio-taped using an Olympus VN 5000 digital recording device and were transcribed at the conclusion of the interviews either on the same day or the following day. The willingness of the principals to share their leadership and managerial experiences under USE was a key highlight of the data-gathering exercise. The next section focuses on the approach taken for data analysis and data presentation.

3.10 Data Analysis

The purpose of this research is to elicit the perceptions and evaluations of Vincentian secondary school principals on the leadership practices and behaviours that they have used to ensure the effective running of their schools in a period of educational change and innovation brought about through the institutionalization of the policy of Universal Secondary Education The collection of data was based on the use of a semi-structured interview protocol administered face-to-face with a wide cross-section of principals working in the secondary education system of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

This section of the study is devoted to the analysis of the views of the school principals involved in the data collection phase of the study. Lapan & Quartaroli (2009) describe qualitative interview data analysis as "the process of moving from raw interviews to evidence-based interpretations. Analysis entails classifying, comparing, weighing and combining original material to extract meaning and implications, reveal patterns, or stitch together descriptions of events and processes into a coherent narrative" (p. 260). Raeder (2007) describes four major steps in the analysis and presentation of qualitative data. These steps include (a) preparation of the data (b) the development of codes and categories (c) completion and revision of the system of codes and categories based on the data and (d) reporting the results of the data analysis.

Data analysis for this study was carried out in a number of sequential steps. In stage one, on completion of the interview, transcription of each interview was carried out the same day the interview was held. Transcription represents a vital stage in the analysis of much qualitative data and allows the researcher to become familiar with the data (Hewitt and Cramer, 2008). I systematically analyzed each interview by thoroughly reading through each transcript. A combination of inductive and deductive content analysis was employed to make sense of the data collected from the principals.

Data analysis primarily involved the use of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis focuses on the identification of themes from an in-depth reading and re-reading of the raw interview data (Fereday and Muir-Cochran (2006). Attride-Stirling (2001) suggests that coding be done based on the theoretical interests guiding the research questions or

on the basis of salient issues that arise from the text or from an integration of both approaches.   For this study, a hybrid approach to data analysis was used.

Research question 1 focused on the types of challenges the principals are confronted with in their quest to execute the policy of Universal Secondary Education. Bottom up, open coding was used in this phase in order to identify the key concepts and categories embedded in the interview data. This inductive phase of the data analysis began with a thorough reading and re-reading of the interview transcripts. The key concepts that were related to the research questions were highlighted and grouped together in a word document created for initial coding of the data. Using the technique of repeated occurrences and repeated strategies and practices suggested by Lapan and Quartaroli (2009), I identified common concepts from the collection of transcripts to create a number of categories and sub-categories. The final organizing themes were derived from further analysis and refinement of the identified categories.

The derivation of the various codes and categories from the raw data is exemplified in the following table:

Table 3.4   Sample derivation of categories and themes from key data extracts for research question 1

Data excerpts	Condensed meanings/Categories	Themes
You also have to deal with students with low self-esteem, they are not motivated, students with low literacy and numeracy, low reading levels you have to deal with those students, so it is difficult for you to come up with programs and even though you come up with programs, it is difficult for you to implement programs to be able to solve all of the problems.	Psychological student issues: Low student motivation; Low self esteem Students with academic deficiencies Program implementation difficulties	Student-related Challenges Instructional Challenges

Data excerpts	Condensed meanings/Categories	Themes
Let me first just say that the whole process of Universal secondary education was thrust upon us. We had no choice in that sense. It was something that was just introduced and it brought along a number of challenges. Among them first being…….Well, in reference to my school, is where we had a number of students maybe about 70-80% of the students that were reading below their age level and reading was a major problem. The inability of students to read was a major problem. And so as administration and staff we had to be very innovative in trying to deal with those problems that arose... so we had first of all to adjust the curriculum, even though I might say that USE access is a good thing in itself.	Top-down policy implementation Reading challenges Innovative pedagogical strategies Curricular adjustments	Administrative challenges Instructional challenges Creative Instructional Practices
One of the things we are trying here is personnel development We are sensitizing teachers to the need for inclusion and that students should be included and so on. Well, it is something to let the teachers know that they should buy into. The students are there already and we have to do something with them. We cannot throw our hands up into the air. I have taken our HOD's on board to monitor the lessons, because one of the things that we figured too is whenever another	Teacher development Student welfare Inclusion Sharing of responsibilities with middle management Improving student behaviour	Instructional Leadership Practice

mature teacher is in the form, the students behave well.		

Based on an analysis of the semi-structured interviews and using the system of open coding developed for this analysis and taking into consideration the identified themes and sub-themes, the   presentation is organized along five principal sections. These sections contain the main themes and sub-themes identified from the principals' responses to the semi-structured interview. These include (1) Student Achievement and Student Management challenges (2) Teacher and staff-related challenges (3) Parents and Community related challenges (4) School System-related challenges and (5) Eclectic or other challenges faced by school principals. These broad themes were then reduced to specific subcategories. This further breakdown into themes and sub-themes is included in Chapter 4 of the data analysis section.

For the main research question 2, I decided to analyze the transcripts based the analytical model of Grissom and Loeb (2009) that contains a structuring framework to carry out the analysis. The Grissom and Loeb (2009) theoretical framework, which provided the foundation for the study contained five a priori categories and concepts that encompassed a range of constructs on effective principal leadership practices, thereby forming an appropriate analytical base for this research question. However, on account of the specificity of context and the absence of a complete framework to address the issues of principal leadership under Universal Secondary Education, those novel themes that did not fit into the classification from the Grissom and Loeb (2009) Framework were assessed inductively and new categories created for the analysis.

The table below provides an overview of the various a priori categories of leadership practices and tasks contained in the analytical framework designed by Grissom and Loeb (2009) to investigate the instructional leadership and managerial behaviours of school principals. As a general rule, the key themes identified by Grissom and Loeb (2009) have been kept intact. However, additional themes emerging from the data and specific to the leadership practices of principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have been added as the need arose. For example, in addition to the five

existing themes of instructional management, internal relations, organization management, administration and external relations, a further theme labelled "Other significant principal leadership practices were incorporated into the thematic framework to complete the data analysis.

Table 3.5   **Dimensions of Principals' instructional leadership and managerial practices**

Themes	Sub-factors
Instructional Management	Using data to inform instruction
	Developing a coherent educational program across the school
	Using assessment results for program evaluation
	Formally evaluating teachers and providing instructional feedback
	Classroom observations
	Utilizing school meetings to enhance school goals
	Planning professional development for teachers
	Implementing professional development for teachers
	Evaluating curriculum
	Directing supplementary after-school instruction
	Releasing/Counselling teachers
Internal Relations	Developing relationships with students
	Communicating with parents
	Attending school activities (e.g. sports events)
	Counselling students or parents
	Counselling staff about conflicts with other staff members
	Informally talking to teachers about students

Interacting socially with staff

Themes	Sub-factors
Organization Management	Developing a safe school environment
	Dealing with concerns from staff
	Managing budgets and resource
	Managing personal, school-related schedule
	Maintaining campus facilities
	Managing non-instructional staff
	Interacting/ Networking with other principals
Administration	Managing school schedules
	Managing student discipline
	Fulfilling compliance requirements and paperwork
	Managing student services (e.g. records, reporting)
	Supervising students
	Managing student attendance-related activities
	Fulfilling special education requirements
External Relations	Communicating with district to obtain resources
	Working with local community members/organizations
	Utilizing Ministry of Education communications to enhance goals
	Fundraising

Source: Grissom and Loeb (2009)

The table below is a representation of how the themes on principal instructional and managerial leadership practices were derived based on the categories and themes contained in the Grissom and Loeb (2009) theoretical framework.

Table 3.6   Sample derivation of categories and themes from key data extracts for research question 2

Data Extracts	Condensed meaning	Category	Theme
We had to adjust the curriculum. We had to tailor it to meet the needs of the students. We now added more sessions of English and also we had to introduce reading as a separate subject area. Reading had to be introduced as a new subject area.	- Curriculum Adjustments - Introduction of new subjects	- Developing a coherent educational program across the school	Instructional Management
We have a discipline policy and also we have strategies in place to improve the parents' abilities to educate their child. Whether it be by way of study habits, creating a good study environment and so on not only discipline but we want to reach the parents themselves.	- Discipline policy - Parent outreach programs	-Creating a safe school Environment -Communicating with parents	Internal Relations Practices
I think the MOE has been very supportive and we have a number of workshops and so forth. The literacy coordinators have been trained, workshops for principals to deal with instructional leadership, and how to face off with things.	- Support from the Ministry of Education - Training in literacy and instructional leadership	- Communicating with the district to obtain resources	External Relations practices

To summarize, Research Question 2 focuses on the various leadership and managerial strategies that Vincentian principals have been using to optimize or at least ensure the smooth running and operations of all facets of the school related to instruction and organizational management. The analysis of research question 2 is presented based on the set of prescribed pattern codes contained in the Grissom and Loeb Framework (2009) and in the literature review. In addition to this framework, any new and emerging conceptual themes or categories identified in the principals' responses are added to the overall the data analysis. These findings related to Research question 2 are organized under the following rubrics and highlight the main themes and sub-themes evolving from the data collected from the school principals: (1) Instructional management practices (2) Internal Relations practices (3) Administrative practices (4) Organizational practices (5) External relations strategies and practices and (6) Other significant leadership and management practices.

3.10.1 Data Analysis Procedures Summary

This section describes a detailed approach to the analysis of the interview data and the derivation of codes, sub-themes and themes. Each interview transcript was read through individually to get a general sense of the salient issues raised by each respondent. Each interview was also coded based on the demographic characteristics of gender, years of experience, location of the school, whether rural or urban and whether the principal was based at a high-performing school or a low-performing school. The themes were then derived using an inductive approach based on the data as advocated by Ryan and Russell (2003)

I read through each transcript several times in order to identify broad key statements used by each respondent. Having identified these key data elements, each key statement or phrase was entered into a word document separately for each participant. These broad key statement were then condensed into key phrases or sentences that summarized the meaning that the participant was seeking to convey. These key phrases were then cross-coordinated using all interview transcripts and further broken down into specific codes. Related codes were then categorized and placed under a specific related theme. For examples, Statements related to literacy and

numeracy such as students reading below their grade levels, students' inability to read, reading difficulties, problems with numeracy were all subsumed under the theme of Student Academic and management challenges.

Operations were also performed systematically for frequency of occurrence of each key phrase for each interview. Using the search facility in Microsoft Word, each key phrase was entered for frequency of occurrence and for relevance to the broad theme. Based on the criteria of relevance and frequency, each key phrase was counted for the number of times it occurred and for the number of participants who mentioned the key phrase. The summary of key phrases and their occurrence is shown at the beginning of each major theme in the two data chapters four. The main codes, their frequency of occurrence and the number of participants making reference to these codes have been summarized in an Excel spreadsheet and can be found in Appendix H.

Using a combination of inductive and deductive approaches (Ryan and Russell, 2003), thematic analysis for Chapter 5 employed a mixture of a priori themes from the Grissom and Loeb Framework as well as inductive derivation of themes from the reading of the interviews. The Grissom and Loeb Framework was the main organizing vehicle for this section of the analysis. Again, individual transcripts were read and colour-coded on a word document. These were compared to the Grissom and Loeb categorizations. Using the same procedure of initial identification of broad key statements, these were further condensed into specific codes and compared for congruence with Grissom and Loeb. Corresponding codes were then entered under the themes of Instructional leadership and management practices, Internal Relations practices, Organizational and administrative Practices and External Relations. In some instances, certain themes were assigned different names due to context-specificity. However, appropriateness and relevance of the code dictated its inclusion under a particular sub-set of the Grissom and Loeb (2009) Framework. Frequency of occurrence of the theme and number of principals mentioning the theme were also included in the introductory table that preceded the detailed analysis. An Excel Spreadsheet located in Appendix I shows the full breakdown of the analysis in terms of frequency of mention of the code by participant.

In summary, the data analysis was carried out in relation to each of the two main research questions. The various emergent themes were categorized and presented. Chapter four and Chapter five of the dissertation manuscript include a detailed analysis and presentation of the data using the salient themes identified.

3.11 Ethical Issues

In this study, it is recognized that the protection of the welfare of the study participants is of paramount importance and the necessary procedures were implemented to ensure that these ethical concerns were properly addressed. Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey (2005) emphasize the need to address the confidentiality, autonomy and the anonymity of all human research subjects through the processes of informed consent, authorization and ethics approval through the competent ethical review committees or boards.

In this study, every effort was made to ensure adherence to these ethical guidelines. Written permission was sought for conduct of the study through the University's ethics research committee and through the Ministry of Education of Saint Vincent to carry out the field work in the school system. The principals selected for the study were duly informed of the study's aims and objectives and the written consent was sought prior to the commencement of the interviews. All participants were apprised of the voluntary nature of participating in the interviews and the option for withdrawal was made available to any subject who no longer wished to continue participating in the research exercise.

Protecting the identity of all research participants was a priority in this study. To ensure that no participant could be identified from the study, I developed a system of coding where random numbers were assigned to each interview. This system of numbering was applied without giving any indication as to the type of school, location of the school or the gender of the respondent. This system therefore made it difficult to identify the principal or the school represented in the data collection process. In addition, great care was taken to ensure that names and other school identifiers were excluded

from the verbatim quotations used for illustrative support. In the analysis, each respondent was assigned a pseudonym as a further layer of identity protection.

The integrity of the data was maintained through storage of the collected data in a locked filing cabinet at my home. Computer files used for data transcription were also securely stored in a locked filing cabinet. Password encryption was used on my personal computer to ensure that the data were not accessible to outside parties.

Data collection was carried through the use of audio files and supporting field notes. The digital recorder used for recording the data was also securely locked away in a secure filing cabinet at my home. Additionally, all audio and data files were password protected and their access has been restricted exclusively to me. Finally, all participants were given the opportunity to check the accuracy of the data provided by reviewing the study before its submission.

3.12 Role of the Researcher

The impetus for undertaking investigative study into the area of principal leadership and the policy of Universal Secondary Education came initially from my own role as a deputy principal working in the school system of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Having worked as a class room teacher, head of department and as a deputy principal for a number of years, several opportunities became available for me to observe firsthand the changes that had been taking place throughout the education system.

My first experience with the policy of Universal Secondary Education came about shortly after the policy had been introduced to the schools. At that time, I was employed as a graduate teacher at a high-performing school. I remembered the policy was suddenly introduced and I was aware that the school principals had been apprised of the policy through a principals' meeting. Based on my recollections, the policy was explained to the staff by the principal at the monthly staff meeting. The onus therefore fell on the principals to explain and sell the policy to the teaching staff. That initial period was

characterized by much uncertainty and lack of clarity as many changes were instituted at the system and building levels.

From a research perspective, I was curious to know the extent to which principals were able to adjust to these novel changes. These policy decisions undoubtedly required a series of adaptations and innovations by school principals. Based on these observations, I believed there arose the need to investigate in some depth how principals saw their changed roles and what cognitive adaptations they were constrained to make in a changed school and policy environment.

It was therefore important to learn more about the underlying forces that impacted on the leadership roles, behaviours and practices of the school principals working in the education system. As a practicing educator, I was granted permission to carry out the research and to access the research site and participants with minimum "red tape". This was accordance with the research protocols established by the Ministry of Education in its thrust to encourage on-going, action researcher by teachers and other researchers. Additionally, and I had a professional relationship with some of the participants. This facilitated entry to the field of study and access to some of the key informants who are well positioned to provide insights into the policy and its impact on their leadership approaches.

In the same vein, it is important for me to acknowledge that my own biases, preconceptions and experiences may have negative or positive ramifications for my own perceptions of the situation and there always exists the possibility of subjective interpretations of reality in such situations. My aim was to maintain a level of objectivity by reducing or eliminating such possible threats to the trustworthiness of the study by designing the study in a way to minimize possible biases. It is hoped that through a professional approach and objective approach to data collection, and through careful presentation and transparent data analysis that the issue of subjectivity was minimized, if not completely eliminated.

3.13 Trustworthiness

Twycross and Shields (2004) affirm that the foundations of good and rigorous research are underpinned by reliability and validity. In qualitative case-study research, these concepts are best exemplified through the avenue of trustworthiness. Cope (2014) and Houghton, Casey, Shaw and Murphy (2013) emphasize that "the perspectives of qualitative research are credibility and trustworthiness" (p.12). JeanFrau and Jack (2010) further define trustworthiness as the "truth value of the study's findings or how accurately the investigator interprets the participants' experiences "(p. 7). Sandelowski (1993) defines trustworthiness as "a matter of persuasion" through which "the scientist makes his practices visible and therefore auditable" (p.2). The overarching aim of trustworthiness is to ensure that" rigour in qualitative studies is established through the study's confirmability or auditability, credibility and transferability" (p.620) (JeanFrau and Jack, 2010).

In highlighting the importance of trustworthiness in qualitative case-study research, Williams and Morrow (2009) suggest that all qualitative researchers should attend to "integrity of data, balance between reflexivity and subjectivity and clear communication of findings". Based on the recommendations contained in these authoritative writings, this study sought to ensure that the basic tenets of trustworthiness including dependability and confirmability were fully integrated into the research design. As a consequence, a number of measures were taken to establish the trustworthiness for the instruments used to collect data as well as to ensure a certain degree of rigour in the data collection and analysis processes.

Trustworthiness in this study was achieved mainly through the use of respondent validation as advocated by Bryman (2004) and Hairston (2000). Bryman (2004) strongly recommends that researchers pay attention to respondent validation or member checking as a way to guarantee the trustworthiness of qualitative case study research findings. In keeping with this guideline, I reported the findings of the study to the principals involved in the research effort as well as provided a copy of the interview transcript to each participant in order to confirm the accuracy of the interview data.

Participants were given the opportunity to revise the data, and three principals exercised that option.

It is also necessary to constrain researcher bias as an integral part of the validation process when interpreting qualitative data. Gubrium and Holstein (2001) recommend that this be carried out through the process of transcript checking. To this end, copies of transcripts were emailed to participants for validation and in cases where there was need for greater clarity of statements made on the interviews, follow-up emails or phone were made to ensure clarification of unclear issues. Four participants were contacted for further clarification and all of them responded positively to this request. The use of participant validation through transcript checking and respondent validation in this study helped to reduce researcher bias as well as providing an independent verification of the accuracy of the collected data.

In research of a qualitative nature, it is important to establish the dependability of the research procedures. Dependability implies that there is consistency in the data and that the findings of the study can be replicated (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). As an integral part of providing quality assurance in this study, full documentation of all data gathering and analysis procedures was provided throughout the study as documented in the various appendices on data collection and analysis.

Confirmability is also fundamentally important in qualitative research designs. Confirmability refers to the degree to which the study's results can be confirmed or corroborated by others (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). It is a process of verifying that the findings of the study are in conformance with the data collected. Finlay (2006) advocates the use of an external auditor and researcher self-critical reflexive analysis of the research methods used   as other viable methods of reducing researcher subjectivity in this type of qualitative research. Triangulation of data and methods are also strongly recommended in the research literature. In this study, the use of the participants' voice through direct quotations from the interview transcripts in conjunction with providing a copy of the study's findings to the participants were used to establish the confirmability of the findings.

Generalizability or transferability, while not mandatory in qualitative research, is often viewed as an important facet of the trustworthiness of this form of research. Finlay (2006) however, points out that qualitative researchers are primarily "concerned to show that the study's findings can be transferred or may have meaning or relevance if applied to other individuals, contexts or settings" (p.5). In this study, transferability is not a major objective; however, the setting of the study and participants have been described with sufficient detail to enable one to judge the extent that the study's findings may be applicable to other settings where the instructional leadership and managerial practices of principals under USE may require further investigation.

3.14 Summary

This chapter has provided a brief overview of the design of the study and a tentative synopsis of the methods and procedures that have been be employed to collect data for this study. Philosophically, the design of the research which is a descriptive qualitative case study, is based on the assumption that the collection of in-depth qualitative interview data would provide the optimal process for studying the leadership practices of secondary school principals under Universal Secondary Education reforms. As a consequence, a qualitative in-depth interview case study approach to data collection combined with thematic analysis has been adopted with the expectation that it would provide valid answers to the issues under investigation. The ensuing chapters present the analysis of the data and an overview of the key findings of the study.

Chapter 4.   DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1   Introduction

The study sets out to explore and investigate the perceptions of Vincentian secondary school principals regarding their self-reported leadership practices under Universal Secondary Education. Firstly, it examines their insights into the challenges posed to their instructional and managerial leadership practices as a result of the introduction of the policy of Universal Secondary Education. Secondly, it examines their responses to those identified challenges.

This chapter of the dissertation presents a report of the key findings of the study. These findings are based on the on the analysis of the significant themes emanating from the principals' interviews in the context of the Grissom and Loeb (2009) theoretical framework and the guiding research questions. The thematic analysis is preceded by a breakdown of key demographic data on the principals and the schools involved in the study.   School factors include school performance and location. School performance in this study is defined as the level of attainment of secondary school historically in external examinations. As a result, secondary schools have been classified as high-achieving schools, those schools that have consistently attained a pass rate of 80 per cent or above at Caribbean Secondary School Certificate Examinations (CSEC). Lower-achieving schools are classified as those that traditionally have received less than 80 per cent pass rate at CSEC.

In terms of location, schools have been classified as urban schools, based on their location in the capital region of Kingstown and its suburbs. Rural schools include all schools located outside of Kingstown, the capital of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Principals' demographic characteristics include years of experience in the principalship. Principals with less than five years' experience are categorized as inexperienced principals, while those with five or more years of experience are denominated experienced principals. Gender of principal is the other demographic indicator of note used in the analysis of the results.

4.2   Schools and Participants Demographics

At the outset of the study, the total population of 26 secondary school principals of were invited to participate in the study. 25 principals indicated that they were willing to take part in the study in response to a circular sent by the Ministry of Education informing them of the proposed research. Due to logistical and scheduling difficulties, three principals were unable to participate in the face to face interviews. Two of them later e-mailed written responses to the questions contained in the interview protocol that I had forwarded to the e-mail addresses of the respective schools. However, due to the brevity of the responses and the fact that I was unable to explore the topic in detail with these participants, the decision was taken to exclude these written responses from the final analysis of the interview data. I felt that this mode of data response, while providing some relevant data, did not harmonize with the main approach to data collection. Face to face, one-on-one, in-depth interviews were therefore conducted with a total of 22 secondary school principals.

In the analysis, reference is also made to school size and school ownership. Schools are described according to student population. Schools with 400 students or less are designated as small schools while those with a student population of 401 students and above were categorized as large schools. There were a total of 11 schools with populations of 400 students or less as well as 11 schools with populations in excess of 401 students. Schools are also described in terms of ownership: Government-owned or Government-assisted.17 of the 22 participating schools were wholly government owned and controlled, while the remaining 5 schools fell under the rubric of Government-assisted schools. These schools are religious denominational schools where teachers' salaries are paid by the central government. However, school governance remains the

prerogative of the church authorities that founded the institutions. This information is particularly pertinent in discussing the issue of school autonomy.

The research looked at the leadership practices in high achieving schools in relation to the leadership practices of principals in schools with lower standards of academic achievement. Schools that were categorized as high-achieving were the ones allocated the students that obtained the highest scores on the Common Entrance Examinations used for transitioning students from primary to secondary schools. Two of the four schools are wholly government-owned, while the remaining two are religious schools receiving government assistance. The other 18 schools are newer secondary schools receiving students with lower grades on the Common Entrance Exams. Academic performance in these schools ranges from low achieving students to students with above average academic performance.

The demographic characteristics of the participants included gender and years of experience in the principalship. There were 15 male principals and 7 female principals that participated in the study. These were distributed throughout the government-owned schools and the government-assisted schools. 13 principals had more than 5 years of experience either at other schools or at their current school, while 9 principals had five years or less in administration. Table 4.1a below provides a breakdown of the profile of the participants in the study while Table 4.1b summarizes the overall demographics of the participants.

Table 4.1a   Profile of Study Respondents

RESPONDENT	GENDER	EXPERIENCE	SCHOOL LOCATION	ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL
Kevin	Male	11 years	Rural	Low
John	Male	20 years	Rural	Low
Elvis	Male	8 years	Rural	Low
Tracy	Female	3 years	Rural	Low
Leroy	Male	2 years	Urban	Low
Nicole	Female	11 years	Rural	Low
Alfred	Male	3 years	Rural	Low
Elijah	Male	8 years	Rural	Low
Abigail	Female	4 years	Rural	Low
Michael	Male	16 years	Rural	Low
Jerome	Male	2 years	Rural	Low
Shane	Male	12 years	Urban	High
Ken	Male	2 years	Urban	High
Natalie	Female	10 years	Urban	High
Warren	Male	1 year	Rural	Low
Denise	Female	15 years	Rural	Low
Winston	Male	8 years	Rural	Low
Akeem	Male	3 years	Rural	Low
Daryl	Male	4 years	Urban	Low
Leslie	Male	I year	Rural	Low
Ruthann	Female	10 years	Urban	High
Barbara	Female	8 years	Urban	Low

Table 4.1b   Demographics of interviewed secondary school principals and schools in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

GENDER	TOTAL
MALE	15
FEMALE	7
	22

YEARS EXPERIENCE IN THE PRINCIPAL SHIP	
1-5 YEARS EXPERIENCE	10
OVER 5 YEARS EXPERIENCE	12
	22

TYPE OF SCHOOL	
HIGH-PERFORMING	4
LOW-PERFORMING	18
	22

LOCATION OF SCHOOLS	
URBAN	7
RURAL	15
	22

4.3   Significant Themes identified as Challenges by Principals

The data analysis began with a detailed reading of the individual transcripts, followed by a comparison across the totality of the transcripts with the objective of

identifying the major themes or clusters identified by principals as constituting a challenge to the effectiveness of the school's organizational and instructional programme.

As described in Chapter three, this section of the analysis employed an inductive approach to identifying the major themes as advocated by Miles and Huberman (1994). Instead of using a pre-specified deductive approach to dissect the findings in this section, I believed that relying on the principals to describe the problems they encountered in their own words and within the context of their experiences would present deeper insight into the nature of the challenges confronting Vincentian principals under USE. The raw data was reduced to themes and categories by first entering the key statements identified into a word document. Using frequency of occurrence of each key statement in the individual transcripts and recurrence of usage by the individual respondent, each key statement was placed under a sub-theme and entered on an Excel spreadsheet.

After initial coding and identification of the codes, categories and subthemes, five broad clusters or themes were identified from the interview data. These included (1) Student management and academic challenges (2) Staff-Related Challenges (3) School-Related Challenges (4) System-Related challenges (4) (5)Parental and Community-related Challenges. Each of these identified themes is laid out in a summary table at the beginning of the analysis and provides a breakdown of the derivation of the theme from the raw data and the frequency of occurrence and intensity of usage in the interview transcripts. These individual themes, taken together, provide an analysis of the data pertaining to research question1: What are the major challenges confronting Vincentian principals under Universal Secondary Education?

Based on the analysis of the interview data, 15 out of the 22 principals felt that the policy of Universal Education (USE) had been beneficial to students and was likely to have a positive impact on education in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in the future, However, there were a number of challenges that they identified in the course of their practice that needed to be overcome before they considered USE to be functioning at an acceptable level. These challenges are subsumed under five broad themes and a

number of related sub-themes or analytical categories. The presentation of the analysis is preceded by a summary table of each theme and sub-theme. Each table provides a sample of key statements made by the respondents, the analytical category derived from these key statements and the frequency of occurrence of these keys statements or codes from the analysis. Each analytical category is then presented in broad general detail and then in relation to the demographic variables of gender, principal experience, school performance and school location.

Table 4.2   Student management and academic challenges-major analytical categories and themes

Theme 1: Student Management and Academic Challenges

Sample Key Statements	Analytical Category	Frequency	No 0f Respondents
Our main challenge at the moment is literacy. Students who can barely read and write and do Math come to these schools. A whole cadre of these students who are unable to read and deal with numeracy.	Literacy and Numeracy issues	303	22
I think that the major issue is to maintain the interest of the students in learning and seeing learning as important. Many of them do not see education as having value.	Low student motivation	27	10
You find that every year students get progressively worse, particularly those that are coming from the primary schools in the area.	Lower achieving students	61	14
We have students with quite a lot of behavioural problems. Every week we used to be collecting knives, sometimes cutlasses, scissors and other weapons that students will bring and there used to be frequent fights, although the number of fights has been reduced greatly.	Disciplinary Issues	66	19

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Sample Key Statements	Analytical Category	Frequency	No 0f Respondents
One of our most serious problems here is the economic status where unemployment is high and where sometimes children stay away from school. I noticed that some students were ready to drop out in Form Four. There were those who were already gone. I cannot do anything to them. That is their culture. -Sad to say, there are some students, we do not think they will get To Form Five. They may get there, but there are some students who drop out in Form One. So it leads to frustration.	Student attendance concerns	19	9

The table presented above show four important pieces of information. These are key sample statements, analytical categories or sub-themes, frequency of occurrence of the sub-theme and the number of respondents that mentioned the sub-themes during the interviews. Basically, key sample statements are original raw data that contain units of meanings uttered by the respondents. These key sample statements or units of meaning are then reduced to analytical categories or sub-themes. Sub-themes that are related are then subsumed under a related theme.

The theme and sub-themes identified in the above table are then examined in greater depth using frequency of occurrence and intensity. Frequency of occurrence is defined as the number of times a key construct was mentioned by the respondents in totality. Intensity refers to the number of respondents raising a particular issue during the interviews. This was done by counting the number of times the code was identified in each interview. The frequency of response for each sub-theme for this chapter was entered into a spreadsheet and is included in Appendices H and Appendix I. This spreadsheet also presents the data by a breakdown of the demographic variables. A similar table of themes, key sample units, analytical categories and frequencies of occurrence and number of respondents mentioning the sub-theme will be presented at the beginning of each major theme.

4.4 Theme 1: Student Academic and Management Challenges

During the interviews, school principals were asked to describe the range of managerial and instructional challenges confronting them under the new education policy of Universal Access to Secondary Education (USE). Based on their responses, five broad themes were identified as outlined previously. The discussion begins with an analysis of the first theme Student Academic and Management Challenges. This theme includes five sub-themes which are discussed in this section. These sub-themes include challenges mentioned by the principals in the areas of student academic achievement, in particular, student literacy and numeracy, low student motivation and readiness to cope with the demands and requirements of the academic programmes offered under Universal Secondary Education as well as perceived challenges in the areas of student discipline, student attendance, student attrition and student retention.

4.4.1 Literacy and Numeracy Issues

Inadequate levels of literacy and numeracy were the issues most frequently raised by school principals in their discussions of the major instructional challenges stemming from the enactment of the policy of Universal Secondary Education in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Nineteen principals out of the twenty-two (86%) said that the inability of students to read at a standard appropriate to a secondary level of education was the most significant challenge in carrying out their instructional leadership roles. Eighteen of those respondents mentioned that a number of the students experienced severe difficulties in reading and that this basic issue of literacy and reading comprehension impacted negatively on the students' academic performance. Four principals mentioned that students had come to their schools unable to read and decode basic words, while six principals indicated that students were reading below the grade one level based on the results of the grade six diagnostic tests done prior to entry into secondary school.

One rural principal with more than five years' administrative experience pointed out that one-third of the students entering the school had been placed in the remedial

reading programme. Another rural male principal with eleven years of experience pointed out that between seventy and eighty per cent of the students entering the school had been reading below their grade levels and that "the inability of students to read was a major problem" (Kevin). This principal stated that many students were reading at the "kindergarten level" and summed up the reading deficiencies of his students as a "traumatic experience". Another rural based principal of 15 years' experience summarized the extent of the literacy and numeracy phenomenon in these terms:

"*Our basic problem is the level of literacy with which these students come. You find you have students reading below the Grade One level. As low as that. The whole thing: the main challenge is literacy and numeracy*". (Denise)

The interview data also revealed that in some schools there were significant differences in the ability levels of students. 18 of the 22 principals mentioned the diversity of the student population created by the introduction of USE and the challenges posed to effectively organize remedial programs in literacy and numeracy. One male principal from a large rural school stated that he encountered difficulty in catering for the learning needs of students with diverse abilities:

"*We have students of diverse abilities. Some are average and the bulk of the students are at the bottom of the table. A lot of them cannot read properly so that it is one of the major challenges; catering for the bulk of students that cannot read properly*". (Michael)

One principal from a large urban school had attempted to address the varying disparities in student competencies through ability groupings. The principal stated that the initiative had not been successful since it was difficult to create homogeneous groupings because within these groups "there are those who just cannot read. They cannot even decode words" (Leroy). He concluded by stating: "So literacy is a major problem within most of the classes".

Two principals mentioned the negative impact that the entry of large numbers of students had had on their in-house resources to provide individualized instruction to the weaker students. One urban principal stated that the Ministry of Education had

constantly asked to increase the student intake, which had resulted in overcrowding and an increase in the student-teacher ratio, thereby making the strategy of individualized instruction difficult to implement. Referring to the requests for increased admission of students and its resultant impact, Leroy stated:

"We are asked to take more, so it ends up in overcrowding…… and this means that a lot of students cannot get the individual attention and this is very important because a lot of students are weak and without that individual attention it is difficult for them to make use of the opportunity."

Another related issue was the difficulties associated with organizing reading instruction for mixed ability groups of students. Data from three principals indicated that teachers often found it challenging to cater for the needs of students with varying reading levels. Tracy, a female principal with less than five years' experience at a rural secondary school made the following comment about the complexities of mixed ability groupings:

"Varying abilities; that is what makes it difficult for the one teacher to deal with them because in one class you can have a child reading at say, Grade 5 and another at Grade 2". (Tracy)

Another rural of principal of two years' experience spoke about the difficulties of creating suitable programmes for the diversity of students:

"You have to deal with students of low self-esteem; they are not motivated, students with low literacy and numeracy, low reading levels and it is difficult to come up with programmes". (Jerome)

Even in cases where programmes have been implemented in remedial literacy, the data from principals highlighted on-going challenges. For example, one female principal based at a rural school pointed out that the educational benefits were not filtering down through the system because the literacy coordinators and teachers involved in literacy remediation were frustrated on account of the large numbers of students included in the intervention programmes. Denise made the following comment:

"I think that literacy has become a big thing. It is a buzz word. Although we have a literacy coordinator and things are being tried, it is not filtering down; because the literacy people are frustrated because of the number of students they have to deal with". (Denise)

Literacy and numeracy problems in secondary schools were also viewed as a corollary of other social problems among USE students. Five principals indicated that there was some correlation between student inadequacies in literacy and numeracy and behavioural problems Denise said that the presence of fifteen year old students with literacy challenges in the same class with ten year old students had led to "frustrated students who are venting their frustration on everyone else". Winston pointed out that "practically most of the students with behavioural problems were in the remedial reading class" Nicole, a female principal with eleven years' experience, stated "many of the weak readers are troublesome because they are embarrassed on account of their reading problems". Elvis felt that "the remedial students are by and large the problematic students and that itself poses tremendous challenges for the administration of the school". The foregoing statements reveal the linkage that 23% of Vincentian secondary school principals perceived between literacy and numeracy shortcomings and student behaviour under USE.

With specific reference to numeracy issues seven principals (34%) pointed out that students had encountered challenges in this key area. Shane pointed out that "Math was a bit of challenge", while Kevin pointed out that "Mathematics has not been one of the areas where students perform well". Both of these principals were experienced principals with more than ten years of service respectively in the principalship. Another experienced principal of twenty years, John, said that "there was a need to strengthen numeracy" at the time he assumed the mantle of leadership. Ken, an inexperienced principal with two years of school leadership mentioned students not being "on par" in literacy and numeracy. Elijah, a rural principal who had been appointed to the position less than five years ago, described his student intake as "a cadre of students unable to read and write and deal with numeracy". By contrast, two other principals from high performing schools said that numeracy issues were inconsequential at their institutions.

In terms of demographics, all 15 rural schools in the sample reported that their students encountered varying degrees and types of challenges in literacy and numeracy. By contrast, 4 urban schools indicated similar problems. Two of the three schools indicating an absence of literacy and numeracy problems were high-performing schools. Two high-performing schools reported minor issues in literacy such as spelling and comprehension problems. In terms of gender and experience, both experienced and inexperienced principals reported having students with major problems, while five of the seven female principals also indicated having to deal with literacy and numeracy challenges. Literacy and numeracy problems were reported at both large and small schools included in the study, although the three schools not reporting literacy and numeracy issues were all large schools.

This section of the analysis presented the major findings in relation to the sub-category of literacy and numeracy issues. The data revealed that 86% of Vincentian secondary schools contained students with severe literacy and numeracy shortcomings. The data also revealed that due to the diversity of students entering secondary schools under USE, principals faced several constraints in crafting suitable literacy and numeracy programmes to meet the wide-ranging needs of the student population. The most significant trend noted in this subcategory was that a preponderance of rural schools (15) reported having students with literacy and numeracy challenges. This trend is in keeping with expectations since the students performing at the lower end of the spectrum on the Common Entrance Examinations were assigned in disproportionate numbers to rural secondary schools. However, it is to be noted that two high-performing schools reported literacy and numeracy challenges under USE as well. The ensuing sub-theme will examine the related condition of student motivation under Universal Secondary education and the attendant challenges to Vincentian principals' managerial and instructional leadership practices.

4.4.2   Low Student Motivation

From the analysis of the principal interviews, frequently recurring themes were those of low student motivation and student interest in and ability to pursue the more academically-oriented educational offerings that were prevalent before USE and which remained dominant after the implementation of USE. The importance of the theme can be gauged from the fact that 16 out of the 22 interviewees raised the issue in their discussions. Two urban principals, one male and the other female, felt that the level of student motivation for academic excellence had declined except for students originating from primary schools with high levels of competition. Natalie said that automatic transition to secondary school resulted in students "abusing the privilege", while Ken said that "with USE, and every child coming into the classroom, the impetus on the child to work is not there". These two principals felt that although USE was a beneficial policy in terms of participation rates, the reduced focus on academic excellence represented one of its main downsides.

Three other rural principals, with leadership experience in excess of ten years individually, discussed the issue of student motivation from an instrumental perspective. Denise said that education was "a low priority" for students because "they can get money without being educated" and that 'education for many people in this area is not a means of social mobility". Winston viewed the phenomenon in terms of students' perspectives on the utility and value of education. He said that "some students cannot see the relationship of the programme to what they will be doing in the future". The third principal, Warren, stated that "they are more present-oriented and concerned about immediate gratification" He felt that they needed to have a "more futuristic orientation" if they are to benefit from Universal Secondary Education.

The student motivational sub-theme was also examined under the lenses of coercion, reading inadequacies, classroom dynamics and intrinsic motivation. Elijah, a rural principal from a small school, said that "some students were not suited to secondary schools, because they do not understand the whole working process, but they come because they have to come". Within the context of this statement, it is important to note that compulsory education had been instituted in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in 1992 (Education Act, 1992). For this principal, compulsory school

attendance was the sole reason why some students attended school rather than intrinsic motivation to attend.

Another male principal from a large school felt that the motivational issue was linked to deficiencies in reading competence. Michael said "for those children who cannot read, they are not motivated". Analogously, Nicole mentioned that students did not have "an intrinsically motivated attitude for learning" and that unmotivated students deliberately disrupted lessons "because they don't want to be sitting in classes". However, two rural principals felt that student motivational problems were linked to what happened in the classrooms. Jerome stated that "many students are not challenged in the classroom" while Alfred, a male principal from a large rural school, stated that "principals need to address the children and get them to work, because it is a motivational problem"

Another noteworthy finding from the data and linked to student motivation, revolved around the value placed on 'free' education. One female principal with fifteen years' experience serving at a rural school said:

"I think that some people take for granted what they don't pay for. It is free. They figure that it is free so that they can do as they please. They want to come to school any hour and many of the students come to school without basic supplies……when you go into a class and want to do real work, they have no books". (Denise)

She concluded that students were more appreciative of education before USE when they paid a fifty Eastern Caribbean dollar ($ 20 US) school fee, but that since the introduction of USE and the move towards free schooling that "we threw out the baby with the bath water" (Denise).

From the interview data, student lack of interest in academic work was a recurrent theme. Ken stated that it was important for schools to stress the positive aspects of education to counteract the "lack of interest in education". He emphasized that it was necessary to maintain interest in learning for USE children since "many of them do not see the value of education".

An experienced female principal from a large school established linkages among student motivation, the academic nature of education under USE, the level of student preparation for secondary education and their relationship to the larger issue of school discipline:

"Another thing that you have to look at is that some of these children do not want to be in school. They are forced to be in school and another thing, is that some of them do not want the academics. They can't cope, they can't read, they can't understand and that is why they have a serious discipline problem in some schools. The children cannot grasp what is being taught". (Natalie)

In contrast to the views expressed by the foregoing interviewees, one experienced male principal from a rural district reported that interest in education among his student population remained high in spite of the literacy challenges confronting them. He said that average student attendance fluctuated between 95 and 97 per cent and that "even though they have literacy problems, they are still interested and that is encouraging". (Winston)

In this sub-topic of low student motivation, there were no perceptual differences among principals in terms of school size, years of experience or type of school. Principals from these demographic categories reported encountering challenges in the level of student academic interest and drive for achievement and academic success. The only clearly identified difference among principals occurred in the category high-performing to low-performing schools. 15 of the 16 principals (94%) reporting student motivational problems were from lower-performing schools. Only one high-performing school reported issues with student interest and motivation.

Within this sub-theme of student motivation under USE, Vincentian secondary school principals expressed concerns about the impact of guaranteed placement at secondary schools on student effort, the low value placed on education by some students, the academic nature of secondary schooling, the absence of intrinsic motivation, the lack of appreciation for 'free' schooling, the material conditions of teaching and learning and their effects on student motivation. The next section will examine the challenges posed to school principals by the change in the composition of

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the student body entering secondary schools under the policy of Universal Secondary Education.

4.4.3   Lower Achieving Students

Two common themes that emerged from the data were student readiness for secondary education and the general decline in the performance of students entering secondary schools under Universal Secondary Education. Two principals with more than five years of leadership experience from small schools expressed concern about the reduction in the quality of student performance in the move to increase student numbers at secondary schools. Denise, a female, rurally-based principal, said "there were a lot of students quantitatively, but qualitatively USE was a failure". Natalie said that "with the thrust to put students into a seat, the quality of students coming into the schools had decreased".

Eight of the sixteen principals compared the pre-USE student intake with the post-USE student cohorts and they all described the student composition after USE implementation as presenting greater challenges to their instructional and managerial leadership. A female principal described the situation in the initial years of USE implementation:

> *"We got slower students at that time and we had to work hard to bring them up to standard. At that time it was really difficult". (Natalie)*

Another female principal from a rural school with in excess of ten years' experience said: "*You find that every year students are getting progressively worse. Before, we had those who were weak, but not as weak as those that we have now*. (Denise)

Elijah, a male principal from a small rural school mentioned the problems of having to provide remedial support in the first years when the school discovered that some students did not know the alphabet. Ken discussed difficulties providing instruction for students with "wide gaps in their ability, especially in the same classroom", while Leroy said "it was like a hospital to deal with these students" John, a rural principal of a

large government-owned school, used an analogy from fishing to describe the increased student diversity. He likened the situation of dealing with the large, diverse student population to that of "capturing in the net everybody, including students with wide varying abilities". In a similar vein, Jerome, another rural principal from a large government-owned school reminisced about the conditions existing prior to USE when he stated "we used to have that kind of student that passed the Common Entrance Examinations"

Three secondary school principals, on the contrary, raised the issue of the large numbers of students that were marginalized before USE and who were eliminated from the education system without the opportunity for continued secondary education. All three principals felt that USE was a positive step in spite of the lower student academic performance and the increased complexities posed to principal managerial and instructional leadership. Their comments serve to highlight the counterpoint argument to the issue of lower student quality.

One experienced principal at the helm of a small rural government-owned school made this observation:

"For the last three years, we see better students emerging from the primary schools. After two years of consolidating the programme in the primary schools and with certain structures put in place to deal with the shortcomings, we are seeing better quality students coming into the secondary system." (Kevin)

The reduced wastage at the primary level was highlighted by one male principal from a large urban school. He stated that "one of the strengths of USE was that "students were no longer kept back in primary schools where they used to have them wasting". (Leroy)

John, another male principal of a large rural school, also commented on his improved student cohort: He said "A lot of students who come to the school now have been passing the Common Entrance, so we have been getting a better catchment".

Natalie reflected on the primary intent of the USE policy and its aim of increased opportunities for students. She said:

"I strongly believe all students must be in school. And in the past, given the number of students who were filtered out of the system, this is really a good thing for the students".

Notwithstanding these observations, 14 of the 22 principals (64%) representing all the demographic elements of school size, gender and years of experience identified the level of student readiness as an important challenge to their managerial and instructional leadership. For these respondents, student lack of readiness had a negative impact on discipline, teacher preparedness to deal with a different kind of student than previously also had a negative impact on student self-esteem and on the daily management of the schools. Shane, an experienced principal serving in the urban area, said that "the large student intake" and "students less academically inclined than in the past" had proved to be "a bit more challenging" He went on to point out that because there were no longer a "select few", and that he had to deal with "all the gamut of challenges".

Staff unpreparedness for the change in student clientele was cited by one female rural principal as one consequence of student lack of readiness for academic education. Denise said that "staff had been focused on the academics, on preparing students for the CSEC exams. All of a sudden, you were landed with students who could not come up to standard". Leslie commented that the students "were not ready for secondary education. There were students with learning disabilities and quite a lot of behavioural problems" Leroy and Warren, both male rural principals noted that the self-esteem of some students suffered as a result of having to do remedial work. Michael described the initiation of students into USE as "shock treatment for the students themselves, not being able to read and put into a secondary school system".

These findings are not dissimilar to those of Werner (2011) whose investigation of USE in Ugandan schools found that "since USE, many of the new students who enrolled were academically weak and needed more discipline "(p.78). From the interview data, secondary school principals consistently expressed the view that the challenge of a less homogeneous student body under USE increased their managerial and instructional leadership complications. Principals from all categories of secondary schools discussed

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the issue of lower student performance and its implications for their own practice under Universal Secondary Education. The related sub-theme of student discipline under USE is highlighted in the next section.

4.4.4 Disciplinary Issues

Consensus exists among educational researchers and educators that there is a close correlation between student learning and an orderly learning environment (Kiefer & Lowe, 2002; Duke, Tucker, Salmonowicz & Levy, 2007). The principals interviewed were divided in their analysis of the trends in school discipline since the implementation of USE. Ten principals indicated that there had been an increase in disciplinary problems while four others said that there had been an improvement in student behaviour or a reduction in student violence since the implementation of Universal Secondary Education. One experienced principal from an urban school said that "disciplinary challenges did not result from USE. Discipline is a challenge in any school and ours is no exception" (Natalie)

Disciplinary issues identified by principals included lack of cooperation from the home, students skipping classes, increased teacher frustration due to student misbehaviour, academic maladjustment and undeveloped social skills on the part of students. Tracy said that "the home is failing and it is impacting on everything, even the discipline in schools". Akeem identified the increase in indiscipline as problematic when he stated: "some of the teaching staff is at the height of their frustration levels because of the increase in disciplinary issues". Ken, a male principal from an urban secondary school admitted that "the supervision of teachers was a weak area of management because of the discipline problems of the school". Alfred. Leslie and Warren, all principals with less than five years' of service, linked disciplinary and behavioural problems to academics. Alfred stated that "students with poor performance give the most trouble', while Leslie indicated that "students who are not doing well will leave the classes and go outside without a cause". Warren also said that students were often not in classes and that "teachers were not focused on that problem".

As can be gleaned from the foregoing comments, the issue of student discipline is an important one for 73% of Vincentian secondary school principals. Research into student indiscipline and academic performance has shown that there is often an inverse relationship between poor student discipline and effective learning (Scott, Nelson & Liaupsin, 2001).   This recently appointed principal from a large school in a rural community summarized the negative impacts of student indiscipline on his school in these terms:

> *"Another challenge that I have to deal with is that of indiscipline. That is a big, big problem. Vandalism, graffiti, oh, don't talk about those things. Many students are not challenged in the classrooms because many teachers have not embraced USE".* (Jerome).

Additionally, two other experienced principals, one male and the other female, identified the lack of social skills as having an impact on student discipline. Kevin, felt that "there were negative spin-offs in terms of behaviour as many of them did not have the social skills to cope" while Barbara, said that "the students need to do more in terms of their holistic development, in terms of their decorum, their manners and the way they carry themselves". She concluded by stating that student misbehaviour had been reported in the newspapers and "had given a bad image to the school".

 By contrast, four other principals presented views contradictory to the preceding ones on student discipline. Elijah said: "We have seen a reduction in the discipline problem". Leroy stated "we have seen a reduction in the number of weapons brought to school and where there used to be frequent fights, the number of fights has been greatly reduced; so we are having success in the reduction of violence".

 In a related issue, two male principals also indicated that the matters surrounding student discipline had been complicated by the absence of a clear-cut disciplinary policy emanating from the Ministry of Education. They also pointed out that proper guidance had not been given to school principals on how to handle certain disciplinary issues and that many principals were left in a state of uncertainty on how to handle elements of student discipline such as suspensions and expulsions in the absence of a clear-cut disciplinary policy from the governing authority.

One experienced principal from a large urban school commented on the lack of support and remediation system-wide to deal with the problems associated with student indiscipline:

"One of my disappointments is that we do not have the proper support and remedial structure when it comes to ill-discipline. And to me that is the major part of the entire scheme. We seem to have adopted USE which in itself is good. But if it is not supported by that disciplinary measure, we are going to meet a problem. When it comes to my colleagues, especially, that is a major problem". (Shane)

Another principal from a rural school with less than five years tenure in the principalship mentioned that a national policy on dealing with student disciplinary issues would be helpful in improving the overall functioning of the USE policy. This principal pointed out the need for a harmonized disciplinary policy, one that would allow principals to make disciplinary decisions based on a commonly accepted set of standards:

And another thing that I would like to see is a more structured disciplinary code, because right now, it is difficult for us to understand what is acceptable….. They have a draft discipline policy that they have been working on over the last three years. If it is something that we know is standardized, it makes it easier for us, so that we can understand exactly where we stand. (Akeem)

In summary, a total of 19 out of 22 principals commented on disciplinary issues under USE. Two of these principals said that disciplinary problems were not unique to USE. Four principals mentioned improvements in student behaviour since the initial years of USE implementation, while ten principals indicated that disciplinary and behavioural problems have been on the increase since the inception of USE.

Based on the demographic indicators, 8 low-performing schools mentioned greater problems in discipline since USE, compared to two high-performing schools. Eight male principals reported increases in disciplinary problems compared to four female principals. There were no notable differences in terms of experience as both experienced and inexperienced principals saw disciplinary issues as one of the key

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challenges to their efforts to achieve instructional leadership and managerial effectiveness in their schools. Discipline and student attendance issues were often intertwined in the previous sections. The final section of this theme explores student attendance issues in detail to show their implications for the managerial and instructional practices of secondary school principals.

4.4.5   Student Attendance Issues

The issue of student attendance was one raised by principals as impacting negatively on the teaching and learning environment of certain schools. While the problem did not appear to be a wide-spread or system-wide phenomenon, it was considered serious enough to be raised by ten of the 22 principals surveyed as an area of concern for the optimal functionality of the policy of Universal Secondary Education. Eight of the principals reporting on student absenteeism, late coming, and attrition or absconding school were from the rural secondary schools. It was however this concern expressed by an experienced principal from an urban school that summarized the nature of the negative impact of student attendance issues on principal managerial leadership:

"And when it comes to implementation, we have not fully implemented. For example, we have USE, but we still have students liming at the bus stops at Little Tokyo, still being truant and nothing is done". (Shane).

This view was further supported by another male principal from a large rural school who described the truancy problem as follows:

"Some of these students will leave for school in their uniforms and they never show up to class. They go to the beach and they go all over the place". (Michael)

Three principals from large rural secondary schools mentioned that the tardiness of students was an increasing problem. One female principal had resorted to locking the school gates after a cut-off point, but said that "she was reviewing that punitive measure to get the chronic late comers to come early, since she could not have them consistently locked out" (Nicole). Two male principals from rural schools had instituted reward programs for latecomers and frequent absentees through a "free lunch as a reward for

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attendance" program. One female principal had solicited the collaboration of parents to deal with the problem of tardiness. On the other hand, two other rural principals, one male and one female, reported an improvement in attendance. One experienced rural female principal commented: "We have seen an improvement in regularity and punctuality now they are seeing the importance of a secondary education" (Denise)

Absconding from school and absenteeism were reported by four rural principals, two of whom had in excess of ten years' experience in school leadership.   Reasons cited for these trends included being embarrassed to be in a remedial class, under-performing at academic tasks, students living on their own without adult supervision, economic reasons such as the inability to provide students with lunch.

A related issue raised in the interviews was the failure to implement fully all of the provisions of the 1992 Compulsory Education Act with particular reference to the appointment of school attendance officers. One experienced urban principal pointed out that under the compulsory education legislation attendance officers should have been appointed to monitor student attendance, acts of truancy and other violations of the compulsory education regulations. However, based on his remarks, failure to enforce these provisions had impacted negatively on principals' ability to deal with truancy and associated problems:

> *"In the Education Act, there are provisions for attendance officers, who should be seeing about these problems, but so far attendance officers have not been appointed. Students come to school when they feel like. They jump the fences, they disappear and nothing is being done. Something definitely needs to be done in that area".* (Shane)

The issue of student attrition from secondary schools under USE is intertwined with that of student truancy and attendance. According to UNESCO Global Education Digest (2012) survival rates for students up the final grade of secondary school in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines averaged 87% of the initial secondary student intake. As a consequence, approximately 13 % of the student population did not complete secondary school based on the secondary school data for 2010. The percentage completion rate for males was 81%, while for females, it stood at 94%. These statistics were further

supported by the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Statistical Education Digest (2013), which revealed that 1,296 students dropped out of secondary schools between 2009 and 2013, including 224 students in the first year of secondary schooling.

On this issue, five principals touched on student attrition. Two male principals from urban schools indicated that there were no dropouts from their institutions, while three others, two males and one female, confirmed that " there were a few dropouts, but not in significant numbers" (Akeem). One male principal, Warren, described the drop-out phenomenon at his school as "their culture", while an experienced female counterpart. Barbara, attributed the attrition of females to "teenage pregnancy" and that of the males as "dropping out for no reason at all".

In keeping with the UNESCO (2012) official statistics, secondary school principals reported that the dropout rate was not particularly high; however, five principals, three males and two females indicated that they had provided incentives to encourage students to remain in school and complete their education. Chapter 5 will examine some of the measures that, Vincentian secondary school principals employed to counterbalance the impact of some of the foregoing challenges in order to enable students to obtain optimal benefit from the educational opportunity presented.

This first theme examined the student instructional and management challenges confronting principals under USE in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The ensuing theme examines the personnel and staff-related challenges posed to principals in their enactment of the provisions of USE in their educational institutions.

4.5   Theme 2 – Staff Related Challenges

**Table 4.3 Breakdown of Participants' Key Statements, Analytical Categories,
Codes and Frequencies of Occurrence for Theme 2**

Sample Participants' Statements (Meaning Unit)	Codes used	Analytical Categories	Total number of key statements	No. of interviewees that mention sub-theme
We work as team but we are saying that here are some teachers who can pull their weight more and that can do a better job. -Sometimes it is easier to deal with students than a teacher and sometimes, the Ministry has to play their role and clamp down on teachers in terms of how you deal with teachers when you report a complaint - Dealing with teachers is a one kind of problem because teachers have not really embraced USE and because they have not embraced, it makes your work double	-Inadaptability of teachers -Failure to embrace USE -Teacher fear of change -Indifference towards student learning -Attitudes of experienced versus Inexperienced teachers	Teacher Resistance to Change	19	8
Yes, because professionalism was a problem. Sometimes, you had to go into the classroom because people were walking out of the class five or ten minutes before the end of the lesson. I am convinced that sufficient planning was not going into the preparation of the work.	-Teacher lack of professionalism -Poor classroom management skills -Underperforming teachers -Teaching as a stepping stone -Interpersonal frictions -Fear of integrating ICT in the classroom	Teacher Job-related Issues	31	10

Sample Participants' Statements (Meaning Unit)	Codes used	Analytical Categories	Total number of key statements	No. of interviewees that mention sub-theme
But I would say that the percentage of untrained teachers vis-a-vis the trained teachers is quite critical. Particularly here at my school. Of the 20 staff members, there are only 3 trained teachers. And also many of the teachers that we have are young teachers and I am referring to teachers below the age of 30. - I will like to also see on-going and systematic retraining of more experienced teachers because some of us seem to be stuck in our old ways when we are faced with new challenges.	-Uncertified teachers -Teacher Inexperience -Inadequate Pedagogical Training -Retraining of Teachers	Insufficient Teacher Training and Teaching Experience	102	12

Using the criteria of frequency (number of times a key statement occurred) and intensity (the number of respondents focusing on a particular theme), the second cluster of challenges identified from the interview data and was denominated staff-related challenges. This general theme was broken down into three sub-themes. For the purpose of this analysis, they were classified as: (1) Teacher resistance to change (2) Teacher performance issues and (3) Inadequate Teacher Training and Experience.

4.5.1   Teacher Resistance to Change

Cuban (2011) and Zimmermann (2006) have identified coercive changes and little trust in teachers' judgement as catalysts for teacher resistance and for reform failure. The introduction of the Universal Secondary Education Policy meant that schools were no longer offered a select group of students of a certain academic competence. Previously, secondary teachers only dealt with students who had all passed the Common Entrance exams and were therefore certified as being capable of performing at the secondary level of education. The change in the type and quality of the student

clientele implied that teachers had to make a number of adjustments in their teaching styles and approaches to classroom management. The issue of teacher adaptability to change was indicated as a significant issue in the interviews by four principals from government-owned schools and three from government-assisted schools

Seven of the twenty-two principals interviewed identified the issue of teachers' unwillingness to adapt their teaching methods and styles and teacher resistance to the different conditions under USE as major obstacles to their efforts to make the implementation of the USE education policy as efficient as possible. One rural, male principal commented on the resistance to change by some of the more experienced teachers who had worked under the pre-USE system of selective secondary education. Referring to the attitude of some of the more experienced, pre-USE teachers, and using language couched in biblical imagery, he made the following comment: *"Well, in the beginning those that drank of the old wine found it very hard to change"* (Winston).

Another rural male principal of more than ten years' experience mentioned the apprehension of some teachers when faced with the influx of students stating that "it was met with resistance in some quarters" (Shane). To deal with the negative responses from some teachers, three principals mentioned that they used motivational talks to convince their staff members that "it was a government policy that they could not change, but that the children were more important than the policy" (Denise). This unwillingness to adapt to the changing circumstances and to the more diverse student population was an important hurdle that Vincentian principals had to surmount in the quest for greater managerial and leadership efficiency.

 In a related context, seven principals cited the failure of many teachers to adopt new teaching methods and approaches to deal with the changes in the now heterogeneous student population. Additionally, one female principal from a rural school noted that at her school younger teachers were more prepared to adapt to the conditions brought about by the introduction of USE as they were not influenced by conditions that existed prior to the implementation of Universal Secondary Education policy. She stated:

> *"Younger teachers, they offer more because I do not think that they have anything to compare to but like the seasoned ones who would have had a*

system to compare here, then and now, it is extremely challenging for some of them". (Abigail)

However, as a counterpoint to the foregoing observation, three rural principals from large schools indicated greater satisfaction with the performance of their experienced teachers vis-à-vis that of their inexperienced teachers. One principal from a large urban school mentioned having to deal with complaints from his inexperienced staff in relation to classroom management difficulties. Responding to a prompt about how his teachers were coping with the new situation, he made the following comment:

"Some of them, particularly the older, more mature teachers; I do not know, maybe because of the conditions they came up with, they tend to cope better than the younger teachers. The younger teachers will come and they will complain that students can't read, that they do not know what to do and I have to try to build them up" (Leroy).

In a similar observation, another male from a rural school commented on the effectiveness of experienced teachers compared to inexperienced teachers in handling classroom management problems.

"The problems about which our teachers complain are about the lack of discipline and focus from the students. Oftentimes, teachers have to be constantly bringing these students to the office, because, the weaker ones are the ones who are going to disrupt the class and give problems and some of our teachers are not trained to deal with some of these problems, so you find that the more seasoned teachers, the more qualified teachers, they deal with them in a kind of way. The younger ones…… face a lot of challenges monitoring the behavioural problems that come up". (Warren)

Additionally, two rural principals, one male from a large school and the other a female from a small school, mentioned that certain teachers had not fully embraced the philosophy underlying USE and that this failure to embrace the policy was a complicating factor impinging on principal leadership. Commenting on this challenge, one male principal said that "because teachers have not embraced USE, it makes your work

double" (Jerome), while his female counterpart stated that "many teachers were not prioritizing for under-achievers" (Abigail). Teacher resistance to change had impacted negatively on student self-confidence according to one male principal from a rural school. He commented that "the students know that they are not planned for and they see for themselves that the teachers are not concerned" (Jerome).

From the interview data, three principals, two male and one female, reported that their teaching staff had adjusted well to the changed conditions of teaching and learning. Two of these principals were however from high-achieving schools. One rural principal from a low-achieving school said that "after the initial shock, everyone was able to make the adjustments" (Kevin). His urban counterpart said that "by and large, staff had adjusted (Natalie)" However, for younger and less experienced teachers the school's management was "adopting a sort of mentoring approach" (Shane).

As a counter measure to the issue of teacher failure to adapt to change brought on by the USE policy, one male principal from a large urban school recommended the wide-spread systematic retraining and retooling of teachers, with emphasis on experienced teachers, in order to get them focused on the different learning styles of the current cohorts of students in attendance under the USE policy.

> "I *will also like to see on-going and systematic retraining of more experienced teachers. Retooling, because some of us seem to be stuck in our old ways when we are faced with new challenges so that in itself presents a bigger challenge".* (Shane)

In summary, this sub-theme examined secondary principals' views on teacher responses to the USE policy, their adaptations to the changed policy environment and the impact of teacher attitude on principal instructional leadership and management approaches. While 32% of principals raised the issue of teacher resistance to change, it is significant to note that 71% of the schools with this problem were located in rural areas. In terms of teacher adaptability to the conditions of USE, 75% of the schools showing a positive trend were urban, high-performing schools. Only 2 rural schools indicated that their staff had made the necessary adjustments to the new dispensation occurring under USE.

4.5.2   Teacher Job-Related Issues

During the interviews, twelve principals raised various teacher job-related issues that included teacher performance, teacher quality, and teacher professionalism, transfers of key teachers to other schools and teacher relationships to the management of the school. Eight principals stated that they were generally satisfied with the attitude and performance of the teaching staff. Five of these principals were principals with more than five years' experience as school leaders. Four principals expressed dissatisfaction with the level of performance of teachers and expressed the wish for greater participation, involvement and engagement of their teachers in terms of their overall classroom performance.

Two rural male principals with more than ten years of tenure individually stated that the Ministry of Education needed more effective policies in dealing with teachers who shirked their duties and responsibilities as well as underperforming or non-performing teachers. Warren, a rural principal from a large school stated that "many under-performing teachers were transferred to other schools when reported to the Ministry of Education by school principals". He was opposed to this practice since "we are dealing with the nation's children". He suggested that such teachers should be removed from the teaching profession or transferred to other government departments not related to teaching. He also pointed out that such personnel practices as transferring teachers to other secondary schools "did not augur well for enhancing the educational climate or culture of the schools" (John). Additionally, Michael commented on teacher under-performance, teacher indiscipline and the reticence of the Ministry of Education to deal with this phenomenon:

Sometimes, the kind of teachers that you get....... it is easier to deal with students than a teacher and sometimes, the Ministry has to play their role and clamp down on teachers in terms of how they deal with teachers when you report the complaint. It does not make much sense to take a teacher who is not performing, move that teacher to another school. We have a few teachers that we have had to deal with. They have been very delinquent and so forth. Yes, there are teachers who are very problematic. You can deal with a student better than how you can deal with a teacher. (Michael)

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In a related vein, two principals noted that key personnel had been transferred to other schools and had not been replaced. Such transfers without replacement prevented continuity of the literacy improvement programmes that had been initiated while the transferred teachers were on their staff list. Michael described the impact of this practice on the learning environment at the school:

"*We do not have a literacy coordinator; the literacy coordinator was transferred but not replaced. We do not have someone who is specifically trained to deal with literacy. It is definitely hampering the programme*".

Communication issues and interpersonal relationship difficulties were raised by one female principal from a rural secondary school. In response to a question about the level of cooperation between staff and management of the school, she said that "there are some teachers who can pull their weight and do a better job" *(Nicole).* Another female principal from another large rural school mentioned instituting a conflict resolution programme because teacher-teacher conflict "was very bad" (Abigail).

The issue of teacher professionalism was raised by three principals, two from rural schools and one urban male principal. Daryl pointed out that "professionalism was a real problem as sufficient planning was not going into the preparation of work". Abigail and Denise, two female rural principals, reported that confidential matters discussed in staff meetings and management meetings were divulged to parents without official consent.

Teacher quality issues were raised by seven principals. One experienced principal from a large urban school said: "our challenge is attracting and retaining quality teachers and the MOE is limited in how they can affect that positively" (Shane). Another female from a rural school stated that they did not have "quality teachers to deal with low levels of literacy". This was supported by another female counterpart based at a rural school who said that "you cannot have a good education system if you have weak teachers" Jerome, a male rural principal from a large school talked about teachers without classroom management experience and the phenomenon of large numbers of students sent out of classes "because the teacher says he or she cannot deal with these

problems". Two male, rural principals raised the matter of teacher commitment to the teaching profession stating that "many use the profession as a stepping stone" (Kevin).

Notwithstanding these findings in respect of teacher performance, four principals indicated that teachers were very cooperative in the implementation of the policy. Two experienced male principals mentioned that they had implemented induction programs, conflict resolution techniques and training in classroom management as strategies to deal with teacher performance issues. Overall, the trend in lower teacher performance was more prevalent in rural secondary schools, with ten principals indicating challenges in teacher performance. However, two urban high-performing schools indicated that teacher quality was a minor issue but they had instituted mentorship programs and the recruitment of teachers " familiar with the schools' culture (Ruthann)" in order to reduce the impact of teacher quality issues on teaching, learning and managerial operations at their schools with the onset of the policy of Universal Secondary Education.

4.5.3   Insufficient Teacher Training and Teaching Experience

Issues surrounding teacher inexperience and lack of certification were raised by nine of the twenty-two principals. According to the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Annual Digest of Statistics (2012), secondary school teachers are classified as graduate teachers (teachers holding a university degree) trained teachers (teachers certified by the Teachers' Training College and Non-graduate teachers (teachers without university degrees or Teachers' College certification). Between 2001 and 2012, the percentage of graduate teachers in secondary schools dropped from 38% in 2001 to 15% in 2010. In 2001, the percentage of certified college trained teachers stood at 47%. By 2012, the percentage had increased to 58%. (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Education Statistics Digest, 2012). Based on these statistics, in 2012, 27% of the secondary teaching staff included teachers that had not been university-trained or certified at the level of the Teachers' College. These teachers fall under the category of non-graduate teachers.   The interview data also pointed to the fact that a number of non-graduate teachers had been appointed to teach at the USE secondary schools and that the lack of pedagogical training and preparation to deal with classroom management and student

discipline had impacted negatively on the effectiveness of teaching and learning at USE secondary schools.

One male principal from an urban school noted that at his school non-graduate teachers significantly outnumbered certified trained teachers:

"*But I would say that the percentage of untrained, non-graduate teachers vis-a-vis the trained teachers is quite critical, particularly here at my school. Of the 20 staff members, there are only 3 trained teachers. And also many of the teachers that we have are young [untrained and inexperienced] teachers and I am referring to teachers below the age of 30. And that would be approximately 75% of my staff below the age of 30". (Ken)*

The issue of insufficient training of teachers to deal with the various expectations of USE was raised by nine of twenty two principals. 41 % of the principals felt that training geared to preparing teachers for these new roles was lacking in the build-up to the implementation of USE and that many of the negative repercussions in the school were due to the failure to address the issue of focused and appropriate training for teachers.

One urban principal of a large school with less than five years' experience stated that many of the teachers possessed adequate knowledge of subject content but needed further training in pedagogical methods to help them in the effective delivery of that content to enable them to boost student performance in the classroom. He also pointed out that although some level of in-house training was provided for new teachers at the commencement of their secondary school teaching career, current levels of training were not sufficient to prepare these teachers to teach effectively and to manage their classrooms under Universal Secondary Education. The need for better teacher preparation and training for the USE classrooms is summed up in this statement:

"*At the same time we have teachers in the system who come from universities, the Community College who have had no pedagogical training in executing information…… Every new teacher in the system goes through a training program at the beginning of the school year. That is not totally adequate". (Ken)*

Another male principal with 15 years' experience stated that that there was a need for "the systematic retraining of more experienced teachers" (Shane) to provide them with up-to-date techniques to deal with the new challenges posed by USE. Another experienced colleague mentioned challenges facing teachers in adapting ICT tools in the classroom, emphasizing that many classroom teachers "were still addicted to chalk and talk" (John). One male principal with less than five years' experience mentioned the need to have teachers " vetted before coming to the system (Jerome)" because some teachers were not committed to the profession and " used the system as stepping stone" for opportunities to study in other areas.

In summary, secondary school principals in aggregate identified the need for greater teacher training for new teachers and retraining and retooling of seasoned teachers as an important approach needed for the overall success of Universal Secondary Education. The interview data revealed that principals from all demographic strata were dissatisfied with teacher pedagogical readiness for USE. All principals, irrespective of experience and gender, were challenged by the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of some teachers and felt that more training in pedagogical methods and classroom management skills were areas that needed improvement for better functioning of the schools under USE.

4.6 Theme 3 - School Level Challenges

TABLE 4.4: Breakdown of Participants' Key Statements, Analytical Categories, Codes and Frequencies of Occurrence for Theme 3.

Sample Participants' Statements (Meaning Unit)	Codes used	Analytical Categories	Total number of key statements	No. of interviewees that mention sub-theme
Even considering the size of the classes that they are taking in, I think the classes are too big. I think the ideal class size should be twenty or 25 at the most.	Classroom overcrowding -Inability to use individualized teaching -Reduced student performance - Increased student-teacher ratio	Increased Class size	23	9
-Principals are overloaded with responsibility, especially at this age. When I was a young teacher, as a principal, you did not have much to do, but now with all this increase, the workload is a lot more. - The job of the principal is not a job that anybody should envy. Sometimes, I ask myself, why should I go through this sort of stress? I think it is too stressful	- High levels of stress - Role overload -High workload -Time constraints	Principal Workload and Job-related stress	28	11

Another significant theme that emerged from the analysis of the interviews was that of challenges related to conditions existing in the schools or conditions resulting from the workload involved in providing leadership in instruction and management at the

building level. The two main sub-themes associated with this domain include larger class sizes and job-related stress associated with the increased workload.

4.6.1   Larger Class Sizes

Given the diversity of the student population and the complexity of dealing with the wide-range of abilities of students under USE, nine principals referred to the challenges brought on by the need to accommodate the large numbers of students admitted to the secondary schools. Generally, class sizes tend to be larger ranging from 36 to 42 students in some instances, whereas prior to the introduction of USE, class sizes ranged between 25 and 30 students. One female principal pointed out that she had "an intake of 110 students divided into three classes (Natalie). Another male principal from a rural secondary school said that since USE "the size of the school population is really awful" (Elvis).   Before the introduction of USE, average secondary school enrolment was 7,775 students. With the implementation of USE, average enrolment increased to 11,140 students (Statistical Digest of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 2012). The research literature has consistently pointed to the negative impact of large class sizes on student performance. Borden and Burton (1999) found that students in large classes did not perform well as students in small classes particularly among lower ability students.

In regard to the issue of increased class sizes, two principals pointed out that requests were frequently made by the education authorities to admit more students even though they already had large classes within the school:

> *"First of all the increase in the numbers of students that we have to take in. There are times when they asked from the Ministry how many students we can take and we are asked to take more, so it ends up with overcrowding in the classroom and hence, you will have an increase in student-teacher ratio and this means that a lot of the students cannot get the individual attention and this is very important because a lot of the students are very weak and without that individual attention it is very difficult for them to make proper use of the opportunity". (Nicole)*

Another rural principal pointed out that the optimal class size should not exceed twenty-five students in order to allow the teachers to provide maximum attention to the needs of the existing students:

"*Even considering the size of the classes that they are taking in, I think the classes are too big. I think the ideal class size should be 20 or 25 at the most. It is enough for a class because you are going to deal with students of different backgrounds and of different levels because we do practice differentiated teaching and learning here*". (Jerome)

Another rural principal of more than ten years' experience stated: "USE *means all and sundry. I do not think we had the space because you have to be doubling up on classes. Right now, we are actually utilizing the computer lab as a classroom, which should not be"* (John)

The data suggest that principals preferred smaller classes in order to provide more individualized attention to students as well as ensure a smaller student–teacher ratio thereby creating more favourable conditions to effect teaching and learning in the schools. The data also emphasized that to a large extent principals did not have much control over the number of students assigned to their schools as allocation of students was under the central control of the Ministry of Education. Overall, the issue of class sizes was more prominent in urban schools as four urban principals referred to large class sizes being a challenge. However, two rural principals also indicated admitting more students than originally planned for.

4.6.2   Principal Workload and Job-Related Stress

Thirteen principals (59%) mentioned that stress related to managing the schools under USE conditions was a critical issue confronting their ability to function effectively. Three male principals and one female reported that they were experiencing higher levels of stress under USE than before its introduction. Another female principal with more than ten years' experience stated "School Leadership and Management has become extremely stressful as students are not focused on education and achievement" (Barbara), One rural male principal of more than ten years' in the job said that "so many

social problems manifest themselves such that when I come here I do not get to sit down until lunch time" (Winston). Another male principal from a government-owned rural school stated that he was forced to spend most of his time "dealing with routine things rather than more progressive things" (Elvis). One inexperienced male principal described his situation as 'overwhelming" and "just a lot of stress especially when you go to the classrooms and observe what is going on" (Leroy)

Similarly, a rural colleague of two years' experience stated that principals were on their own when they had to deal with the problems associated with USE and its implementation. He added that enough support was not given to principals, thus contributing indirectly to greater levels of stress:

> "*The attitude is that you have the school out there and you should deal with that and so on and all that. So in that case you try to manage how you can. The job of the principal is not a job that anybody should envy. Sometimes, I ask myself, why should I go through this sort of stress? I think it is too stressful*". (Jerome)

One female principal from the urban area pointed out that because of her personality, she was prepared to rise to deal with the challenges. She said: "The job is stressful, but because of my personality, I like stress" (Ruthann). Two other principals reported that they had to spend a great deal of time dealing with student management issues as students were often sent to them for minor infractions. Two rural principals also said that they could not find the time to deal with issues such as teacher evaluation, monitoring of classrooms and the more important instructional issues. These principals also reported a high level of stress in having to handle many competing demands on their time and resources simultaneously.

Linked to the finding of job stress for principals is the related issue of a high workload. Four principals (18%) mentioned an overall increase in their workload since the inception of USE. Responding to a probe about the workload of principals under USE, one experienced female principal from a rural school made the following observation:

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"Principals are overloaded with responsibility, especially at this age. When I was a young teacher, as a principal, you did not have much to do, but now with all this increase, the workload is a lot more". (Denise)

In three cases, principals were obligated due to a shortage of qualified personnel to teach a number of subject areas. They decided to assume teaching duties in conjunction with their administrative duties in order to ensure that instruction was provided for students. One inexperienced principal from a rural school said he had a full workload for a period of three years as a result of staff shortages.

My first three years were really overwhelming. This is my fourth year. We were short-staffed too and I had to end up teaching a load that was greater than all the teachers because we could not get staff in the area of Music, Science and Math. (Akeem)

While some effort has been made to improve the level of staffing as the implementation of the USE policy kicked in, adequate staffing in some subject areas has not been forthcoming. Three principals mentioned that human resources were adequate except in the area of Music. However, 5 principals also mentioned that they were unable to implement certain programmes due to a continuing teacher shortage in such areas as Physics and other science-related disciplines.

Another male principal from a rural school described the increased workload due to inadequate staffing:

"We have four classes, but we have had to merge two of the remedial forms with 18 and 15 and we did not get a teacher. I had to be teaching one of those forms. So I found it extremely difficult to be teaching and to be doing administrative work. Because sometimes, you find that in the middle of teaching, I had to be called out. So because of certain things, I merged 2 of those forms". (Jerome)

Due to workload constraints, three principals, all from rural schools, indicated that they were not able to effectively carry one of their key functions of teacher supervision, evaluation and appraisal. While acknowledging the importance of supervising teachers,

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these three principals indicated that they were too overwhelmed with administrative and instructional obligations and therefore did not have the time to monitor the work of teachers effectively. This admission from a female rural principal sums up the collateral results of time constraints on teacher supervision and monitoring systems under USE:

We have done a few teacher evaluations, but not a lot, I must confess. We need to do more of that. But I am teaching, but with a teaching load and an administrative load, it is difficult to get those things done (Denise)

To sum up, in four of the assisted schools, principals mentioned that they had inadequate staffing in areas such as learning support, literacy, remedial reading and the Sciences and that this shortfall in staffing had contributed to them having to spend more time in classes assisting with teaching and less time on administrative duties, thereby leading to a corresponding increase in overall principal workload. In terms of demographic trends, 4 principals of larger schools in the rural areas pointed out that their workload and related job stress had increased as a result of the introduction of USE. In terms of gender, 6 male principals reported higher levels of stress or greater workload. Correspondingly, three female principals pointed to increased workload. The noteworthy pattern however was that principals of larger schools indicated that increased student numbers had brought on added strain to their job.

4.7   Theme 4: System-Related Challenges

Table 4.5: Breakdown of Participants' Key Statements, Analytical Categories, Codes and Frequencies of Occurrence for Theme 4

Sample Participants' Statements (Meaning Unit)	Codes used	Analytical Categories	Total number of key statements	No. of interviewees that mention sub-theme

Sample Participants' Statements (Meaning Unit)	Codes used	Analytical Categories	Total number of key statements	No. of interviewees that mention sub-theme
I don't think even the Ministry of Education was fully prepared for USE. The principals were not fully prepared because it was only since USE was implemented that most of the training was done for teachers, so the students were really thrown on us.	-Improper planning -Insufficient dissemination of policy information -Timing of the policy	Lack of preparedness for USE implementation	48	16
I think our biggest problem is what we have inherited from the primary school because I do not think if a child has done 6 or 7	-Inadequate primary school foundation -Unintended benefits of USE	Negative impact of primary school education	52	16
Sample Participants' Statements (Meaning Unit)	Codes used	Analytical Categories	Total number of key statements	No. of interviewees that mention sub-theme
years in the primary school, we should be still teaching the child to read at this point. The work should have been done in the primary schools				
Currently, we offer reading up to Form 3 level because of the time table constraints and other constraints in terms of human and material resources, We cannot take up to Form 4.	-Need for specialist teachers -Uneven distribution of resources - Deployment of Human resources -Inadequate material resources	Instructional and Human resources constraints	27	11
I think that the support from the Ministry is good it is only sometimes you have to give up your autonomy. I think that they are too centralized. I think now that we have USE I think that we should be decentralized and have small pockets to deal with certain issues	-Expanded role in decision-making for principals -Top-down approach to policy implementation	Insufficient Autonomy granted to public school principals	15	7

Throughout the interviews principals indicated that there were a number of challenges that were directly or indirectly related to the nature of the wider educational system and context. These were largely factors that were entrenched in the educational system and these were clustered into a fourth theme and subsumed under the rubric system-related challenges. The various sub-themes under this profile include: (1) Lack of preparedness for USE at the system and school levels (2) Negative impact of primary education (3) Inadequate material and human resources and (4) Lack of autonomy for public school principals.

4.7.1   Lack of Preparedness for Universal Secondary Education Implementation

One of the prominent themes emerging from the interview data that sixteen principals identified as a source of challenge for them was the overall lack of readiness for the realities of USE by a number of stakeholders. These stakeholders included the students and their parents, teachers, principals and even the Ministry of Education itself that had overall responsibility for implementation and oversight of the USE policy. Many key stakeholders therefore showed a marked lack of readiness to deal with the demands of the policy according to the interviewees.

Five of the interviewed principals pointed out that all the necessary structures had not been fully put in place by the implementing authorities and that these deficiencies have continued to create challenges for school principals. The views of one male principal with fifteen years of experience highlighted this issue:

"I do not believe that the powers that be recognized or had foresight of the challenges. If you are going to have universal secondary education, you have to realize that in some schools there will be children who will not be on par as it relates to reading, numeracy and so forth and therefore a greater impetus should have been put in place to qualify teachers". (Ken)

One male principal from a rural school data indicated that some principals were not ready to deal with USE:

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"*I don't think even the Ministry of Education was fully prepared for USE. The principals were not fully prepared because it was only since USE was implemented that most of the training was done for teachers, so the students were really thrown on us*". (Elvis)

Another male rural counterpart of less than five years' experience noted that even the Ministry of Education was not fully ready for implementation and that this lack of readiness filtered down to the rest of the system to include teachers, principals, parents and students. He further stated that the "necessary structures were not put in place" and that the Ministry of Education "maybe had to implement the policy decision from higher up without doing the groundwork". (Akeem)

Another female principal with ten years of experience in the principalship pointed out that planning for the implementation of USE had been insufficient from the outset. She felt that full implementation of the USE policy should have been preceded by a piloting phase as a way of gauging the readiness of the system for its implementation and to remedy any perceived pitfalls associated with the policy change. She felt that full-blown implementation of the policy from the outset had been premature, as stated in this excerpt:

"*I think they could have tried a few pilot schools first. They could have worked with a couple of schools before they implemented the programme*". (Abigail)

This was further supported by another inexperienced principal from a rural school. She argued that there was more involved in the implementation of USE than "opening new classrooms and providing furniture" (Tracy). The following comment summarizes her views of USE and the pitfalls surrounding its initial implementation:

"Structures *must be put in place, people must be trained; curriculum, staffing, all these things should have been looked at before beginning these things*". (Tracy)

 Juxtaposed to the issue of readiness of these aforementioned key stakeholders was the perceived failure of the implementing authorities to properly inform them to the workings of the USE policy. The manner in which USE was implemented still appeared

to have some indirect impact or side effects on teacher attitude, performance and dispositions working the USE policy landscape.

Two principals indicated that the failure to adequately inform teachers about the policy still remained a lingering drawback on the smooth unfolding of the policy within the secondary schools. The insight provided by one rural male principal into this issue is encapsulated in this observation:

> "*I think that even though certain structures had not been put in place, they should have gone to the schools and informed teachers about what they were going to do. I don't think that was done and I think that that too added to a number of the problems. Teachers were not sensitized. It was not that they would have had all the necessary resources or so, but I think teachers should have been sensitized. So that worked against us*". (Jerome)

He concluded by stating that question of the timing of the policy was also an important issue. Indeed, for this rural principal, both the failure to sensitize teachers and the timing of the policy operated against the smooth implementation of USE. Overall, the issue of sensitization was raised most frequently by principals from the rural schools (27 %) while 5 male principals and 2 female principals pointed to the negative influence that lack of sensitization and timing of the policy had on their leadership practice.

4.7.2   Negative Impact of Primary School Education

Sixteen of the twenty-two principals (73%) also said that their work in dealing with the new students was exacerbated by the inadequacies of the primary education that many of the students had received prior to their entry into the secondary school. One principal felt that the education of the students had been neglected at the primary level and that secondary school principals had to seek ways to compensate for the identified inadequacies by devising programs for the students to bring them up to the standard of academic performance expected at the level of the secondary school. Leroy commented on the severity of the instructional shortcomings at the primary school level:

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"At the primary level, some serious shaking up needs to be done because after 5 or 6 or 7 years a student cannot read…. Something is wrong. The problem is being passed on to the secondary school because of the way education is being delivered in the primary schools". (Leroy)

"I think our biggest problem is what we have inherited from the primary school because I do not think if a child has done 6 or 7 years in the primary school, we should be still teaching the child to read at this point. The work should have been done in the primary schools. This is one of the definite weaknesses. I would like to see teachers get on board there and really work because we inherit too many problems". (Leslie)

Two rural-based principals pointed out that one unanticipated consequence of USE was that it led everyone to recognize that primary school education had not been meeting the learning needs of many students and had actually exposed a deep-rooted problem in literacy and numeracy at the primary school level:

"*Well, if the USE had not been implemented we would not have seen the problems of students not being able to read down in the primary school. And that is a major thing because they have noticed in the primary schools that students cannot read. Some may say that the students may not fit in, but down in the primary school they may not have had the opportunity"* (Jerome)

"I know that it shows up the problems that were hidden there in the primary school because a lot of the kids come into the school not being able to read and with a lot of problems and we never know about it until they get here so I think the USE actually revealed some of those problems (Nicole)

I think we now need to have some more centres for intense remediation for those students who are really weak and not ready for secondary school. The problem is being passed on to the secondary school because of the way education is being delivered in the primary school". (Denise)

Twelve respondents stated that, that the problems confronting principals in the secondary schools could be minimized with greater attention to the work of the primary schools. Two principals said that there had been an increase in the quality of the students coming out of the primary system, particularly as compared to 2005, the year of the full implementation of the USE policy. One experienced principal attributed this improvement in the quality of his students "certain structures that had been put in place to deal with the shortcomings of the students". (Kevin)

Two rural principals, in examining the gains and the academic improvement of some students after one year of remediation at the secondary level, were convinced that a more dynamic and student-centred primary program was needed for greater success of USE at the secondary level. In terms of the demographic trends eleven of the principals highlighting this issue were based at rural schools. Eleven male principals and four female principals indicated that the state of primary school education needed to be addressed since the primary schools were the feeder schools for secondary education. The inadequacies identified in the delivery of primary education were additionally compounded by the phenomenon of inadequate resources as outlined in the next section.

4.7.3   Instructional and Human Resources Constraints

The need for better resources in terms of more facilities and material resources was emphasized by eleven of the interviewees. As highlighted earlier, this lack of resources was particularly critical in the areas of personnel with the training and expertise required to cater for the varying needs of the diversified student population that had to be accommodated within the framework of Universal Secondary Education.

Another issue identified under the general rubric of inadequate resources was the need to provide the secondary schools with more specialist teachers with emphasis being placed on the recruitment of Mathematics and Science teachers as one area that needs urgent improvement. One female principal from a rural school commented on the shortage of specialist teachers in strategic subject areas:

"*The MOE has to provide more specialist teachers. You know, we are having a problem in the sciences, the math area, so more specialists need to be hired. And the resources generally need to be improved; material, instructional*". (Abigail)

Two principals mentioned that they were forced to discontinue programs that they deemed to be important given the level of student interest because they did not have a teacher available to continue to carry on those programs. Alternative programs such as music, visual arts and literacy were negatively affected by the unavailability of teachers to continue the programs.

"*We had visual art but we had to discontinue it because we do not have a teacher. That area our students did very well, but now it is completely off the curriculum. There are some children who are inclined in that area. They are artistically inclined. So we would like to see more of that*". (Jerome)

Two respondents also mentioned that shortage of human and material resources had hampered the delivery of lessons as teachers were often unable to execute lessons as planned. At one urban school, the unreliability of Internet connection had interfered with teachers' ability to deliver lessons and the integration of ICT resources into lesson delivery. At another rural school, the shortage of sufficient literacy teachers had caused the principal to shelve his plans of assigning two teachers to one classroom in order to promote individualized and differentiated instruction to the students.

One rural principal stated that there was uneven distribution of literacy coordinators among the secondary schools because an insufficient number of them had been trained and as a result, his reading room and state-of-the art facilities for reading were being under-utilized:

"I *would have liked to see more teachers being trained in helping to deal with the remedial problems because I cannot see the reason why our school cannot have a literacy coordinator when some secondary schools have three. And we have a well-equipped literacy centre; perhaps one of the best, but it is under-utilized*". (Michael)

Four principals stated that teachers often used their personal earnings to procure instructional and other material resources due insufficiency or lateness of supplies from the Government. Two rural principals mentioned that resources were not being supplied as previously and that they had to "practise fiscal prudence in these challenging times". (Michael)

Additionally, two principals pointed out that attention needed to be paid to the manner in which certain categories of human resources were allocated among the secondary schools to ensure a more equitable and strategic deployment of resources in areas where they were mostly needed. One principal cited an overabundance of literacy coordinators in one school while others schools did not have access to the services of a literacy coordinator.

One female principal from a rural school pointed out that the level of resources and support were not in keeping with their needs or expectations:

"I think that the delivery of the policy has improved over the years. Before, we would have asked for materials for schools and we would have had difficulty getting it, but now if we ask we get them more easily. But in terms of personnel coming down to see how we are faring, we get very little of that. And we are understaffed and a somewhat under-resourced". (Denise)

The issue of computers and other ICT resources were raised by six principals. Specifically, they mentioned the shortage of computers for students' use, the absence of a smart-board and the need for technology and software to enhance their remedial reading programs. A female principal from a rural school explained the resource scarcity problems in the following manner:

"We really need the reading room. It will help us very much in the literacy program and the young people are very much interested in computers. They love those things and the new thrust now   is integrating ICT in the curriculum. We have not been able to do that in terms of the reading program. We have a computer lab which is too small. It is impossible. We have about 18 computers in

working order. The size of the room cannot really facilitate all of the students with only 18 working out of 24". (Denise)

While a total of ten principals mentioned dissatisfaction with the level of human and instructional resources, four others stated that they were generally satisfied with the level of resources and that the provision of these resources had improved since USE implementation. One male urban principal said that the MOE and the Government "were trying their best given that we are implementing something like this on a large scale in a poor country" (Shane)

Nevertheless, the shortage, the uneven distribution of instructional resources and key support personnel were highlighted as areas that presented further challenges to principals and obstacles to fully implementing the programs that were needed to reduce the negative aspects of USE implementation.

4.7.4   Insufficient Autonomy Granted to Public School Principals

Seven principals from the public school system raised the issue of autonomy for principals in terms of the degrees of freedom that they were granted in operating the schools under USE. Two principals, one female and a male, from an urban and a rural school respectively, mentioned that public school principals were unable to deal with the expulsion of students, since such matters had to be referred to the office of the Chief Education Officer (CEO) for final arbitration. Both principals felt that the need to have all expulsions sanctioned from the CEO had a negative impact on the ability of the principal to discipline students at the school. Jerome compared the situation to that of the Government-assisted schools by stating: "In those schools you either shape up or you find somewhere else to go", a reference to the fate of those students that contravene school rules and regulations.

Both principals also addressed the issue of autonomy. One principal from an urban school said that the school was allowed sufficient autonomy in its decision – making and budget. However, this male principal from a rural school suggested otherwise:

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"*I do not think that the school has sufficient autonomy. The Ministry of Education can allow more powers to the schools*" (Jerome).

While acknowledging that there was good support from the Ministry of Education, he stated that there was greater need for decentralization under USE. He felt that it was important to decentralize control of the curriculum and those aspects of school management relating to student discipline in order for public school principals to deal effectively with the problems occurring under USE.

In a related vein, seven of the twenty-two respondents talked about the top-down approach that had been taken during the implementation of USE. Kevin said that "the whole process of USE was thrust upon us. We had no choice in that sense. It was just introduced". Winston told his staff that "It is a Ministry-inspired policy and there is nothing we can do about it". Barbara said that "Principals were thrust in at the deep end". Natalie stated that "it was thrust upon us and as principals; we had to deal with that". The general consensus emanating from the foregoing commentary of these principals was that the input of secondary school leaders was not sought prior to the implementation of the USE policy.

To summarize, 7 of the 17 public school principals indicated that greater autonomy was needed to make their work under USE more effective. The issue of autonomy was cited by 6 rural principals as a source of constraint on the effective execution of their leadership role. The issue was not applicable to assisted Government schools which are controlled by independent Boards. Jerome sums up the situation in this quotation:

"While *I think the support from the Ministry of Education is good, it is just that sometimes, you have to give up your autonomy*".

Central bureaucratic control was seen by 32% of principals as a challenge to the implementation of their managerial practices under the policy of Universal Secondary Education.

4.8   Theme 5: Parental and Community Challenges

Table 4.6: Breakdown of Participants' Key Statements, Analytical Categories, Codes and Frequencies of Occurrence for Theme 5

Sample Participants' Statements (Meaning Unit)	Codes used	Analytical Categories	Total number of key statements	No. of interviewees that mention sub-theme
-I think that the parents are not taking up their responsibilities at all. I think there is a point where the authorities should make the parents accountable. - We live in an area where we have the influence of drugs and not just the parents, but whole families are involved in it and that in itself can be very deceptive.	Negative Parental Attitudes Absentee parents Insufficient parental involvement and support Negative community influences	Parental Issues Community influences	84 13	16 5

The support of parents is extremely important to the successful functioning of USE. In this theme there are four areas in which the data indicated that school principals experienced a number of challenges. Lack of parental involvement in the education of their children, inadequate financial support for the students, failure to attend Parent-Teachers meetings, absentee parents and in a few communities, negative community values were important findings under this theme.

Sixteen of the principals interviewed said that said that they received little support from the parents and that parents were not actively involved in the education of the children. Lack of parental support for the school encompassed failure to visit the school to find out about their children's educational and social progress, refusal to pay monies to purchase books from the Government subsidized Book Loan Scheme, failure to provide meals for their children, not ensuring that the children do homework and lack of proper supervision of the children after school. One female rural principal from a small school summarized the parental engagement issue as follows:

"I think that the parents are not taking up their responsibilities at all. I think there is a point where the authorities should make the parents accountable. Do you know how many students come here without breakfast or lunch? There are a lot of social problems hampering the delivery of the programme". (Denise)

Social problems also included students living on their own without parental or adult supervision and parents who had migrated and left the students in the care of ageing grand-parents or distant relatives. Six principals from urban and rural schools touched on the issue of students living on their own or with minimal adult supervision. Three experienced male principals from large schools in two rural and one urban district respectively explained the phenomenon as follows:

"Many of these students are on their own, no provision at home and in the community and we find that for those students, it is difficult for them to adhere to rules and regulations". (Elvis)

"The major problem is when both parents are abroad and the child may be living with an immobile grandmother. That poses a real challenge". (Shane)

"We find that many of the children are not living with their parents. Their parents have either migrated or they are living with an aunt or a lot of them are living on their own, so the problem is hard to manage". (John).

Twelve principals expressed dissatisfaction with the attendance of parents at PTA meetings. Two principals pointed out that in their school average attendance at PTA meetings varied between 10% and 20 % of the parent body. Moreover, they pointed out that the parents of the students who were for the most part disengaged from their schooling, did not show up to meetings. Two rural principals stated that the parents were pleased to see their children attending a secondary school but showed no interest in the children's progress once they had been admitted to the school. This remark made by one male principal from a rural school encapsulates this issue:

"They are proud to have their son or daughter going to the secondary school, but they do not buy in to that responsibility". (Jerome)

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Four principals attributed the negative parental attitudes to factors rooted in the parents' own backgrounds or to factors entrenched in the immediate communities and environments in which the students live. One rural principal with less than five years' experience attributed the parents' lack of interest in education to their low socio-economic background or their own challenges in literacy and numeracy.

To reinforce this point, three rural-based principals indicated that USE had not been very effective in their communities as students and their parents did not see education as an avenue for social mobility since there were alternative ways of accumulating wealth other than through success in the school system.

"*We live in an area where we have the influence of drugs and not just the parents, but whole families are involved in it and that in itself can be very deceptive because some of our students who can go on to be great, fall short. For them, social mobility does not come from education. Social mobility comes from money*". (Denise)

She further pointed out the influence that the home had on the decision-making of some students and their attitude towards education:

"*Students who have the potential do not want to work, no matter what you do, because the home shows them something else; that money can be made easily*".

Another rural principal explained why it was challenging to implement successful educational programs at his school:

"*The people……… have a culture of drugs and that has dampened everything. This is the reality. You know what runs the economy of this area. Quite a few students are gravitating towards the 'agricultural sector'. The students are oriented towards that. They have that inclination. At least, that is why we feel the programme offered at school is useless to them*". (Winston)

Based on these remarks, these principals felt that both parental attitudes towards education and the prevailing culture of the communities in which the schools

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were located had resulted in greater managerial challenges under USE. While 6 principals stated that they had had positive experiences from parents in term of their involvement in the life of the school and the education of their children, 16 principals felt that parents in general needed to be more involved and proactive in order for USE to be more successful. The visible trend emanating from this analysis of parental engagement was that 4 of the schools reporting satisfaction with parental involvement were high-performing schools located in the urban area.

4.8.1   Summary

In summary, this chapter of the dissertation sought to provide answers to Research question 1: "What are the specific instructional and managerial challenges affecting school principals under Universal Secondary Education"? The analysis of the data revealed that Vincentian school principals faced a variety of managerial and instructional leadership challenges subsumed under five broad themes. These included student academic and student management challenges students, personnel-related challenges that involve the performance and attitudes of the teaching staff towards USE and its implementation. Additionally, a number of system-related challenges emerged from the data that encompassed the readiness of the school system for USE and the deficiencies existing in the primary school system that supplied the raw materials for secondary education. The two remaining themes focused on the internal environment of the schools and external challenges posed by parents and the wider community. In the next chapter, principals' responses to these challenges from an instructional leadership and a managerial leadership perspective are explored and presented.

Chapter 5. INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF VINCENTIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

5.1 Introduction

The focus of the second research question was: "What are the specific leadership and managerial practices that principals use under Universal Secondary Education"? This section of the data analysis seeks to answer this question by examining the specific instructional leadership and other school managerial practices used by Vincentian principals to carry on the work of the schools under Universal Secondary Education. The structure of the analysis is based on the five clusters of principal instructional and managerial practices indicated in the Grissom and Loeb (2009) framework, with some minor adjustments to the framework to incorporate the unique elements of USE not covered by Grissom and Loeb (2009).

The Grissom and Loeb Framework (2009) included five broad analytical categories of principal leadership practices. In this study, four analytical categories are used instead of five, to summarize the findings from the data analysis as shown in the comparative table below.

**Table 5.1 COMPARATIVE MATRIX OF GRISSOM AND LOEB THEMES AND
RESEARCHER'S ORGANIZING THEMES**

GRISSOM AND LOEB (2009) ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES	CATEGORIES USED IN THIS STUDY
Instruction Management	Instruction Management Practices
Internal Relations	Internal Relations Practices
Organization Management	Administrative and Organizational Practices
Administration	
External Relations	External Relations Practices

As far as possible, the study has maintained fidelity to the Grissom and Loeb (2009) Framework with one exception. Due to the overlapping nature of the themes of Organization and Management and the non-applicability of some of the factors in the Framework to the conditions under USE in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, these two themes from Grissom and Loeb (2009) have been have been combined into a single theme. A further comparison of the Grissom and Loeb factors and codes and the sub-themes used in the analysis can be found in Appendix J.   Some terminology differs as certain practices mentioned are unique to principals in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and are not conceptually captured by the Grissom and Loeb (2009) Framework.

5.2 Theme 6: Instructional Leadership and Management Practice

Table 5.2 Breakdown of Participants' Key Statements, Analytical Categories, Codes and Frequencies of Occurrence for Theme 6

Sample Participants' Statements (Meaning Unit)	Codes used	Analytical Categories	Total number of key statements	No. of interviewees that mention sub-theme
-We plan, we discuss how to take the school forward bearing in mind the circumstances under which we operate, the problems which we have observed and we come up with various strategies. Then we will plan our staff development sessions to determine which of the teaching strategies that we will subscribe to and we organize a lot of staff development session	-Training in Literacy and Numeracy -Classroom management -Teacher Planning -School Development Planning -Student Assessment and Evaluation	Professional Development of the teaching Staff	61	22
What we do, we have to tailor down the curriculum. The students are given subjects that are not so challenging. Some subjects are more hands-on.	Curriculum simplification Hands-on curricula	Curriculum Modification and Innovation	42	13
I have spoken recently with the members of my Mathematics department and we are devising strategies towards combating the problems in numeracy. We have used the normal curriculum with some adjustments to methodology	-Remedial classes -Primary school teaching strategies - Innovations in student assessments	Adjustment of Teaching Methodology and Creativity in Teaching	25	7
When the students come in at Form 1 level, we administer a diagnostic test, so all the students are given a Math test and according to their performance they are grouped.	-Ability Groupings -Alternate routes to certification	Differentiated Teaching and Learning	32	10
The introduction of the one lap-top per student initiative; investments in phonics software and other software	-Integration of ICT -ICT as a student motivational avenue	Incorporation and Use of Technology	68	16

have helped with the literacy and numeracy of the students at primary and even at the Form One level.	-Insufficient ICT resources -One lap-top per child initiative			

5.2.1   Introduction

The Instructional leadership and management dimension " represents the set of tasks in which principals engage in order to promote, support and improve the implementation of curricular programmes in the classroom" (Grissom & Loeb, 2011, p.15). Based on this guideline, the analysis of this theme is structured to include the following sub-themes adduced from the analysis of data: (a) professional development of the teaching staff (b) Curriculum modification and innovation (c) Teaching methodology and creativity in teaching (d) Differentiated teaching, ability groups and alternative certification and (e) greater incorporation and use of technology in teaching.

5.2.2   Professional Development of the Teaching Staff

The subject of professional development of teachers and principals was mentioned by all 22 respondents. When asked about the instructional and managerial strategies they employed to improve academic output under USE, 18 of the 22 principals interviewed said that the professional development of the teaching staff was   their most urgent priority in their quest to improve the instructional programme in their respective schools. The training of teachers to deal with specific areas such as the teaching of literacy and numeracy was emphasized by 14 of the principals. Professional development of teachers involved in-house workshops, seminars, training facilitated by outside resource persons as well as online courses and assistance from the local Teachers' Training College with emphasis on the teaching of remedial reading and the diagnosis of students.

Eight of the principals interviewed said that they were focusing on improving their teachers' classroom management competencies. Michael, an experienced male principal from a rural school noted that classroom management was "a weak area that his teachers needed to capitalize on" while John emphasized that "classroom

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management is an area that we need to strengthen". Winston focused on providing induction for new teachers on aspects of lesson planning and class control. He added that he had put on a number of workshops at the beginning of the year to "specifically prepare teachers to deal with these students". For one female principal from a rural school, the issue of classroom management was so important that she had already put on three sessions for the school year. One male principal from an urban government school received assistance from an experienced member of staff in conducting sessions on classroom management with the other members of staff. The importance of the development of competence in classroom management by teachers is encapsulated in this statement from an urban principal based at a government-assisted school:

I think that one may need to look at a one month programme that anyone entering the teaching profession during the month of August must be involved in; a one month program covering basic classroom management, questioning techniques and proper methods of disciplining students (Ken).

Classroom management was not the only instructional leadership practice emphasized by principals under professional development. Monitoring and supervision of learning was mentioned by 7 principals (32%) as fundamental to the success of USE. Shane, an experienced urban principal called for a "comprehensive system of monitoring and evaluation", while Leslie supported this view with a call for "systematic monitoring of teaching and learning". Abigail, a female rural principal with less than two years in the position said:

The key is monitoring what is happening in the school…..It is the key job of the principal. You must monitor the quality of teaching and learning (Abigail)

A similar position was expressed by Kevin 1 who spoke about the importance of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in the following terms:

I really believe, sir, from a management point of view, that monitoring is crucial, assessments that would have been done and the targets that teachers have set at the beginning of the term, must be monitored and assessed continuously (Kevin)

Four of the principals said that the purpose of teacher monitoring and evaluation visits was to offer support to teachers and to provide teachers with guidance on how to improve their teaching methodology and their lesson delivery. In the words of Kevin, these monitoring and evaluative activities had had "a marked difference" on student performance since they were instituted.

Inadequate teacher planning had been identified by one principal as hampering the effective delivery of USE. Jerome pointed out that "if teachers know someone is listening to their lessons, more planning goes into it and students come out better". In keeping with this view, eight principals mentioned lesson planning and delivery as one of the strategies they used as part of their professional development initiatives. One experienced principal from a rural school invited outside specialists to carry out demonstration lessons in various subject areas so that "teachers can see what is actually happening" (Michael). Two other principals had requested time off from the authorities "to allow teachers time to plan in an organized way" (Denise). Another experienced principal said: "Every term we ensure that teachers are educated by emphasizing lesson planning and also lesson execution (John)", thereby underscoring the views of principals on the role of lesson planning for improved delivery of education under USE.

Three male principals also mentioned school development planning and instructional planning as being pivotal to their management of the teaching and learning environment. Instructional planning was highlighted as one of the important avenues for greater success in implementing the USE policy, particularly in light of the number of constraints and challenges confronting Vincentian secondary school principals. One male principal with two years' experience on the job spoke of the importance of instructional planning as laying the foundation for coping with the challenges posed by the varying student clientele admitted to secondary schools under the USE policy:

"Well, firstly, it is planning. I sit together with the teachers……. We plan, we discuss how to take the school forward bearing in mind the circumstances under which we operate, the problems which we have observed and we come up with various strategies. Then we will plan our staff development sessions to determine

which of the teaching strategies that we will subscribe to and we organize a lot of staff development sessions". (Leroy)

One other rural principal said that used his school development plan to guide the collection and use of data for program planning and improvement. His Instructional and strategic school planning was based on an analysis of student performance from data collected through various assessments throughout the school year. The excerpt below illustrates his use of planning for further enhancing student outcomes:

"Okay, what we do in education is to ensure that we have a school development plan so, for example, this is my school plan for 2013.And this forms a guide as to how I do my assessments, how I evaluate the students and programs that I do…... A lot of our planning is based on the evaluation, be it formative or summative evaluation, of the data collected" (John).

Specialized training in Literacy and Numeracy instruction was an approach used by 15 principals with assistance from the Ministry of Education to overcome the literacy issues identified previously. Teachers were provided specialized training in literacy instruction and assigned the role of literacy coordinators to help to reduce the high incidence of reading problems existing in schools. The internal language support coordinators were also instrumental in the training of other members of the teaching staff in remedial strategies for struggling readers. The following excerpts provide some insight into the important role played by literacy coordinators in principals' response to the problems of literacy in some schools under USE:

"We have a trained literacy teacher so what is good for us is that some of our teachers are exposed to literacy training and we have a number of qualified English teachers and although, we have a teacher who did her degree in English and although she did not do literacy she is able to understand and help". (Tracy)

"Now to deal with the literacy aspect, what we have done is to have a literacy program in place. And we have secured the help, of, in addition to our literacy coordinator; we have secured the help of a Peace Corps volunteer who is assigned to the school for two years in the first instance". (John)

"What we have done is to try to prepare some teachers with what we call literacy skills. We have literacy coordinators in the school". (Leroy)

"We have remedial programmes, we are looking at the academics now. We have our remedial programmes specifically literacy and numeracy and we have our teachers trained in delivering those remedial programmes". (Elvis)

Three principals also instituted a comprehensive program of integrating reading across all content areas as part of their school's language immersion strategy. Kevin described the strategy as "a barrage of methodologies in which reading was done across the board in all subject areas. This principal concluded by stating that greater focus on training teachers at the graduate level with specialization in the delivery of literacy and numeracy techniques was what was needed to ensure the success of the USE policy.

Aligned to the strategy of specialist training was that of further exposure of teachers to student assessment and evaluation techniques and further training in testing and measurement. Three principals from rural schools said that they conducted workshops for their teachers in student assessment and evaluation and testing with particular focus on "test writing, item construction and holistic student evaluation and assessment" (Denise).

Eleven principals mentioned using assessment and evaluation data not only for such purposes as student placement and decision-making in areas such as programme delivery, but also for the professional development of the teaching staff. Particularly in teaching methodology and teaching strategies. One rural, male principal describe using assessment and evaluation data " to inform practice" (Michael), while a female counterpart from a similar-sized rural school said that he used data from reading assessments "to get us that sort of insight into our students" (Denise)

Additionally, three experienced principals mentioned that they had engaged in mentoring and coaching of recently hired teachers as part of their professional development. Another principal from an urban school engaged in regular one on one meetings in some instances or group meetings with teachers. He explained that this practice served to boost the confidence of this teachers and that many of them "came on

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board in spite of the initial reservations towards USE (Ken)". He further explained that this mentoring approach had helped to empower teachers and that the strategy had paid" dividends in terms of teacher professionalism and performance". (Kevin)

A male principal from a large rural school explained that he had used his experience and expertise as an external examiner for the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) to provide specialized training for his staff as a strategy to prepare them for the delivery of the external examinations curriculum to the students:

"I train my teachers to answer to CXC specifications because as you know I am an examiner and I assist in writing the curriculum". (John)

Another principal summarized the benefit of professional development for the schools in the following terms:

"Very early next term we are going to have a workshop. As professional development, what we did over most of the years was to have workshops, so as to prepare teachers to deal with the challenges posed by these students. It is definitely paying off". (Warren).

In summary, the professional development of teachers has been varied and attempted to target teachers at all levels of the system. Some principals focused on providing specialized professional development through targeting certain areas such as curriculum and assessment; others concentrated on methodology and dealing with special needs of the students. Some principals targeted their training to new teachers while others engaged in whole school professional development designed to improve teaching practice throughout the school and with all staff members.

5.2.3   Curriculum Modification and Innovation

Among the instructional strategies that Vincentian principals developed to cope with the instructional challenges created under USE was that of modifying the curriculum and introducing innovations to the regular, standard secondary school curriculum. Thirteen of the twenty two respondents touched on the issue of curriculum modification.

One modification that principals mentioned was that of a reduction of the workload of the lower-performing students. Ten principals (45%) had decided to reduce the students' workload from the standard eight subject areas stipulated for all secondary schools to five or six subject areas. One rural principal said that they had reduced the workload so that some difficult areas such as foreign languages had been eliminated. Another female principal had adjusted her foreign language curriculum to provide students with a basic working knowledge of the oral aspects of the language, but with the understanding that students would not offer those subjects at the CSEC external examinations. A male principal from a large rural school justified his reduction by stating that "students having reading problems will also have problems with these subjects". (Michael)

Additionally, eight principals said that they had allocated more hours to teaching the core subjects of Mathematics, English Language and Social Studies. When asked about the time allocation, one principal said that "quality instructional time was allocated to Mathematics and Language Arts and that both subject areas had been increased from five to nine periods per week" (Kevin). He also added that" extra sessions had been added during the lunch periods for students who were very weak. Describing what he saw as a more appropriate curriculum for his lower-performing students, another male principal based in a rural district said:

We have increased the number of periods in literacy and numeracy, family life and those sort of things we have increased those numbers". (Elvis)

In all, four rural-based principals mentioned additional instructional time for students before the start of school or after school as one strategy they had employed to help to increase student learning.

Fourteen principals said that the traditional academically based curriculum offered to students under USE was not appropriate and was not meeting the present or future needs of the students. All of the principals called for a more hands-on practical curriculum geared towards the future employment needs of the students. The following comments made by various rurally-based principals serve to illustrate initiatives taken to provide a more appropriate curriculum:

"*What we do, we have to tailor down the curriculum. The students are given subjects that are not so challenging. Some subjects that are more hands-on. Like technical drawing, woodwork, home economics, food and nutrition, home management, social studies, these kinds of subjects that they are able to do as compared with the brighter students. You find that we have to tailor the curriculum in such a way to suit these children.*" (Michael)

"*I would also recommend as we discussed earlier, some adjustment to our curriculum to include more practical or skilled subjects even in the grammar schools, the very academic schools.*" (Tracy)

"*The technical institute is within walking distance and the students from this school who want to pursue technical education; that is woodwork, technical drawing, food and nutrition, home management are allowed to do so*". (Ken)

One experienced principal further stated that there was not a proper fit between the needs, interests and abilities of the students and current curriculum offerings in the secondary program under Universal Secondary Education. He went on to point out that the academic nature of education under USE and its unsuitability for his student as well as for the national development of the country:

"*But I think what should happen is that we should start diversifying into skills, but what you find here is that everything is academic. Everybody is going off to study things academic. And the simple thing is that our labour market will not be able to absorb all the academics, but where are the skills? You hardly see skilled people around. And we see the level of competence is not very high, and while at school, if they are interested in a particular skill they are not starting from the bottom, because they already have some experience.*" (Winston)

In a related quote, another rural male principal highlighted the importance of providing a more relevant curriculum for the type of students that had been introduced since USE implementation into the secondary schools. He was in favour of a practical curriculum that coincided with the immediate economic needs of the community and that

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harmonized with the interests, abilities and inclinations of the bulk of the student population attending secondary schools under USE.

"W*e infuse certain topics into the school because the school's curriculum has to respond to the needs of the society, address issues that affect the society for sustainability, so if we find that there is a need for farming we should be able to infuse that into the curriculum". (Warren)*

Three principals reported that they had broadened the current curriculum offerings by introducing more vocational subjects into the curriculum. These new subject offerings included woodwork, homemaking and sewing and one rural principal was focusing on physical education as an avenue for harnessing the sporting talents of some students. One female principal stated: *if hands-on can be done in all the schools this should make the system much more viable and a lot better (Abigail)".*

Using analysis of assessment data, one rural principal of twenty years' experience, decided to place emphasis on technical-vocational education as the central plank of his curriculum reform strategy as illustrated in this comment:

We look at the data from the mark readings. I find in certain areas students are not performing well, so I make a curriculum to have a more skill-oriented base. We have Technical Drawing and Woodwork. Clothing and Textiles is being introduced because we looked at the scores (Michael)

Another female principal from a small rural school explained that in additional to making curricular adjustments, her teachers were focusing on varying their teaching techniques to meet the needs of classes with varying ability levels:

"*We have done some adjustments, for example, to our Math curriculum in Form 1. Recognizing the problems that some of our students were having, we tried to do more like reasoning. We set aside a special period just to deal with certain kinds of mathematical problems". (Tracy)*

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Curriculum modification also involved the introduction of a number of alternative programs as well as alternative certifications for students at risk of leaving school without certification at the CSEC examinations. Eleven principals stated that they had initiated or were hoping to initiate alternative programs which they considered more relevant to the students who were not adapting well to the academic programs on offer at the schools. Five principals said that they were expanding their curricular programs to include music, arts, drama as alternative avenues to the rigorous academic courses required for certification at the externally-administered CSEC examinations. A female principal from an urban school explained the growing importance of these alternative programs as follows:

> *"I think for those students they need hands-on. For those students who cannot read they need other kinds of programs. There is no point of them doing French and Spanish and those areas. Strange enough, if you know the number of students in this school that want to do hospitality; that is why now, here, we do food and nutrition, home management, clothing and textiles, music, physical education A number of them are opting for PE. A lot of students are going into that. Those are programs that I am trying to keep on the curriculum" (Natalie)*

Five principals from rural schools felt that the future of their students resided in the pursuit of a well-structured, organized program of technical education and encouraged students who had shown an inclination or competencies in these areas to pursue that pathway. One principal spoke about the efforts that the Ministry of Education had made in introducing certification for students in technical vocational education called Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQs) and the promise of those programmes for students with an interest in the field of technical-vocational education:

> *"Right now, The Ministry of Education is in the process of introducing CVQ's in terms of technical subjects and I think that is the way we need to go in terms of helping the students to find their skills (Alfred)*

In summary, this section revealed the various approaches that Vincentian principals used to devise curricula that were relevant and appropriate to the needs of many of its students under USE. It revealed that in addition to the normal curriculum

used for more capable students, school principals saw the need to provide holistically for all students involved in the USE policy and that adjusting the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of all groups, while maintaining high standards for students of high ability was a fundamental strategy of seventeen of the principals interviewed. Instructional supervision formed the core of instructional leadership practiced by almost eighty per cent of the schools' principals involved in the study.

5.2.4 Adjustment in Teaching Methodology and Creativity in Teaching

Secondary school principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines emphasized innovative and creative pedagogy as another avenue to improve the learning outcomes for their students under USE. Seven of the 22 principals in the study indicated that they had worked with their teachers to develop new approaches to the delivery of curriculum content or to adapt their teaching methodology to meet the needs and demands of the new clientele under USE. One principal from an urban school had asked the teachers to adjust their teaching methodologies to cater for the needs of USE students who were experiencing academic difficulties:

I have spoken recently with the members of my Mathematics department and we are devising strategies towards combating the problems in numeracy. We have used the normal curriculum with some adjustments to methodology". (Shane)

Another strategy employed by principals was the creation of remedial classes for the students performing at the lower end of the spectrum. Eight principals, six from rural schools and two others from large urban government schools said that they had created remedial classes. One male principal stated that he deliberately kept these remedial classes small, with an average of twenty students, "so that we could provide them with individual attention in order to bring them up to a standard that would allow them to get into the regular program" (Elijah). Another experienced rural principal outlined that at his school the teachers were using an integrated approach to reading. He explained that this pedagogical strategy involved incorporating music videos in the lessons. Students were required to listen to the videos, transcribed the words and then read the words in synchronization with the music as an integral part of improving their reading skills.

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Additionally, five principals revealed that they resorted to teaching strategies used in the primary school system to attempt to bring their students up to a level commensurate with secondary education. Primary school pedagogical strategies included the use of manipulatives, spelling and phonics. Three of these principals mentioned that they had ordered two programmes called 'Hooked-on-Phonics' and 'Jolly Phonics' to help students to overcome their reading deficits. A rural female principal described her strategy as follows:

We have to adapt the material to suit their needs. Here I have finger phonics. This is not what you will normally see in a secondary school (Nicole)

Another rural principal revealed that he concentrated on spelling, writing, pronunciation and comprehension in his efforts to raise literacy standards among his students:

We use different strategies that were used in the primary schools. We try different strategies such as cooperative learning, 'buddy reading' where the students sit with someone and read during the lunch break for twenty minutes" (Elijah)

Six principals said that they had introduced reading as a subject on the regular timetable and students were scheduled to do reading exclusively during those sessions. One urban principal also initiated silent reading as well as whole class reading as another innovative approach.

We introduced things like universal, uninterrupted, sustained, silent reading. We also introduced remedial reading sessions and a class simply for reading so it was not really a class for language where the students will do every component of that, but a class for reading. (Ken)

Innovations were also introduced in the formative and summative assessments of the students. Eight of the principals had instituted a number of accommodations to help to facilitate student performance. These accommodations included teachers reading to students during tests or examinations, having variations of examinations for various groups of students in the same classes and oral testing for students

experiencing reading and writing challenges.   One experienced principal described the measures undertaken for student improvement as a "barrage of methodologies that worked wonders" (Kevin). When prompted about the effectiveness of the interventions at his school, he made the following comment:

They have been very effective, because what we have happening right now is that we do not have that low level of reading ability among students of this school as happened in 2005 (Kevin).

Different learning activities to which students were exposed were adopted by this principal. New ways of delivering curriculum that were more in tune with the interests of the students. One rural principal of twenty years' experience from a rural secondary school commented on this approach at his institution:

"Now reading is also a problem so what we have done is to put in place for ourselves a reading room which is fully air-conditioned with computers We also have within that space a mini-library where students can do their research and so forth. We also have our internal reading programme. When I say our own internal programme, I mean that we have like literacy week; we have public speaking during that literacy week, discussions, family discussions, book reviews". (John)

In summary, 80 per cent of the principals interviewed stressed innovative and creative teaching methodology as one avenue through which the delivery of education could be improved under USE. Four principals from high-performing schools mentioned that they were working with their teachers to adapt their teaching methodology, while all the principals from lower performing schools indicated they had worked with their teaching to develop new approaches to the delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of the new clientele entering secondary schools under USE.

5.2.5   Differentiated Teaching, Streaming and Alternative Certification

Vincentian principals also sought to minimize the academic and student management problems brought on by USE by adopting an internal management policy

of tracking or academic streaming of students. Ten of 22 principals said that the used ability groupings or streaming as part of their strategy to seek to optimize the academic output of all the students assigned to their schools. Diagnostic testing of the students on entry to secondary schools was carried out by eight of these principals to determine how best to group the students, particularly in the core subject areas of Mathematics and English. Based on the results of these student assessments, students were timetabled in a way so that they could receive maximum assistance in those areas where they had greatest need. One male principal from a large rural school explained this strategy in the following terms:

> "When *the students come in at Form 1 level, we administer a diagnostic test, so all the students are given a Math test and according to their performance they are grouped and they are given an English test, so you would find that a student who is good in Math but weak in English, he is placed within a strong class for Math at that period".* (Michael)

Three principals from large rural secondary schools justified theirs use of streaming as a necessity based on the students' performance in reading:

> "We have used streaming. We had to stream them to make allowance for those who cannot read and whose numeracy level is low. So we are using streaming to deal with them" (Jerome)

Another female counterpart stated: "We had to stream them to make allowance for those who cannot read. Some people do not like streaming but we stream here" (Nicole)

Another rural male principal stated: "We do a lot of streaming and we have a literacy centre. We take them there; the weaker ones" (Alfred).

Three principals mentioned that they used ability groupings rather than streaming to deal with the range of students with mixed abilities that resulted from USE. These principals preferred to retain an inclusive classroom dynamic but chose to group their students according to ability levels for core disciplines such as Mathematics and English

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Language. One male principal said: "we do not stream them, you show them that you can push them and that they can fulfil their potential as a group". (Leslie). Denise corroborated this by saying: "We maintain an inclusive classroom, but pull them out of classes at particular times for them to go to reading"

In one instance, one rural male principal used the reading scores derived from the annual end-of-year reading assessment at the primary school level as his organizing framework for grouping his students: "In grade 6, I think there were some reading assessment tests and they sent the results to us so that we can stream. I do not want to use stream, but to group them according to reading scores." (Winston) Overall, eleven of the principals interviewed used differing terminology such as streaming and ability grouping to describe their strategy of maximizing student learning in the USE environment, particularly in rural secondary schools.

Seven principals referred specifically to the practice of differentiated teaching as an effective and strategic response to the challenges posed by USE students. One male principal from a large urban school said that "his focus will be on individualized and differentiated instruction" (John). Similarly, Abigail, a female principal from a small rural school stated: "We have tried a number of things including differentiated teaching practice". Another principal from a large urban school pointed out that she had initiated a differentiated program at the third-form level that was so successful that she kept "the differentiated programme for two years" (Ruthann). Another female principal from a large rural school also pointed out that: "the program of differentiation was good, especially when the students are at extreme ends of the spectrum and need special help" (Tracy) Hence, 32 per cent of the interviewees felt that differentiation of teaching and learning was an ideal approach to reach all students given their varying abilities and competencies.

Intertwined with the strategies of differentiation was that of block scheduling and strategic timetabling. Five principals used block scheduling to ensure that all students were allocated adequate time to work on the core areas of the school curriculum. These principals timetabled specific subjects simultaneously. This was combined with ability groupings in some subject areas based on the identified needs of individual students.

According to one rural principal, students that showed improvement were put into a higher-performing group "that suit their ability" (Michael).

This approach was explained in detail by one rurally-based principal:

"Well, we tried all kinds of things because we tried dividing them into groups according to ability groupings, but not for all subjects. Because although some might be weak in particular areas, they are strong in other areas. For reading, we have everybody timetabled in the Form 1. So they do reading at the same time. So we have blocked that. Stronger readers would go in one group. The weaker readers and others will go in another group. Within those groups we have a lot of sub-groups and we try to teach them, to help them". (Denise)

Aligned to teaching differentiation and block scheduling was a focus on providing alternative certification to students at risk of dropping out before arriving at Grade 12 or those unlikely to obtain end-of-school certification through completion of the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) offered by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC). For students in the Caribbean, the CSEC Examinations are used "to assess and certify a student's academic achievement after five years of secondary education" (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 2012). It is also "a terminal examination for secondary education and the basic requirement for the pursuit of tertiary education" (Leo-Rhynie, 2006).

From the interview data, 12 of the principals interviewed indicated that they were focusing on offering the Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence (CCSLC) as an achievement benchmark for many of their students. According to the Caribbean Examinations Council (2014), the CCSLC "was developed in response to a regional imperative to provide for universal secondary education" (p. 1). The Council commenced these examinations in 2007 and the examinations were intended as an interim certification for students at the Form 3 or Grade 10 stage in secondary schooling (CXC, 2014).

Based on the goal of certification, many principals from lower-performing secondary school described their strategy in using the CCSLC examinations as an

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avenue for ensuring that at-risk students obtained some level of certification before leaving secondary school under the policy of Universal Secondary Education. One male principal from a rural school explained the role of the CCSLC in preparing his students for improved performance at the CSEC examinations required for graduation and full certification from secondary school:

Right now, we have 40–odd children signed up for the CCSLC. The good thing about the CCSLC is that it is strong, because it is helping the CSEC students to build, to fill in the gap as it were…That is what helps to give them practice (Warren)

Two other principals indicated that there was an important link between the CCSLC and future careers in technical education for students who were not academically-inclined or those with the likelihood of exiting the system before secondary school completion:

Well, we now have the CCSLC. The advantage is that if they have Math and English at CCSLC, they can go to the technical centers and get into other programs that they might prefer, but you must have the CCSLC Math to access that". (Michael)

A female principal from a rural area felt that the CCSLC was academically beneficial in that it provided a thorough grounding for students if it was implemented at the early stages of secondary school:

I said that we will implement the CCSLC from form 1 and then build on it so by the time they get to Form 4 they should be prepared to deal with the CSEC. They would have had a good foundation because the CCSLC helps them to build a foundation (Warren).

Two principals pointed out however that it was difficult to convince some parents about the benefits to be derived from adoption of the CCSLC assessment as a viable option for student improvement. Warren pointed out that parents with children with high academic potential were opposed to their children pursuing the CCSLC certification. Parental resistance to the CCSLC was highlighted in this comment:

"There are some people who do not want to accept it still even though it is good, for example, if someone has a child who is brilliant enough, they will say: 'why do they have to do the CCSLC'? (Warren)

Similarly, some teachers had negative views in relation to the pursuit of the CCSLC as an alternative to the more prestigious CSEC exam done at the end of secondary schooling. Hence, while some principals emphasized the involvement of the students in CCSLC certification as a worthwhile strategy for student improvement under USE, not all elements of the teaching staff shared this vision. One male principal from a rural school commented on teacher scepticism towards the CCSLC certification:

"We have CCSLC now and we are able to help more students. We start the CCSLC in form 3, if you drop out in form 4 you would have achieved something. Only that some teachers are arguing: What is the CCSLC? Where is that going to take you? It provides you with evidence that they have a certain level of knowledge". (Jerome)

Notwithstanding these reservations by some stakeholders, 12 of the principals interviewed had a favourable attitude towards encouraging their middle school students to pursue the CCSLC as an alternative route to certification of their secondary school level of competence. They also believed that the CCSLC provided a sound foundation for students to continue on to secondary school completion to the level of the CSEC examinations.

In summary, this sub-theme examined secondary principals' use of teaching differentiation, strategic grouping of students or streaming and alternative certification of students as strategies to counter the administrative and educational challenges encountered under USE. The salient trend identified was that principals of low-performing, rural secondary schools were more inclined to use these approaches to mitigate the challenges caused by having larger numbers of students who had performed poorly on the Common Entrance Examination at the time of initial entry to secondary schools. To further assist them in their quest for improved educational output from USE students, incorporation of Information and Communication technologies is further developed in the ensuing sub-theme.

5.2.6 Incorporation and Use of Technology in Education

Based on the interview data, sixteen of the 22 principals (73 per cent) indicated that the adoption, integration and use of a greater variety of modern communication technologies constituted an important tool in their endeavours to improve the standard of teaching and learning in their schools. When asked about her major successes in USE implementation, one female principal from a rurally-based school mentioned "using ICT to improve teaching" (Abigail). Another male counterpart from another rural school said "One of the areas where we have a lot of help internally is the area of ICT; the whole computerized approach to learning" (John)

The use of Information and communication technology was particular prevalent in literacy instruction. Eight of the 16 principals mentioned above indicated that their teachers had used computer-aided instructional devices to help deal with the issue of reading and literacy skills. These ICT resources included a variety of computer-assisted programs, listening workstations, phonics software, spelling-enhanced software to help students in mastery of the basics of reading, writing and linguistic communication. This statement from an inexperienced principal from a large, rural school illustrates the role of ICT in instruction under USE:

> "*The introduction of the one lap-top per student initiative; investments in phonics software and other software have helped with the literacy and numeracy of the students at primary and even at the Form One level*". (Alfred)

In several schools teachers have been making a conscious effort to integrate the use of ICT in various subject areas. Ten principals reported using modern communication tools such as whiteboards, overhead and multimedia projectors as well as online learning tools as part of their repertoire of teaching under USE as compared to more rudimentary tools such as charts and Bristol boards that predominated before the introduction of USE. This upgrade to modern technology was described by an experienced male principal: *"Teachers are trying as far as possible to incorporate the net-book into the instructional process and they have also been using the ICT projectors". (Kevin)* In a related vein, two principals indicated that their teachers had made good use of an online learning tool called Edmodo, which was described by one

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urban, male principal as " the most successful aspect of introducing ICT in the classroom" (Winston).

Two other principals emphasized the motivational impact of ICT on the students. Kevin stated that "there are children interested in doing ICT", while Winston said: "These young people are interested in computers. They love these things and therefore, the new thrust is integrating ICT into the curriculum". Another male, rural principal stated that Information Technology should be a compulsory offering at the entry level for students since he viewed the subject as being pivotal for their future success.

"I ensure that students, especially at the Form 1 level, must have IT being taught to them because we are in a technological age and I did not see any IT being taught here even though the students had access to the net-books". (Warren)

Four principals, while favourable to greater incorporation of ICT as an instructional tool, also pointed out some of the drawbacks confronting school principals in trying to make this initiative as effective as possible. Warren mentioned "the lack of sufficient computers to fully implement ICT across the school", while Winston said that "the absence of a well-equipped room with sufficient functioning computers had hampered my initiative to bring all the struggling readers up to a satisfactory level". Another experienced female principal spoke of her successes in optimizing the use technology in the face of numerous challenges:

"With the children, most of them are not motivated towards academics. With all the social activities of Face-Book, the TV, video, MP3, all these things are distractions. But we try to make our lessons as interesting as possible and we try to incorporate technology, use of overhead projectors, and use of computers and so forth to assist". (Barbara)

Additionally, eight of the principals interviewed spoke positively about the technology-driven initiative in which one net book computer has been made available to each student in the first forms of all secondary schools. This incorporation of technology has been viewed as an effective way of enhancing the curriculum in all subject areas as well as an avenue to help to build needed skills in reading, language and other core

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elements of the curriculum. The expansion of modern computer-technology to the classroom was welcomed as a positive step by this experienced principal:

"*As you are aware, we have integrated the one net-book policy. The policy has its pros and cons, students are motivated but there are challenges where students are using that piece of equipment for other things." (Kevin)*

Two other principals summarized the central role of ICT expansion as part of the principals' instructional leadership practice particularly with reference to student motivation as well as to ensuring that teachers were equipped to integrate the technology effectively:

"*About two weeks from now we are going to have someone come in do ICT training. Somebody is going to do an integrated Mathematics lesson, a model Science lesson so that teachers can see what is happening". (Michael)*

"*We tend to capitalize a lot on the ICT integration because of the type of students that we have here at the school. And Most of them are boys and they like these electronic gadgets, they like anything electronic, like a computer programs and so on, so most of our lessons we tend to focus on integrating ICT. We have computers. We have a smart board. We have projectors. Laptops that can go around and we try to integrate these as much as possible to motivate the students". (Abigail)*

"*We have improved in the area of teaching strategies in the sense that we have computers. We have projectors and that sort of thing, so the teachers have more teaching aids when it comes to delivery of lessons". (Elijah)*

Based on the comments made by principals about their increasing involvement in promoting ICT as an avenue for improving teaching and learning, two salient points emerged. The incorporation of ICT was a recent phenomenon that that was gaining momentum slowly among some teachers. Secondly, school leaders needed to ensure teachers receive more in-depth training to help them make the transition from the traditional "chalk and talk" approach to alternative methods of teaching. 80 per cent of

the principals interviewed are increasingly encouraging the active use of new technology to diversify teaching methods and to incorporate varied techniques designed to maintain the interests of the current population of students in education. The use of ICT is therefore one of the avenues through which principals are implementing their instructional leadership practices under Universal Secondary Education in Saint Vincent. Additionally, nine of the principals expressed appreciation for the support received from the Ministry of Education in respect of the increased thrust towards ICT-enabled instruction: "The Ministry of Education has tried. They have put ICT's in place and made them functional" (Abigail) Thirty two per cent of the respondents agreed that the education authorities were giving principals tremendous support in this aspect of their leadership practices.

In summary, male principals revealed a greater tendency to advocate greater incorporation of information and communication technologies into the classroom as a major response to improving the changed circumstances that principals faced under USE. Thirteen of the principals advocating greater use of technology were males as opposed to three female principals. Nevertheless, these female principals highly recommended greater teacher and student involvement in ICT. Additionally, 13 of the principals of lower-performing schools indicated an interest in ICT-enabled teaching as a way of providing hands-on motivation for the students through the incorporation different strategies for their struggling readers. Overall. There was no clear-cut discernible patterns in terms of the rural-urban divide as principals from both categories indicated a willingness to adopt the available technology to improving student academic outcomes.

5.3   Theme 7 – Internal Relations Practices

Table 5.3: Breakdown of Participants' Key Statements, Analytical Categories, Codes and Frequencies of Occurrence for Theme 7

Sample Participants' Statements (Meaning Unit)	Codes used	Analytical Categories	Total number of key statements	No. of interviewees that mention sub-theme
I do not do things on my own. I always try to keep the vision and project the mission all the time. I keep focused on the vision and mission of the school.	Culture of learning Building school image Teacher collaboration Sharing best practices	Developing School mission, vision, culture and interpersonal relations	12	7
There are a number of charitable organizations which are helping with funding for students, food, clothing and so on.	Ethic of care Financial and material support Learning support School counselor involvement	Student support initiatives and the culture of caring	27	10
We try to ensure that we make friendships with the home. For the parents, we provide social support.	Parents outreach Parent education Strengthening PTA's.	Parental Involvement Strategies	26	11

5.3.1   Introduction

The second theme in this chapter looks at the practices followed by Vincentian school principals in managing the internal relations dynamics within their schools to ensure the most effective outcomes for students and other stakeholders under the USE policy. Grissom and Loeb (2009) describe internal relations as "the effectiveness at tasks related to principals' capacities for building strong interpersonal relations within the school" (p.16).   In this study, internal relations practices are categorized under three

rubrics: (a) Developing school mission, vision and culture (b) Student support and the culture of caring and nurturing and (c) Parental involvement strategies.

5.3.2 Improving Performance through School Mission, Vision and Culture

Another important theme that emerged from the interview data relates to the ability of school principals to focus on the school's goals, mission, vision and culture in helping to develop a positive attitude of both teachers and students towards learning and achievement. Seven of twenty-two (32%) principals reported focusing on the mission and vision of the school as an integral component of their strategies to keep the students and teachers motivated. Abigail stated:" I always try to keep the vision and project what is the mission all of the time". Warren, a male principal with less than one year on the job, stated that his goal was "to focus on the fundamentals, give the school an identity that it did not have: things like the mission statement, getting students involved" He concluding by saying: "My vision was to put the school on the map". John concurred by stating that he tried "to establish a shared vision where everyone can feel a part of the organization". From the foregoing statements, selling the vision of the school was an element of principals' leadership practice under USE.

Additionally, three principals addressed the role that school culture played in promoting positive attitudes on the part of both teachers and students. One female principal discussed the academic success of the students in terms of the teachers' knowledge of the culture of the school and their ability to "seamlessly pass it on to the students". (Ruthann). Similarly, another experienced, female counterpart stated that her main responsibilities as a principal included "motivating the teachers" and "being responsible for maintaining a positive school culture under USE" (Denise). At another rural school, the male principal discussed his focus on promoting a strong school culture by ensuring that his teachers "create a culture of work and a 'we can do it' kind of attitude". Through the creation of this 'culture of work' this principal kept his focus on greater teacher productivity as evidenced by this final statement: "We do not allow our teachers to become lax. We do not allow our teachers to come to school and chill out" (John)

Allied to the promotion of the school's mission and vision, three male principals also spoke about the importance of building a favourable image of the school as part of the underlying strategy to improve student outcomes: *"We have a three-pronged approach to school development, which is focusing on literacy, numeracy and strengthening the school's image"* (John). Fundamental to that school image was improved performance of the students at external examinations: "To *build school image, you have to have the students performing at exams"*. On this issue of improved performance at external examinations, another inexperienced principal from an urban school stated that image of his school was gradually changing as compared to the initial years of USE implementation since the school had obtained an award for '*the most improved school after remediation*" (Barbara). He further spoke about the improvement in teachers' attitudes as a result:

"*After we have done well at CSEC, they realized that the school has potential, the children have potential so as a result, they are more prepared for work because they realize that our children can actually achieve".* (Barbara).

Finally, another rural counterpart mentioned the emphasis that he was placing on selling the image of the school to current and future students. He explained his goal as follows

"The first thing is that we looked at what we have....what do we have as a school? Where are we going as a school? So we have embarked on getting students to look at this school from the primary level, to look at our school in relation to selling their school, for children to portray an image of the school as being a good school." (Warren)

To summarize, these principals felt that a focus on improving the ethos, culture and image of their schools were internal avenues through which they could bring about an improvement in the overall performance of teachers and students in secondary schools.

5.3.3 Sharing Best Practices through Closer Collaboration and Fostering Interpersonal Relationships

Developing and cultivating improved interpersonal relationships and cooperation among teachers was heralded by eight principals as an effective practice in building school capacity and therefore a more effective school under the conditions of USE. In response to queries about their practices in creating effective learning climates in their schools since the introduction of USE, these 8 principals identified sharing of best practices among teachers as being useful in helping to enhance the interactions among teachers.

One male principal from an urban school with less than five years' experience encouraged his teachers to observe each other's classrooms and to share instances of best practices gleaned from their observations. He further encouraged them to do in-depth research on best teaching methods using a variety of media and to "create a professional environment through sharing these practices" (Ken). He further added that he had pioneered a programme called 'Excellence in Education' that was helping to "create a positive environment that will speak to students and make a difference in our school".

In a related vein, another male principal of fifteen years' tenure indicated that he did an evaluation of the performance of his Mathematics department and he used the results "to share best practices and to get the teachers to network" (Shane). He concluded by stating that the findings from his research into the performance of Mathematics teachers were applied across the school:" We looked at the best practices that can be applied, not just in Mathematics, but in all subject areas" (Shane).

The demonstration and sharing of best practices in teaching methodology was mentioned by five principals as being very important to the practice of instructional leadership in their schools. One male principal with two years' administrative experience, specifically ordered training materials from experts in the field of best practices in teaching to ensure that his staff was properly equipped to implement state-of-the art teaching practices in the USE classroom.

"We create that personal environment, we share best practices and teachers are always searching out new ways of teaching and development". (Ken)

The strategy of greater networking among teachers was further raised by four other principals. Abigail, a female principal with two years on the job, reported that she asked her teachers "to adopt those practices that worked for other teachers to see the extent to which it may work for them" (Abigail). Team work and mutual teacher support were touted by this rural principal of a large school as the appropriate response to the challenges of Universal secondary Education. Using a biblical analogy to illustrate his point, he made the following comment:

I believe in team leadership and I basically tried to get all the teachers to work closely together. I get them to be like their brother's keeper, to help support one another. We are trying to build a good relationship to face the challenges. (Alfred)

Staff camaraderie and collegiality were encouraged by one rural principal with eight years' experience. He intimated that informal discussions were held among his staff at lunch time to discuss strategies to improve the delivery of teaching and learning. He stated: "I think there is a good rapport among staff members" (Winston). Michael stated that he had "sessions on interpersonal relationships" with his staff. This participant further added that the level of teacher involvement had avoided staff conflict because "teachers are involved and are part of the process. We involve them. We do not doing anything without letting them know" (Michael). Analogously, Elijah, who had less than three years in school leadership, reported on the regular strategizing sessions held with his staff: " I must say that we have a very close relationship, because we sit every Friday and discuss certain things which will move the school forward" (Elijah). Similarly, John spoke developing "an interpersonal culture, where the interactions are very friendly"

Contrastingly, three principals spoke about the difficulties experienced in their attempt to build staff consensus and greater collegiality. One female principal from a rural school described the reluctance of some male teachers to work in harmony with the female management of the school:

We have not had a management meeting for quite a while and that is the reason why. One of the problems is that the male teachers do not like to take orders from females. I think it is sexist. Taking orders from females do not fit it with their image of themselves as males. There is a lack of collaboration. (Natalie)

Another rural principal with one year in leadership described teachers not giving of their best "in order to make somebody else look bad" (Abigail). Leslie referred to "cliques" at his school, while another of his counterparts with three years in the position described having to resolve conflicts between teachers: " *You have that kind of saga where I have to come in and use whatever kinds of skills to get teachers to see eye to eye"* (Leroy). Hence, based on the foregoing, while forging bonds of collegiality among staff worked positively for most of the principals interviewed, others had staff-related challenges to overcome.

 Nonetheless, one rural principal responded to such challenges by instituting a rewards program for his teachers. This reward program took the form of trophies, plaques and public acknowledgement of outstanding work or long service to the school. In the words of this principal, rewarding his teachers was "a springboard for them to do better". Such practices augured well for the smoother operation of the school. Maintaining close and regular contact with the teachers was predominately an effective strategy for the majority of Vincentian principals as voiced by his male principal from a large rural school: "I try to touch base one on one with the teachers. It is a difficult thing to do, but I have done that and some of them have been very receptive" (Jerome)

Overall, nine of the fourteen principals that discussed the promotion of staff relationships and best practices in their schools felt that that this focus was having a positive impact on the delivery of education under USE conditions. Broken down in demographic terms, eight inexperienced principals focused on improving internal collegial relations as an integral component of their leadership practice, while six experienced principals emphasized this aspect. Ten of these principals were from rural school settings, while both male and female principals focused in equal proportions on promoting improved staff relationships as part of their school improvement endeavours.

5.3.4   Student Support Strategies and Interventions under Universal Secondary Education

"Successful schools follow a continuum of strategies to help students to learn to behave and succeed in the classroom" (Hierck, Coleman & Weber (2011, p.12). Student support initiatives were identified as foundational to principals' response to the conditions brought on by the implementation of Universal Secondary Education in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Analysis of the interview data revealed that ten Vincentian secondary school principals in this study used a variety of student support initiatives and strategies. These strategies included learning support for students, rewards and incentives, material supports in the form of Book loan schemes, creating a climate of caring and nurturing and expanding the support role of school counsellors in secondary institutions.

Learning support initiatives were carried out under different modalities. Three principals mentioned that learning support assistance had been put in place through a programme of recruitment of retired teachers and volunteers. One rural principal described a "Before reading programme" conducted on a daily basis by a Peace Corps volunteer. Another female counterpart from an urban school said that a retired teacher was assigned to her school" to help with literacy for students that had comprehension problems "(Natalie). This practice was further corroborated by another female principal from a large rural school who added that retired literacy coordinators and college students used to come in to help with the slow readers, but that the programme was discontinued" (Abigail).

Other principals used their existing staff resources to provide additional support to students. A male principal from an urban school reported "pulling out weaker students with spelling problems and assigning in-house resources to alleviate the problems of those students" (Shane). Creating additional classrooms for specialized tutoring was carried out by a male principal of less than five years' experience in a rurally located school. Peer tutoring was used by two principals as a means of having stronger students help the weaker ones, while "buddy reading" or paired reading was instituted by a principal with three years' experience stationed at a rural school. Additionally, one rural principal instituted a full-fledged learning support programme for students with academic

disadvantages at her school: "We have a learning support program and teachers were assigned specially to help these students who were at a disadvantage" (Tracy)

In addition to learning support strategies, eight principals, six males and two females, raised the issue of financial and material supports provided to students from economically-deprived socio-economic backgrounds. To counteract the problem of truancy, one male principal heading a small school in a rural district with high rates of unemployment indicated that he had put measures in place to ensure deprived students received free school uniforms, free school books from the Government –instituted Book Loan Scheme and free eye examinations. Two other principals, one male and the other female with more than fifteen years' individual experience as school principals mentioned the provision of free lunches to needy students as well as direct financial assistance from the Social Services Division. The following comments by two rural male principals serve to illustrate the extent of principals' involvement in the satisfaction of at-risk students' physiological needs:

For students who are very poor, we beg for help to give them welfare assistance. The school provides them with lunch because we have a Tuck Shop where we raise funds for those eventualities" (Michael)

His colleague also referred to the role of teachers in these terms:

"There is a counselling committee in the school and the counselling committee which comprises a number of the teachers and the counsellor. They have a program in which monies are raised… there is budget, a small budget to buy food for children who are at risk". (John)

In a related vein, two principals revealed that offering various incentives and rewards to students were very effective in increasing the overall attendance and helped in encouraging more students to remain in school until graduation or completion of their studies. One male principal from a large rural school spoke about the implementation of his "meals for study" trade–off, whereby students who committed themselves to attend school on a regular basis were offered the assurance of receiving free meals in return for their commitment to their education:

"We have tried to provide meals for these students when necessary: breakfast, lunch. Many of them come without lunch. They leave school because they have no lunch; we have lunch tickets and passes. Now, we have a breakfast program, so we give them something to eat. It is like a trade-off, because, here is how we go … we will say to them look, we are giving you breakfast; we are giving you lunch, but there is something you must do for us. You must be in school; so if you want that, we expect certain things from you". (Elvis)

We have an on-going feeding program where on a daily basis we feed students. I think at this time we have about 11 students. On a monthly basis, the bill is just above $1,400 that we spend on our children. (Ken)

From the foregoing statements, principals showed their concern for student welfare and progress by endeavouring to ensure that that their basic material needs were fulfilled by seeking to build a culture of caring and nurturing within their schools.

Principals also sought   to establish an ethic of care through sensitizing teachers to focus on meeting the psychological and learning needs of the students.   Four principals mentioned the need for teachers to accept USE students and to strive to create inclusive learning environments as a strategy to help the students achieve their potential. One rural principal stated that he had asked his teachers "to buy in" since "the students are here already and we have to do something with them" (Jerome). John stated that he was "trying to foster a caring environment where they feel wanted", while a male colleague from an urban school described his system of pastoral care as providing "paternal as well as maternal support" (Leroy) for his students. Another female principal from a medium-sized school spoke of the need to constantly bolster the new USE students to help them overcome the novelty of secondary schooling:

"Some of these students are first-timers into secondary schools. First generation. You need to bolster some support for these students. They have a very different view of schooling so you have to offer them a wide variety of supports. You always have to remind them and have them learn". (Abigail)

Another female principal pointed out the need to focus on promoting student learning rather than looking at the shortcomings of the USE policy or prior factors in the students' educational experience. Her strategy was focused on identifying the strengths of the students and crafting programs that would be amenable to their abilities and interests. For this principal, gains in student achievement and the promotion of the welfare of students were paramount in her approach to managing instruction:

> *"We recognize that the core need is the students and not necessarily the policy. We have to find ways of helping them because we cannot blame the primary schools and we know that that is still going to happen, so we have to continue our work. So we know that when they come here we need to find those niches in which they are going to excel. Even if we do not move them all the way, once we would have moved them from point A to point B, we would have made some gains" (Denise).*

In a nutshell, for these principals cited above, the building of a culture of caring and nurturing was fundamental to their vision of effective leadership practice in response to the changing conditions existing under the policy of Universal Secondary Education. Many of the principals saw their counsellors as helpful allies in achieving this vision.

5.3.5   Enhancing the Role of School Counselors

15 of the 22 (68 %) interviewees discussed the role of counsellors and the expanded role of counselling since the introduction of Universal Secondary Education. The involvement of school counsellors ranged from routine counselling sessions with students to the implementation of some special programs such as the bridging program designed to ensure smooth transition of primary school students to secondary schools.

Responding to a query about the various strategies they had used to deal with student behaviours under USE, all 15 respondents to this question said that their counsellors had been dealing with regular student referrals as well as group and individual counselling sessions to counteract many of the negative behaviours manifested by students. Kevin stated that 'the counselling aspect of the school plays a very significant part in getting students to model certain values and principles". Barbara,

an urban principal with more than ten years' in leadership and management referred to "anger management sessions with the counsellor for students." The counsellor at another medium-sized rural school was in demand to "carry out conflict resolution sessions with students" (Kevin).

The expanded role of school counsellors also involved counselling of teachers as well as parents. At his school in a rural district, the male principal stated that "the school counsellor organized special afternoon programmes for parenting. Leroy, an urban male principal, went further:

Sometimes the counselling is not for the students; sometimes, we have to take time to counsel the parents (Leroy)

Two rural principals, one male and the other female reported that counselling for teachers was included in the amplification of the counsellor's roles. At one rural school the school counsellor dealt with anger management issues, while at another large school the principal disclosed that" counselling of teachers is necessary to ensure they are on board" (Jerome)

Two principals also relied on the services of school counsellors to carry out "a bridging program" during which students are provided with guidance and nurturing to enable them to make a smooth transition to secondary school.

For one period a week, with the help of the counsellor, we do a complete transitioning where students are given help in making the change from primary to secondary school and that helps to get them into what they are supposed to do there (Natalie).

Additionally, four principals mentioned counsellors having oversight for peer counselling and mentorship programmes as well as outreach programmes. Moreover, identification of students with reading disabilities and direct assistance to students with reading problems were also integrated into the counsellors' new roles as indicated by these principals.

While 68 per cent of secondary principals felt that counselling played an ever-increasing role in promoting student success under USE, two principals proffered contrasting views. One rural principal with fifteen years in school leadership said that "the counselling programme might be ineffective because of the attitude of the students" (Michael). He also commented on the fact that counsellors had not been placed at every secondary school. He pointed out that for USE to be successful: "full-fledged counsellors, not teachers, needed to be placed at every school". This view was further corroborated by another female counterpart serving at a large urban school:

The reason for that again is that you are taking students who are not prepared for secondary school and they will face challenges dealing with the content and you need counsellors to do that (Natalie).

In summary, this sub-theme examined student support strategies under Universal Secondary Education, including the role and input of school counsellors. In demographic terms, there was no perceptual differences between male and female principals in their use of support strategies. In terms of school size, a similar trend was evidenced as principals from large and small schools indicated use of a variety of support initiatives to help students to adapt to secondary schooling. Also, both rural and urban principals were equally engaged in the application of student support measures. Overall, the interview data indicate that Vincentian secondary school principals felt that educational support and a broader role for school counsellors constituted effective approaches to managing student challenges internally.

5.3.6   Parental Involvement Strategies

In the previous chapter, the findings showed that only 6 of the 22 (27%) principals interviewed expressed a measure of satisfaction with parental engagement under USE. Several researchers have shown repeatedly the necessity of a strong correlation between parents and the school to ensure student success. (Pipho 1994. Emeagwali, 2009). Emeagwali (2009) goes on to state that "A successful partnership between parents and teachers is integral to student achievement" (p.1). Faced with the difficulties associated with low parental involvement, eleven Vincentian secondary

school principals resorted to a variety of strategies to improve relations between the home and the school under Universal Secondary Education. Based on the interview data, parental engagement strategies included the following: Home visits, parental training workshops, parent conferences, PTA recruitment drives, Open Days and Fathers and Sons Days.

Four respondents mentioned that they used home visits as one of strategy to reach out to parents. One urban male principal said he did home visits "to see where the students live and to get a feel of the home situation" (Leroy). Another female principal from a rural school with more than ten years' leadership experience allocated staff members to visit specific homes "to lend support to the parents" (Denise). Nicole, another experienced rural principal, reported doing "house visits for just a few children". She felt that these house visits were having a positive impact, as encapsulated in this comment: "I think it has been fairly successful for us in helping to change their attitude" (Nicole)

Strategically however, 9 of the 22 (41%) principals focused on parental educational programs to get more parents equipped and involved with their children and with the schools under USE. Kevin said that he had held seminars "in relation to parenting skills". Similarly, Elijah, another male principal, described hosting a local parenting workshop. Elvis reported hosting parenting workshops "targeted at those parents of children with behavioural problems". Another rurally-based, female principal disclosed that she had organized workshops for parents where the emphasis was on school improvement and on parents' expectations of the school.

> *"We have had workshops here for parents and we have had to put them into groupings, so we have parents broken up into small groups during the PTA sessions and they have been talking about their expectations for the* school*".* (Akeem)

Parental outreach and training sessions were also an integral part of the attempt by some principals to forge closer school community partnerships. Two rural principals mentioned working in partnership with other agencies to seek to increase the level of

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parental engagement in their children's education: One male principal with less than five years in school management described this approach:

"We have invited people from the community and the Ministry to make presentations to the PTA and through the Ministry; we have organized a parenting workshop to make the parents understand their roles and responsibilities as parents". (Akeem)

Another male counterpart from a rural school described his approach to parent education as consisting of equipping parents with the skills to provide homework assistance and creating a suitable study environment for the children:

In terms of families, we try to educate the parents. We brought parents in and told them how they could implement the SQR method of studying with their children. We have strategies in place to improve parents' ability to educate the child, whether by way of study habits or creating a good study environment…. But we want to reach the parents (Natalie).

Three principals sought to increase parental involvement through strengthening the Parent-Teachers' Association of their schools:

"We have called the parents together. We now have an executive in place to run the PTA, but it is still in its infant stage. And I can only see it growing from strength to strength". (Warren)

Two principals, one male and the other female, both with less than five years' experience, mentioned using social activities to reduce barriers between the school and the home. Ken instituted a Family Fun Day at his school. He mentioned that the ultimate objective is "to get everyone on board. It is a family day but we try to get the parents involved". In order to increase the involvement of fathers in their sons' education, a rurally-based principal at a medium-sized school instituted a Father and Sons' Day:

We have to do outreach with the parents and we have what we call the Father and Sons' Day; so you bring them in, they get to bond with their sons at least and to share and to see what is happening in the school (Abigail)

A Parents' Appreciation Week was established at another rural school. Parents were given opportunities to interact with the teachers, sat in classes with their children and provided with opportunities to witness first-hand the quality of education dispensed under USE. Five principals also mentioned having an open-door policy that gave parents the option of visiting the schools at their convenience and to check on the progress of their children.

Parental involvement strategies also took the form of class meetings, Open days. Parent consultations and fund-raising activities as described below by two male, rural principals:

We have parents' consultations during the second term. They can come in and meet with the teachers, discuss their child's report or any other thing they want to discuss. We have the structures in place for them to come in" (Winston)

We have PTA meetings, class meetings, and whole group parents' meetings. We have open days and we have fund-raising efforts where we bring parents into be part of it. And they have been responding well (Alfred)

In summary, this sub-theme discussed principals' responses to the challenges posed by the parents of USE students. It revealed that in spite of the general lack of parental engagement in 73 % of the schools, Vincentian principals employed a plethora of parental involvement strategies ranging from parental training workshops to parental participatory strategies such as Parent Appreciation Days and fund-raising.

Broken down in demographic terms, 11 of the 14 principals that discussed parental engagement strategies were from rurally located schools. Only one urban principal indicated using home visits to narrow the gap between the home and the school. In terms of school size, 9 of the schools were large schools, with the remainder being medium-sized or small schools. While both genders were well-represented on this

sub-theme, 67 per cent of male principals and 57 per cent of female principals employed leadership practices designed to enhance parental participation in the work of the schools. In the next section, we examine the administrative and organizational and leadership strategies adopted by Vincentian principals managing USE schools.

5.4 Theme 8 – Administrative And Organizational Practices

Table 5.4: Breakdown of Participants' Key Statements, Analytical Categories, Codes and Frequencies of Occurrence for Theme 8

ample Participants' Statements (Meaning Unit)	Codes used	Analytical Categories	Total number of key statements	No. of interviewees that mention sub-theme
We distribute leadership in terms of division of labor. We have like the different heads of department taking on additional roles and even below that we have the year heads who are responsible for the different year levels.	Distribution of leadership tasks Teacher professionalism and accountability Strategic staff deployment Shared leadership and team-work Teacher leadership	Leadership Strategies	23	11
I have the HOD's on board to monitor lessons. This is something we do, monitor lessons	Greater in monitoring and supervision Expanded roles for SMT's Special committees	Enhanced Roles for School Management Teams and Heads of Department	32	18

5.4.1   Introduction

In this section of the dissertation, an analysis is made of the administrative and organizational leadership strategies that Vincentian secondary school principals adopted to deal with the variety of student and teacher-related challenges as well as the increased workload and job-related stress identified in Chapter Four. According to the Grissom and Loeb (2009) Framework, Organization management involves "a set of identifiable tasks that capture the principal's effectiveness in overseeing the functioning of the school" (p. 17). This theme is therefore discussed under two inter-related sub-themes. These include (a) the distribution of leadership tasks, roles and responsibilities (b) the enhanced duties assigned to School Management Teams and Heads of Departments

5.4.2   Leadership Strategies

Elmore (2000) has argued that distributing leadership is important to promote large scale improvements in schools. Vincentian principals in this study felt that distributing of leadership to other capable personnel within their school was an effective way of mitigating many of the problems that surfaced in secondary schools with the implementation of the USE policy.

Principals accomplished this by assigning tasks to those subordinates with the requisite expertise, willingness and ability to perform the required tasks. Three principals, one female and two males mentioned distributing leadership tasks on the basis of teacher expertise. One principal specifically mentioned including teachers on the management team" that we think have something to offer" (Leroy), while another male counterpart specifically distributed leadership responsibilities to his physical education teacher " because of his expertise and commitment" (Daryl). Providing additional leadership training to staff members was mentioned by four principals as another reason for distributing leadership roles to teachers. One urban male principal mentioned developing teacher expertise as part of teacher leadership development:

I would like to see distributed leadership in that way where people can hone their expertise and run with it and I would facilitate it in a sort of servant –leader role". (Daryl)

Focus on understanding the philosophy and goals of the school was emphasized by one urban principal:

My motto is to infuse in everybody the objectives of the school, our philosophies of education and let them understand those well enough". (Ken)

Two other principals highlighted the need to develop teacher accountability and professionalism as this had been one challenge identified by principals in Chapter four:

What I have done is to try to make teachers more accountable. I think that is an area where we have made a lot of progress. I think that the school has had an impetus because we have looked at the school improvement philosophy and tried to get people on board and a certain number of people accept it, and you have a certain number of people who want to improve the school. (Akeem)

"So we have an administrative team that is responsible for what we call the consultative committee …….if I am not there my administrative team is responsible, accountable for carrying out the work of the institution". (John)

Ancillary administrative duties were often assigned to other staff members of part of the leadership diversification strategy of some principals under USE. Four principals made explicit reference to the use of "deans of discipline", specific teachers or middle managers assigned to deal with routine disciplinary issues under the rubric of student management:

"We have in place deans of discipline... well, they are responsible for the five levels. Each of them is responsible for a level and any discipline problems should go to them. These go to the middle managers. If there is something that they cannot deal with then they come to us". (Alfred)

We have year heads and the year heads will act as "deans of discipline". Any problems that the teachers have with the students, they will go to the year heads. If the year heads find that it is something to be referred to the principal they will bring it to me (Leroy)

Two principals, both female from large schools, one urban and the other rural, indicated that staff deployment was one major strategy they found productive in dealing with the administration of the schools. The strategic allocation and placement of the teaching staff was one avenue that these principals used to ensure that the teachers with the requisite expertise and experience were allocated to the students with greatest academic needs. They specifically targeted the new students in their first year of Universal Secondary Education.   One female principal from a large urban school believed that this strategy was more effective in terms of the initiation of new students into the culture of the school:

First of all, I try as much as possible in my lower secondary school to place a number of senior teachers who are experienced and trained so that they could deal with issues that arise in that regard. We do have some new ones, but I try not to put new teachers in form 1 unless I cannot help it. I try to put experienced and senior teachers in the lower school. (Natalie)

In addition to the distribution of leadership responsibilities to seasoned and competent teachers, the leadership practices of many of the participants involved shared leadership and team-work. Team work and teacher leadership were frequently mentioned by eleven principals interviewed. When asked about leadership style under USE conditions, one experienced female principal stated: "All teachers are leaders. My leadership philosophy is based on team-work. I believe in teams as a practical leader" (Nicole). Another male colleague, with fifteen years' at the helm of a large secondary school said: "I don't expect to be the only person that has a say. It should be a shared approach. I believe in taking a transformational approach to leadership and management" (John).

Another experienced principal expressed the belief that given the novel conditions under USE, participative leadership or guided democracy was central to effective school operation: "I think the participative style of leadership is what really fits my mode. It is important they get the involvement of everybody as no one person knows everything" (Kevin). The attributes of collegiality and consultation were important to one young rural principal

"I see myself as a democratic person and it is not a one-man ship. I am not the captain, I am a colleague. I see myself as a colleague, so with any decision, I take it to the staff. I want my staff to be on the same level with me". (Elijah)

An integral part of principals' democratic or shared leadership was collaborative decision-making. Collaborative decision-making was stressed by two rural principals because they felt that teacher involvement in the decision-making process contributed to a reduction in staff conflict: "Once teachers are part of the process, we do not have staff conflicts. We involve them and we do not do anything without letting them know" (Michael). A similar point of view was expressed by another male colleague from a small rural school: "*so when it comes to decision-making, whether it is an individual child, whether it is an idea, we sit and we discuss it and we put it to the vote so nobody is going to point fingers". (Elijah).*

Based on the foregoing observations by principals, it appears that consensus and harmony among the teaching staff were pivotal to principals' enactment of their administrative leadership practices.

Finally, building the leadership capacity of all members of the teaching staff was another goal that three male principals underscored in response to a question on teacher empowerment under USE. These principals stressed the importance of maintaining continuity and a smooth functioning of the school in their absence or after their departure from the institution. Hence, providing a democratic and shared approach to leadership that built the leadership capacity of teachers was viewed as an important strategy for a more successful school in the USE environment. The ensuing comment by the male principal of a large urban establishment illustrates the central role of leadership capacity building:

"In terms of leadership, I am accountable for the departments. I ensure that I create leaders. My task is to ensure that in my absence the school can function and function excellently. I do not have to be the centre of life and hence, I therefore try to ensure that that chain of command is followed through. In terms of instruction as indicated, what we try to do is every term, we ensure that teachers are educated". (Ken)

Other leadership styles were practiced by certain principals depending on the school environment and the type of staff working at the school. For instance, three principals, two male and one female, said that they occasionally practiced an autocratic style of leadership when the situation warranted a firm intervention by the principal. Another said he used "a mixture of the democratic and the autocratic, even though my main focus is on empowering teachers" (John). At the other end of the leadership continuum, one male principal from a rural school said he believed in a "laissez-faire type of leadership" (Leslie). Rather than directing the work of teachers, he felt that a more unobtrusive approach was more effective. "I love to see people have their freedom, relax and I think they perform a whole lot better" (Leslie).

In summary, this part of the analysis looked at leadership strategies that Vincentian principals applied to respond to various instructional and administrative challenges under USE. For most principals, it was important to lay the groundwork for teacher empowerment and allow their teachers to function within that framework; but with the freedom to innovate and implement new strategies within the guiding principles laid down by the principal. As pointed by one experienced principal, under Universal Secondary Education" the leadership and management of the school is crucial" (John). Vincentian secondary school therefore focused on building leadership capacity and expertise of teachers as well as distributed and shared leadership as potential avenues for school improvement as the implementation of USE took root within the school system

5.4.3 Enhanced Roles for School Management Teams and Heads of Departments

Closely allied to the process of distributing leadership was that of an enhanced or expanded role for deputy principals and heads of subject departments (HOD's). Collectively, deputy principals and HOD's constitute the senior management team (SMT) in the secondary schools in this study. 18 of the 22 participants indicated that they had assigned specialist roles to the heads of departments and other members of the senior management team such as counsellors and literacy coordinators. Five principals specifically mentioned that they were giving a greater role to the HOD's in the area of monitoring and supervision of classes. One urban principal attributed this expansion of

the supervisory role to "specialist knowledge of the subject area", so that "observations can be more meaningful" (Daryl). Another female principal from a rural school said "monitoring is for the HOD's and the deputy principal, so we broaden it. I consider monitoring as key to the success of the programme" (Nicole). Another male principal from a large rural school described the new role of Heads of departments in these terms: "I have taken the HOD's on board to monitor the lessons, to do lesson observations, so we have that working for us" (Shane)

Secondary principals emphasized a greater role in decision-making as well as a consultative role for the senior management team. One principal outlined how he had placed the senior management team in charge of fashioning an information technology policy for the school as well as coming up with guidelines for sports administration and graduations. He said that these policies "were vetted by the management team before being sent to the Ministry" (Daryl). Kevin spoke of weekly meetings with his management team as part of his "participative leadership style". One rural principal highlighted the key consultative role of his management team:

"I have a management team comprised of eight members of staff, and every decision I take, I meet with the management team, so whenever we have a staff meeting, I have the support of eight members; the management team". (Michael)

In addition to formal management teams, five principals also mentioned the creation of special committees as one way of getting more staff members to take an active role in teacher leadership or to lend assistance to the principals in executing certain managerial and leadership tasks. These ad hoc committees were constituted to deal with fund-raising, ICT, disciplinary issues, pastoral care of students and supervision of support and ancillary staff. One respondent of fifteen years' experience described the role of the ICT committee:

There is an ICT committee, so they would have had sessions with the entire teaching staff, trying to bring us up to date with what is new or current in the field. (Denise)

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Meanwhile, another male principal with a similar number of years' experience at a rural school described in general terms his strategy for division of labour among school personnel:

What I have been doing is to empower teachers to deal with the management of the school because what I take at my desk here are the more crucial issues; t*hose that have legal implications, those that are more difficult to deal with are the ones that I will deal with, but between the teachers, the ordinary teachers and the vice-principal, they will deal with routine matters" (John)*

Similarly, another rural male principal with two years at a large school, described his efforts to include as many teachers as possible in the different levels of management in the school and in a general sharing of tasks and responsibilities.

"We distribute leadership in terms of division of labour. We have like the different heads of department taking on additional roles and even below that we have the year heads who are responsible for the different year levels. And then we have the extra-curricular activities department which itself is trying to help to deal with the discipline. So we have been trying to put together a senior leadership management team to keep the school together, to manage the school". (Alfred)

Heads of departments and senior management personnel were also assigned instructional leadership roles in the mentoring younger teachers. Principals saw their involvement as an effective way of helping newly appointed and inexperienced teachers to cope with the challenges encountered within the USE classrooms. In response to a question about teacher adjustment to the changes brought about by USE implementation, two male principals made the following comments:

"The staff has adjusted. Those that are young and less experienced, we are adopting a sort of mentoring approach". (Shane)

Now, with the new teachers in the Form 1 the heads of department will see that they follow the curriculum and what they are supposed to teach. (Natalie)

One rural principal also involved the deputy principal in mentorship of two teachers who had not pursued teacher education programmes through "using in-house workshops and demonstrations of how it must be done". (Elijah). In another school, heads of departments offered initial support to inexperienced teachers followed by additional support from the principal: "*And the heads of departments will offer support to those younger teachers. I also offer support to a number of them and it makes a difference as to how they go about certain Improvements*" (Leslie).

In the area of curriculum leadership and instruction, heads of departments were also involved in training of new teachers in subject matter preparation, the adoption of new teaching methodologies and in building content expertise. Specifically, HOD's provided assistance in lesson planning, student evaluation techniques and classroom management.   One female principal commented on this practice: "

"*In the modern languages department, we have workshops where the head of department provides training for others in the department". (Denise)*

We do have some training for teachers that we have at the beginning of the school year, we have a workshop where teachers learned to do evaluation, item construction (Daryl)

In summary, the data in this sub-theme consistently showed that all principals had a management team to assist in decision-making and to assist the principals in specific areas of curriculum delivery. Heads of Departments played a major role in mentoring and training younger teachers. The practice was widespread across schools irrespective of size, location, type of school or gender and experience of the principal. Distribution of leadership responsibilities to HOD's and management teams was an important practice also in government-assisted as well as government-owned schools.

5.5 Theme 9 – External Relations Practices

Table 5.5: Breakdown of Participants' Key Statements, Analytical Categories, Codes and Frequencies of Occurrence for Theme 9

Sample Participants' Statements (Meaning Unit)	Codes used	Analytical Categories	Total number of key statements	No. of interviewees that mention sub-theme
When it comes to the rest of society, we get individuals to sponsor students. We have a scholarship programme in place for students. That depends on the kind-heartedness of individuals.	Support for literacy and numeracy Sponsorships Scholarships Law enforcement and school security	Strategic Partnerships with external agencies	21	13
The MOE must be commended for training so many persons in remediation to be able to go to all the schools and help all those children who had all these different needs. The training was good for that purpose and it is now kicking into the system	Sufficiency of support Training Human resources	Official Support and Collaboration	32	15

5.5.1 Introduction

This final theme in the analysis examines the external relations practices of Vincentian secondary school principals. As defined by Grissom and Loeb (2009), external relations practices entail "tasks relating to working with stakeholders beyond the schoolhouse doors" (p.18). The analysis shows the extent to which Vincentian secondary school principals were able to harness the support and collaboration of external stakeholders and agencies to improve their effectiveness under the USE policy. The presentation of this theme is subsumed under the following two sub-headings: (a) Strategic partnerships with external entities and (b) Official support and collaboration.

5.5.2   Strategic Partnerships with External Entities

Although principals were not specifically asked to address the issues of support for the policy of Universal Secondary Education from sources or agencies external to the school, thirteen of the 22 principals mentioned various forms of support that their schools had received from other entities and agencies not directly associated with the provision of education. The issue of public–private cooperation spontaneously emanated from the data. As pointed out by Klein (2010), these partnerships bring innovation, resources and alternative models of leadership into schools (p.1). Principals spoke of various types of assistance from these agencies as well as initiatives that they had undertaken themselves to forge greater collaboration between the school and the wider community.

Two principals from rural schools indicated that funds were made available from private entities to support the reading and numeracy programmes at their schools. The principal of a large urban government-operated school described the initiative as "a computerized programme that helps students who are weak in reading. That internet program has helped to build their reading levels and numeracy" (Jerome). Resources were provided for completion of the Science laboratory at another school through the collaboration of the school's Parent-Teachers association and the Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF). As part of the drive to provide greater hands-on education, one principal from a large rural school reported receiving monetary assistance for programmes in sports, music and agricultural education for   those children who are not academically-inclined (Leslie).

Principals were also proactive in seeking out resources designed to boost the delivery of the educational programmes. Three principals mentioned using their personal network of contacts locally and overseas to procure resources to use in the various instructional programs. Resources such as computers, reading and Language Arts materials were donated to give added impetus to the programs that principals had devised to move the students forward.   An experienced female principal from a government-owned rural school described initiating a reading programme with external assistance:

"We implemented a reading program through our initiative because we are the ones who know from our local situation what would and what would not work…... A friend of mine in the United States gave us some computers to help with the reading programme". (Denise)

External cooperation with outside agencies was not limited to the provision of monetary support and material resources. External entities and individuals also played an important role in providing training and instructional support to teachers and students as evidenced by the statements made by six of the respondents.   Two rural principals discussed the role of Peace Corps volunteers in providing reading support to struggling readers. These volunteers had established Breakfast reading programmes before the start of official instruction for remedial students. One male rural principal said that he had seen a lot of improvement as a result of these interventions.

To counteract the negative spin-offs from inadequate primary schooling highlighted in Chapter Four, one principal sought to establish working relationships with the feeder primary schools in his area. This urban principal saw this as an effective way to provide training for his teachers by asking them to go to the primary schools to observe their teaching practices. Teachers used the observations to devise curricular programmes in reading and language to help the new students in their transition to secondary school.

Professional development of the teaching staff was cited by 10 principals as being an area of high involvement by external experts and facilitators. For example, one male principal from an urban school with two years' experience had sought the services of an expert in educational pedagogy in the region to guide his teachers in positive ways of educating children (Ken). Professional development activities were also routinely led by "outside persons from the Ministry of Education, retired persons as well as people on staff" (Barbara).   The depth of involvement of external experts was summed up as follows:

"We have had two individuals come in thus far to help us deal with the learning sciences, different learning styles and to deal with different abilities of students. We have had two such individuals to come and work with the teachers during the

first two weeks of school that we set aside for professional development. We had
that individual there and we had another individual come in later". (Ken)

According to 12 of the respondents, the Educational Project Management Unit (EPMU) had been highly active in providing a range of services to the secondary schools. All twelve principals indicated that the EPMU had been involved in hosting joint parenting workshops with the schools and had also provided resource personnel for those workshops. Four principals stated that the EPMU had provided instructional resources in the form of computers, projectors, teaching aids, and science kits. Furthermore, the agency had provided training in ICT in conjunction with another governmental agency. 55 per cent of principals reported receiving technical assistance in some form through the auspices of the EPMU.

Through the instrumentality of two principals, students also benefitted from sponsorships from external organizations and individuals. One urban principal had put a scholarship programme in place for disadvantaged children. Another urban principal had liaised with social services to provide monetary and health assistance to students. Two other principals mentioned the provision of counselling services to students through a professional counselling agency.

School security was another area that required the collaboration and intervention of one external agency; law enforcement. Six principals discussed the important role played by police officers in ensuring a safe school environment. Leroy mentioned having two police officers stationed on the school compound "to keep intruders out and to help with any severe behaviour from students". Daryl said that he had requested the assistance of the police to deal with an intruder on the school compound because "the level of security is grossly inadequate".

Meanwhile, another seasoned male principal from an urban school justified collaboration with the police to deal with instances of truancy: *On numerous occasions, we have called the police to deal with certain matters to send the message to students that we are serious. Because to me, students should have an early reality check (Shane).* Law enforcement therefore played a pivotal role in ensuring that the issues of school violence, safety and security were addressed under USE.

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In summary, this section of the analysis discussed the strategic partnerships that Vincentian principals established with external agencies as a part of developing school-community partnerships on one hand, while seeking to boost student academic output and administrative efficiency under USE. The final section of this theme examines the relationship of Vincentian school principals to the Ministry of Education and other governmental agencies.

5.5.3   Official Support and Collaboration

Respondents were asked their views on the level and types of supports received from the Ministry of Education, the organization charged with oversight of the implementation of the policy of Universal Secondary Education throughout the country.

Twelve of the twenty-two participants said they were very satisfied with the level of support and resources that they had received from the Ministry of Education since the implementation of USE. Ten principals said that they were particularly satisfied with the efforts that the MOE had made in the training of literacy coordinators, language support specialists, the training of teachers through various workshops and the involvement of the curriculum department in professional activities to support the teaching and learning in secondary schools. Moreover, mention was made by six respondents about the efforts to ensure that principals received training in the area of school management to help them to respond to the identified challenges of USE. One rural principal of ten years' experience expressed this view:

I think the Ministry of Education has been very supportive. Literacy coordinators have been trained. There were workshops for principals to deal with instructional leadership and how to face off with things' (Michael)

Four other principals disclosed that they were happy with the level of human resources provided. One male principal from a government-assisted school spoke about staffing: I am satisfied with the MOE helping us with teachers and covering of teachers' salaries (Ken). His counterpart from a rural government-owned school said that the È MOE was very supportive because they had provided the school with ICT resources, and training for teachers in remedial teaching (Kevin). Two rural principals from

government-assisted schools said that the level of support that they had received from the Ministry of Education was much higher than before the implementation of USE. Tracy said:

I have found is that here has been an improvement of late with the Ministry of Education with the new administration, I find there is better communication, more openness I am able to communicate if I have difficulties with something and there is that kind of open mind.

Her male counterpart of less than two years' experience echoed a similar sentiment when he compared the pre-USE relationships between the Ministry of Education and the government-assisted schools:

In the past, like some years ago when I was a young teacher, you know the government-assisted schools did not get that kind of support. It was like we and them in terms of the government schools are ours. We have nothing to do with the children at the Government-assisted schools, but I have seen that policy kind of change and everybody seems to be treated across the board fairly (Alfred).

Indeed, two urban principals of more than fifteen years' experience were confident that the Ministry of Education had addressed the majority of system-related problems that had been existing since the outset of USE. The male respondent made the following assertion in this regard:

"*A number of the problems have been addressed. For example, the literacy and numeracy problems we have had, there have been persons trained to deal with that. They have vibrant programs for dealing with those problems".* (Shane).

His female counterpart shared the view that the steps taken since the start of Universal Secondary Education were now bearing fruit, a tacit endorsement of the success of the USE policy:

"*Well the MOE must be commended for training so many persons in remediation to be able to go to all the schools and help all those children who had all these*

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different needs. The training was good for that purpose and it is now kicking into the system". (Natalie).

While fifty-five per cent of the respondents felt that the Ministry of Education had been very supportive of the administration of secondary schools under USE, ten of the principals interviewed expressed contrary views on the levels of support offered by the education authorities. Three rural principals complained about shortage of teachers in the Sciences, the delay in receiving school supplies from the Ministry and inadequate infrastructure to carry on all the programmes. One urban principal in expressing his satisfaction for the role of the MOE in many areas, expressed his misgivings as follows:

But with helping with the maintenance of the school, there I am dissatisfied with the performance of the Ministry. In terms of the physical plant, the furniture of the school, that area has a bit of dissatisfaction (Ken).

Finally, two male principals from government-owned schools, with fifteen years' experience respectively in school leadership, felt that the intentions of the Ministry of education were good in regard to the policy of USE but that the MOE was itself constrained by a lack of material and human resources. Michael said: *"I think they are trying their best. If they had more resources at their disposal, things would have been better".* This final caveat sums up the view of one male principal of a large urban school about the support and position of the Ministry of education vis-à-vis USE and its implementation:

The MOE has been doing their best, but I hasten to say, with the onset of Universal Secondary Education, there needs to be more personnel. To me, the staff of the MOE is really stretched and they cannot respond as readily and as effectively to the challenges as they should. We have their support, but they are constrained by the level of resources. (Shane).

To summarize, all twenty two principals in the study commented on the input of the Ministry of Education and the levels and types of supports provided by the Ministry of Education as the policy of Universal secondary Education unfolded. Twelve principals felt that the Ministry of Education had provided sufficient support to principals. The

remaining ten respondents felt that, although the education authorities had provided some support particularly for workshops and the training of teachers, they also identified a number of shortcomings in the level of support provided by the Ministry of Education to secondary schools.

Based on demographic categories, six of the seven principals from assisted schools expressed satisfaction with the increased levels of support that they had received from the Ministry of Education since the implementation of USE. One principal from that category expressed dissatisfaction with the overtures of the Ministry of Education. There were no divergent perceptual differences between male and female principals and between large and small schools. However, rural principals were generally less satisfied with the level of support and resources that they had received by comparison with their urban counterparts. Two rural principals attributed this trend to distance from the central office.

5.6   Summary

This second chapter of the data analysis focused on the instructional and managerial practices of Vincentian school principals under Universal Secondary Education. Broken down into four sub-themes, the analysis of the interview data revealed that principals made use of a variety of leadership practices to deal with the range of challenges confronting the schools under Universal Secondary Education.

The findings of the study revealed that Vincentian secondary school principals employed varied practices that ranged from standard instructional leadership practices such as professional development of the teaching staff and curricular innovations and modifications, to monitoring and supervision of teaching and learning and the training of teachers.

Other important practices identified included internal relations practices focused on improving the school's mission, vision and culture. Student-centred practices were highlighted through the provision of student support services and an ethic of caring for the welfare of students. Parental involvement strategies were also critical to the

principals overall strategy to foster greater participation from parents. External relations strategies were examined through collaboration with outside agencies and the Ministry of Education. The final set of practices identified examined principals' leadership philosophy and the extent to which distributed and shared leadership were used to enhance principals' administrative and operational efficiency.

Looking at the analysis in terms of demographic trends, staff development initiatives and improvement in teaching methodology were fairly uniformed across types of schools, principal gender and location. Experienced principals however pursued these practices in greater proportions than inexperienced principals. Curriculum innovation and modification was generally more prevalent in rural, and low achieving schools as principals sought to diversify the curriculum to cater for the wider diversity of students. Alternative certification strategies were only practised in low- achieving schools and the majority of these were located in rural districts.

Again, student support initiatives and parental outreach strategies, while common to all schools, were stressed particularly in large rural schools. Additionally, there were no perceptual differences across schools in terms of organizational and administrative practices. All schools sought to give a greater voice to their management teams and heads of departments. However, these structures were more sophisticated and well-developed in urban, high-performing schools. Collaboration with external agencies was more marked in large rural schools as greater focus was placed on trying to give greater assistance to the student body of those schools. Finally, support from the MOE was forthcoming for all schools, even though rurally based principals felt slightly disadvantaged on that measure.

This chapter therefore showed the various coping and adaptation strategies employed by Vincentian secondary school principals faced with the new USE policy. Chapter six will discuss the findings, conclusions, recommendations, implications and contributions of this study to literature on the policy of Universal Secondary education and education leadership in developing countries.

Chapter 6. SUMMARY DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

With the implementation of a new policy in schools, the leadership practices of the principal were paramount in determining the degree of success or otherwise of the USE innovation. To fully explicate the problem and research questions, a two-pronged approach was adopted for this study. On one hand, the study examined Vincentian principals' experiences with the recently introduced policy of Universal Secondary Education by enquiring into the challenges that impacted on their instructional and managerial effectiveness as policy implementation unfolded.

The other complementary aim was to determine the principals' responses to the challenges identified in research question 1. This second question therefore sought to gain insights into the instructional and managerial practices of Vincentian secondary school principals. Demographic variables of gender, location of school, school achievement level and years of principals' experience in school leadership were purposefully integrated into the study to determine to the extent to which these supplementary factors provided differing perceptions of USE, its challenges and the concomitant responses.

The ensuing sections will present a summary of the main findings and answers to the initial research questions. These are followed by a discussion of the findings grounded in the relevant literature, with the study culminating in a number of implications and recommendations for policy, practice and future research.

6.2 Research Questions

The study set out to answer the following primary research questions:

(1) What are the specific managerial and instructional leadership challenges that principals face in implementing the policy of Universal Secondary Education?

(2) What managerial and instructional leadership practices have principals employed to deal with demands of Universal Secondary Education?

A number of ancillary but relevant sub-questions were also posed:

1. Are there any differences between the managerial and instructional leadership practices of principals in high-achieving schools compared to low achieving-schools?

2. Are there any differences between the managerial and instructional leadership practices of male and female principals under USE reforms?

3. Are there any differences between the managerial and instructional leadership practices of experienced and new principals under USE reforms?

4. Are there any differences between the managerial and instructional leadership practices of rural and urban secondary school principals under USE reforms?

6.3 Discussion of The Findings

In this section, the main findings of the study are summarized in reference to the two primary research questions and the four secondary sub-questions. The outcome of the data analysis of research question 1 resulted in the identification of five major themes related to the instructional and managerial challenges confronting secondary school principals under Universal Secondary Education. Each theme with its key findings is discussed below in the context of the reviewed literature and other relevant literature.

6.3.1　　Discussion: Research Question 1

What are the specific managerial and instructional leadership challenges that principals face in implementing the policy of Universal Secondary Education?

For principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, weaknesses in literacy and numeracy constituted the most significant challenge to their instructional and managerial leadership. Recent research by Warrican (2009) and Warrican and Leacock (2007) supports the finding that deficiencies in literacy constitutes a major challenge to teachers, school administrators and policy makers in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. A report by the Ministry of Education in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines commissioned to determine the proportion of first year USE students reading levels found that 60 % of the 2005 cohort was reading two years below their grade level (Ministry of Education, 2005). Studies by Lesforis (2010) in St Lucia and by Werner (2011) support these findings of weaknesses in numeracy and literacy impacting negatively on secondary schools in other developing countries.

Under the rubric of student academic and management challenges, two important findings related to USE students were lower student achievement and low student motivation. This finding is supported in a Barbadian study of student behaviour under USE in Barbadian classrooms. Thompson (2009) identified disruptive behaviour and students' lack of interest in academic education as major student academic and management challenges. These findings are mirror images of the student academic and management challenges identified by the majority of Vincentian secondary school principals in this study.

Other researchers in the field had found the existence of low motivation and lower achievement returns in the early years of USE implementation. Hinds (2007) identified low morale and a lack of motivation among students who had performed at the lower ends of the spectrum on the Common Entrance Examinations. Similarly, Marks (2009), citing a 2005 study sanctioned by the Ministry of Education of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, reported "low levels of performance by students who did not meet the benchmark, particularly in literacy and numeracy" (p.61) Based on the findings of this present study, little has changed in the area of student motivation and achievement

during the last seven years as indicated by 75 per cent of principals interviewed in this study.

The recent literature on USE in the Caribbean appears to substantiate the view that student indiscipline has increased since the full implementation of USE. For instance Thompson (2009) and Marks (2009) support the finding that disciplinary problems are "a growing challenge to teachers charged with the implementation of USE in Saint Vincent" (p.63). She also found that: "lack of motivation to attend school was one of the major causes of disciplinary problems among students" (p.64).

Respondents also identified student attendance issues as a noteworthy challenge to school leaders and managers. These actions were seen as outgrowths of the more fundamental problem of student lack of motivation and interest in academic work. Werner (2011) found similar patterns of student attrition and absenteeism in Ugandan USE schools. As a countermeasure to these identified student management and academic challenges, Thompson (2009) recommends the adoption of such practices as "appropriate and relevant curricula, more training of teachers in classroom management and more parental inclusion in the education system". (p.1).

The second cluster of findings highlighted teacher performance and other teacher-related challenges. Teacher resistance to the changes that accompanied the implementation of USE was a salient observation by 32 per cent of the interviewees. Warrican (2009) attributes this phenomenon to USE teachers' inexperience with teaching lower performing cohorts of students and their unawareness of effective strategies to which they could expose them (p. 74). The findings from this study dovetail with similar observations from the research literature (Mckenzie and Scheurich 2002, Moore, Edwards, Halpin and George, 2002 and Thornburg and Mungai, 2011), who cite various reasons for teacher resistance to change such as lack of accountability and perceived threats to their classroom practice In this study, the data clearly showed that teachers' resistance was based more on their lack of preparedness to teach a diversity of students

Study respondents also highlighted the need for increased teacher training particularly in classroom management and in the areas of teaching and integrating the

teaching of literacy into their classes. The area of technology integration, while heavily favoured in some schools, was also found to be in need of improvement among many teachers described by some principals as technologically challenged. These findings are supported strongly in the recent and existing literature on USE. Leacock (2009) mentioned the need for improved teacher preparation and planning as integral to the improvement in the delivery of USE

It is also important to note in this discussion on teacher training that official statistics show that overall teacher training and certification has increased under USE. However, the percentage of university graduates has also decreased. (See Appendix K) Based on the 2012 figures, 58 % of secondary school teachers were Teachers' College certified, while 17 % were university graduates. These aggregate figures however do not show the disparities that exist across the individual schools, with some schools having 100 % trained and graduate teachers, with other schools as low as 11 % of graduate and trained teachers. (SVG Statistical Digest 2013). It is in this context that many principals indicated the need for greater training of their teachers to deal with the challenges of USE, particularly in the area of classroom management, literacy and numeracy instruction and ICT integration.

Lack of teacher preparedness for professional work can hamper the progress of policy implementation in secondary schools (Alekhina & Agafonova, 2011). In the case of secondary schools under the USE policy, Marks' (2009) asserts that classroom management and teachers' inability to minimize loss of instructional time through management of student discipline still remain fundamental to the overall success of the USE policy. In support of this, Werner (2011) found that adequate training and preparation of teachers had a positive impact on USE reforms in Uganda, The principals in this study also believed that addressing the teacher training issue in the key areas of classroom management, assessment and ICT expansion would help to improve the delivery of the USE policy in secondary schools.

Principal workload and job-related stress was an important finding of this study. Principals attributed the increased workload to a variety of stressors built in to the USE environment. Taken together, this study supports the voluminous literature on principal

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stress and workload documented in other contexts. Portin et al. (2000), for instance cited role overload of urban principals as a major challenge to principal effectiveness. Gronn & Ribbins (2003) and Rawlings–Sanaei (2003) described the conflictual pressures of principals trying to balance managerial responsibilities against teaching and learning priorities.

Similarly, Billot (2003),in a New Zealand study of principals workload under school reform and reminiscent of Vincentian principals under USE, described principals efforts to manage externally initiated demands "in a way appropriate for their schools" (p. 46). An OECD (2008) study similarly found the European principals' workloads were so heavy that it had negative impacts on principal recruitment. In this study, principal workload and job-related stress was not restricted to type of school or principal years of experience. Principals across the board were impacted by a workload described by (Heitlin, 2013) as too complex in the context of the new USE dispensation.

The negative impact of primary school education was cited as one of the major external threats posed to principals seeking to improve the delivery of secondary education under USE. This finding is well supported in the literature on Universal Secondary Education. Warrican (2009) mentions the need for sound literacy foundations at the primary level. Similarly, Lesforis (2010) found that the inadequacy of primary schooling was a foundational weakness of USE in the adjacent island of St. Lucia. In Uganda, Werner (2011) attributed the influx of academically weak students to Universal Primary Education (UPE) schools transitioning students of lower academic output.

A general lack of readiness for the implementation of USE remained a significant challenge several years after its initial implementation. Study participants indicated that key inputs such of the training of principals, teachers and literacy coordinators took a long time before their impacts were felt. Some principals felt that the MOE, the implementing body, was not fully prepared for the roll-out of USE. Others mentioned political motivations for the rush to have USE in place at the time of implementation. This view is supported in the USE literature on Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Marks (2009) states that "the introduction of USE was a politically driven policy by the

governing administration that have priority to education" (p. 57). Tanner and Tanner (1990) in discussing top-down approaches to policy implementation, pointed out that politically motivated reforms are difficult to implement in schools. They further argue that such reforms should be educationally motivated to be successful.

In a related vein, a minority of principals felt that a phased implementation model would have been a more successful strategy in the short term. Marks (2009) concluded that volume of work required to support USE was under-estimated by the policy implementers, thereby resulting in shortcomings in implementation. This same conclusion is supported by the principals' statements about the system's readiness for USE implementation and its ongoing shortfalls.

Lack of autonomy for public school principals was another external barrier cited by thirty per cent of principals as being a constraint on their ability to function optimally under USE. Principals expressed reservations about the top-down approach to policy implementation, the general lack of consultation and principal input into policy elaboration and diffusion. Additionally, they cited restrictions on principals' ability to determine curriculum and disciplinary matters in respect of students and teachers. These findings therefore confirm the argument made by Chunna-Bryda (2012) in a Jamaican context, that when teachers and principals are not consulted about policies, there is less enthusiasm for policy implementation.

This state-of-affairs has led some principals to call for greater decentralization of decision-making under USE. It is well documented in the literature that decentralization has resulted in the improved performance of education systems (Johansson and Lundberg (2000); Hausman, Crow and Sperry (2000). The education authorities therefore may need to look at greater decision-making for principals as a viable avenue for improving the workings of the USE policy.

Finally, Vincentian secondary principals identified lack of parental engagement and negative community values as important challenges to instructional and managerial leadership. The research literature has shown that parental attitudes can make or break policy reforms in schools (Langdon and Vesper, (2000); Lloyd-Smith and Baron (2010). Marzano (2003) has identified parental and community support as key correlates of

success in effective schools. Lack of parental involvement has also been identified as a barrier in improving public schools (Keller, 2008, Keller & Whiston, 2008; Richardson, 2009).

The findings in this study confirm the work of numerous researchers who have shown that effective parental support for students can lead to improved school outcomes such as lower dropout rates, improved behaviour and better grades (Lambert 1998; Robinson et al. 2009; Biddulph et al. 2003). While dissatisfied with the existing level of parental involvement, many Vincentian secondary school principals believed that forging strong partnerships among school, home and community should be a major goal in improving the delivery of secondary education under USE.

To recapitulate, this section summarized and evaluated the key challenges confronting Vincentian principals under USE. The findings from this question confirm similar findings in the literature on Universal Secondary Education both in the Caribbean and Africa. Indeed, the findings on parental and community involvement, principals' lack of autonomy and teacher resistance to change are complementary and additional to other studies that emphasized teachers' perceptions of USE and their supports for Universal Secondary Education reforms. The ensuing section summarizes and discusses the responses to the identified challenges highlighted above.

6.3.2   Discussion: Research Question 2

What managerial and instructional leadership practices have principals employed to deal with the demands of Universal Secondary Education?

The Instructional Management practices of Vincentian secondary school principals are discussed under five headings (1) Professional Development of the teaching staff (2) Curriculum Modification and Innovation (3) Adjustment of teaching methodology and creativity in teaching (4) Differentiated teaching and learning and (5) Incorporation and use of technology.

The principals in the study indicated that focusing on professional development of teachers was one of their areas of priority for helping to improve the instructional

climate of secondary schools. Marks (2009) corroborates this finding of increased training for principals and teachers after the implementation of USE. She pointed out that since USE implementation, other training has taken place for teachers of lower secondary schools. Marks (2009), however, notes that while such training is commendable, it is still inadequate to meet the level of instructional and managerial challenges facing secondary schools.

While Marks (2009) concluded that professional development of teachers was inadequate and lagged behind policy implementation initially, the findings in this study show that there has been some incremental emphasis on professional development by the education authorities and by school principals. These findings therefore partially confirm the Grissom and Loeb (2009) finding of school principals in Florida being involved in developing teachers' instructional capacities and in planning and implementing professional development for teachers. Albeit reduced in scope and intensity, this finding also supports Waters and associates (2003), who emphasized that a focus on assessment and instruction was fundamental to effective leadership by secondary school principals.

Curriculum modification and adjustment was highlighted particularly in light of the academic nature of present curricula and their inappropriateness for USE students. Marks (2009) confirms that curricular changes occurred in the lower secondary school, but that "there was a noticeable absence of technical vocational subjects" (p.67). She also pointed out that in spite of the diversity of students under USE "curricular changes were minimal and there was a persistence of a "one-size fits all" approach leading to a mismatch between student needs and curriculum offerings (p.67).

A key finding of this study was the need for a more hands-on approach to curriculum implementation under Universal Secondary Education. This finding agrees with the recommendations made by King (2009) and Leacock (2009) on the need for a more practical curriculum tailored to the abilities of the students entering Vincentian secondary schools under USE.

Adjustment in teaching methodology and creative teaching practices also found support in the USE literature. King (2009) mentions co-operative learning as an

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instructional strategy "beneficial to USE both to bring about learning and to facilitate social interdependence" (p. 34). Leacock (2009) called for greater exposure to creative teaching strategies through further training in educational technology, varied assessment techniques and the appropriate use of the outcomes of assessments. Many schools have therefore been looking critically at their teaching methodologies with a view to increasing the variety and range of methods to deal with the diversity of USE.

Principals also mentioned focusing on increased incorporation of ICT technologies in teaching and learning as an important strategy used in conjunction with differentiation in teaching. English (2006) writings on the use of ICT in British schools highlight the importance of "pedagogical competence" and "a repertoire of ideas on how to use ICT tools in creative ways" for increased ICT to make a difference in education. This caveat is brought out in the findings of this study. Principals expressed interest in exploiting ICT but needed to see a change in attitude of some teachers and more exposure to ICT training to beneficially harness these technologies.

Vincentian secondary school principals also identified a number of practices in the area of school internal relations that have been included under the rubric Internal Relations Practices. This theme incorporates such practices including selling the mission and vision of the school to stakeholders, improving internal relationships, providing greater support to students, creating a caring culture through the greater involvement of school counsellors and seeking to improve parental involvement using such strategies as parent training workshops.

Seven principals spoke about building the image of their schools as part of their student and teacher motivational strategies Focus on school culture was designed to provide improved quality in overall educational provision. Leacock (2009) has pointed out that it was important under USE to provide the less academically inclined students with better educational quality.

Several previous studies support this finding of a strong school culture and student progress. (Sautner, 2001; DeWit, McKee, Fjeld & Karioja, 2003, Safe Schools Action Team, 2008) have all shown that there is a direct link between a positive, supportive school culture and student learning and motivation to do well and to achieve

their full potential. Fullan (2003) mentions the need to have principals at the helm of school leadership who have the courage and the capacity to build new cultures based on trusting relationships.

Similarly, principals in the study identified the need to build stronger interpersonal relationships and student support as effective strategies for improving educational quality in USE schools. Leithwood (2006) also found that a school culture that focuses on supporting students and teachers resulted in positive outcomes for students. Fink and Resnick (2001) emphasized the importance of building strong interpersonal relationships for learning and school success. Grissom and Loeb (2009) included capacities for building strong interpersonal relations within the school as an important specific skill that principals need to build school success. These findings from the literature support the leadership practices of improving internal relationships exhibited by Vincentian principals under USE.

In this study, school counsellors played in a vital role in student diagnosis, identification of students with a variety of socio-economic and instructional issues and in providing instructional and psychological support to the student population. In keeping with this finding, the existing research literature has pointed out that school counsellors are no longer peripheral to the main functioning of schools (Stone and Clark, 2001). Rather, they are seen as powerful allies of principals in supporting academic achievement and student success (House and Martin, 1998). A more proactive role for school counsellors is echoed in the work of Stone and Clark (2001) who emphasize that "the time has come for school counsellors to join forces with school principals to assume and exert leadership within school and communities" (p.16). The Vincentian school principals in this study saw the strategic use of school counsellors as integral to the successful functioning of the policy of Universal Secondary Education.

Vincentian secondary principals also sought to improve parental involvement through improving relationships with parents mainly through parent education initiatives. Although many of the principals interviewed stated improving home-school cooperation was an important goal, the interview data also showed that this goal remained unattainable or limited in terms of success for many of the participants. The related

literature shows that harnessing parental support for their children's education is not always straightforward issue, particularly in developing countries. While a lot of the literature has lauded parental involvement as a strategy for increasing student participation (Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn, & Van Voorhis, 2009), other researchers have pointed out that many schools still struggle with the issue of involving parents particularly those of lower socio-economic status (Bower and Griffin, 2011; Hornby and Lafaele, 2011).

In this study, twelve principals (55 %) had implemented a number of parental outreach and parental involvement programmes including parent training workshops, home visits, parent open days, family and community days and fathers and sons initiatives to stimulate greater male participation. While many of these practices are somewhat effective in reaching some parents, many principals still reported dissatisfaction with the response of a large proportion of parents to these initiatives. This trend was especially prevalent for parents of children with behavioural deficits and for those of lower socio-economic status.

Under the theme of organizational management practices, eleven principals (50%) discussed the importance shared and distributive leadership through the creation of school management teams. They saw distributed leadership as having a positive impact on improving the day to day functioning of secondary schools under USE. These principals believed that building the capacity of teachers through the establishment of various school management teams was an effective way to create the best conditions for teaching and learning and for overall school success. They also felt that distributing leadership was one way of reducing the increasing burden of additional administrative and managerial tasks brought on by the introduction of USE.

These findings are substantiated by similar findings in the literature review. Bush and Glover (2012) found that the use of senior leadership teams in English schools was an effective manifestation of distributed leadership. Harris and Townsend (2007) studied a form of "lateral distributive leadership". In their study, they found that this form of distributive leadership positively influences school development and change and contributes to building leadership capacity within the system. Similarly, Vernon-Dotson

and Floyd (2012) found that the use of teacher teams and school partnerships were potent ways of building school capacity. Leithwood et al. (2007) have also found a close correlation between distributive leadership and increased teacher capacity. Hence, this finding of increased sharing and distribution of leadership tasks in this study coincides with similar instructional and managerial practices identified in the literature.

Under the theme of external relations practices, the study found that Vincentian secondary school principals often relied on collaboration with external agencies and their expertise for assistance in areas such as the professional development of teachers. The analysis of data revealed that 59 % of principals used some form of external expertise to boost instructional and professional development activities. Using a cadre of retired educators and specialists from local and regional teacher training institutions, these principals sought to improve the delivery of education under USE through various modalities including extended training in classroom management, teaching techniques, student assessment and evaluation and in the integration of literacy in the content areas. Additionally, principals also received financial assistance, training materials and equipment, sponsorships of various programs to assist with student development in areas such as sports, music, agriculture and literacy.

This finding was congruent with previous findings in the literature on principal leadership and school external relations. Mannopodi and Beard (2013) described how an external provider was able to turn around a low-performing school in Michigan using a data informed instructional process. Similar studies by Dunbar and Monson (2011) and Rolling, Ford and Moultrie (2000) showed how external partnerships and collaboration with external support providers have led to gains in student achievement and principal's problem-solving capacity in New York schools. One Canadian monograph showed the success that schools can achieve by making use of external expertise (Ontario Leadership Strategy, 2012).

The general consensus in the literature is that principals use outside resources to their advantage when needed, without minimizing the impact of their own influence and involvement. This finding though is only partially congruent with the finding in Grissom

and Loeb (2009). Only 38% of principals in their study rated themselves as very effective in communicating with central office to obtain resources.

These findings under this second research question reveal a variety of connections to the literature review on principals' instructional and managerial practices. In tandem with the findings in this study, Kouzes and Posner (2007) emphasized that a key practice of successful school principals was that of inspiring a shared vision. Principals in this study focused on building the school's mission and vision as a central plank in their repertoire of leadership practices. Similarly, Leithwood et al. (2006) included the establishment of core organizational values as part of building the school's vision, while Kohm and Nance (2009) emphasized the importance of collaborative school cultures.

Fifty-five per cent of principals in this study stressed the importance of collaboration, both as an internal practice to build cohesion and as an external strategy to foster school-community partnerships under USE. Finally, Louis and Wahlstrom (2011) believed that shared leadership played an important role in promoting a positive school culture. Similarly, the analysis of the interview data from this research showed that Vincentian principals believed that fostering a strong collaborative culture supportive of teachers, students and parents was an important element in promoting a strong ethos of learning in most of the secondary schools.

While the majority of principals were engaged in vision and mission building, the data revealed also that not all principals were successful in selling the vision of Universal Secondary Education to all members of their staff and other stakeholders of USE. Many principals reported teacher resistance to change and teacher unwillingness to adapt new practices in line with the mission and vision of the school and the existing realities of Universal Secondary Education. Hence, while the practice of mission and vision building was an important avenue for bringing about meaningful change in the delivery of education under USE, it was only partially successful as a strategy for school improvement.

In summary, this section of the discussion of findings in relation to the previous literature revealed that in spite of the numerous challenges confronting Vincentian

principals under USE, these school leaders have been utilizing various instructional leadership and managerial strategies to combat these challenges. These practices have been broadly subsumed into four clusters. The gamut of principals' responses to the challenges identified under Universal Secondary Education ranged from professional development of the teaching staff to curriculum modification to internal relations practices such as students support and parental involvement. Administrative and organizational practices included distributed and shared leadership as well as an expanded role for Senior Management Teams and Heads of Departments.

Finally, principals sought to build external partnerships with other entities and with the Ministry of Education Overall, in terms of the success of these leadership and managerial responses in the context of the overall challenges posed to principals with the implementation of the policy of USE, principals generally felt that they were achieving a measure of success in their delivery of the policy. However, when asked to evaluate the success of the USE policy sixteen of the twenty-two respondents described the USE policy as "partially successful". One rural principal provided the following evaluation of the USE policy that encapsulates the general consensus of the respondents:

"I think that it has been successful to some point but it will take the commitment of the principals and staff, the parents and the children themselves, the MOE and the government to make it even more successful (Alfred)".

In a nutshell, the majority of Vincentian principals believed that in spite of their efforts to implement a series of innovative instructional leadership and managerial practices, there remains a lot of work to be done to make Universal Secondary Education a successful policy in the educational landscape of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

6.3.3   Sub-Question 1

Are there any differences between the managerial and instructional leadership practices of principals in high-achieving schools compared to low achieving-schools?

According to official Ministry of Education Statistical Education Digest (2014), secondary schools in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have been traditionally classified as high-achieving or low-achieving based on their historical performance at Grade 12 international or regional external baccalaureate or school leaving exams. These examinations are called General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) or Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC)

In this study, four of the twenty-six schools are classified as high-achieving as they have consistently obtained an average pass rate of 80 per cent or higher on external school leaving examinations. The remaining schools have had variable performances over time and are classified as lower-achieving schools as their average pass rates have fallen short of the eighty per cent benchmark. Even more importantly in the context of this study is the fact that 95 % the top-performing students on the annual Common Entrance Examinations are transitioned to these schools. (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Educational Statistical Digest (2012)

To answer the question of differences in leadership practice between high-performing and lower-performing schools, I examined the responses of the principals of the four schools designated as high-performing schools and compared these responses to those of their counterparts in the remaining eighteen schools in the study. These responses and the related analysis are presented in the following table. The table is presented in summary form according to the themes and sub-themes used in the data analysis in Chapter Five. It shows the number of respondents that mentioned the sub-theme during the principal interview. For ease of comparison, simple percentages are presented in the table in brackets.

TABLE 6.1   Leadership practices of secondary school principals of high-performing schools and low-performing schools in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Identified Instructional Leadership and Managerial Practices	High-performing Schools (4)	Low-performing Schools (18)	Total Respondents per sub-theme
Theme 6:Instructional Management Practices			
Professional Development of the Teaching Staff	4 (100%)	18 (100 %)	22
Curriculum Modification and Innovation	3 (75 %)	14 (78 %)	17
Adjustment in Teaching Methodology	2 (50 %)	7 (39 %)	9
Differentiated Teaching and Learning	1 (25 %)	8 (44 %)	9
Incorporation and Use of ICT	1 (25 %)	14 (78 %)	15
Identified Instructional Leadership and Managerial Practices	High-performing Schools (4)	Low-performing Schools (18)	Total Respondents per sub-theme
Theme 7:Internal Relations Practices			
School mission, Vision, Culture & Interpersonal Relations	2 (50 %)	9 (50 %)	11
Student Support Initiatives and the Culture of Care	1 (25 %)	12 (67 %)	13
Parental Involvement Strategies	1 (25 %)	13 (72 %)	14
Theme 8 : Organizational and Administrative Practices			
Leadership Strategies	3 (75 %)	8 (44 %)	11
Enhanced Roles for School Management Teams and	4 (100 %)	14 (78 %)	18

HOD's			
Theme 9: External Relations Practices			
Strategic Partnerships with External Agencies	2 (50%)	12 (67 %)	14
Official Support and collaboration	3 (75 %)	13 (72 %)	16

Based on the comparative data in the above table, the evidence indicates that there were similarities in the instructional practices of both categories of principals of high-performing and low-performing schools on many of the sub-themes. Broadly, principals from both categories used similar practices. However, the important differences lie in the intensity of the application of those practices or differences in their application. In looking at the close similarities, all principals focused on the professional development of the teaching force as a major strategy in improving the delivery of teaching and learning under USE. Similarly, there were only minor differences of a few percentage points in such practices as curriculum modification and innovation, the promotion of the school's mission, vision, culture and interpersonal relations and official support from the Ministry of Education. There were also minor perceptual differences the use of school management teams, leadership approaches and collaboration with external agencies.

Important divergence in leadership practices was evident in parental involvement strategies. 72% of principals from low-performing schools reported the implementation of a range of measures to boost parental involvement. This was only 25% in high-performing schools. This divergence can be attributed to the fact that 3 high-performing schools did not report many parent-related issues. By contrast, the high incidence of student social and behavioural problems and parental dereliction of responsibilities in lower-performing schools resulted in higher reporting of practices designed to boost parental engagement.

Analogously, under the sub-theme of student support initiatives, 67% of principals from low-performing schools reported instituting practices such as free lunch programmes, book loan schemes, and social welfare assistance. School counsellors

also played a major role in providing proactive student support. These supports were only seen in 25% of the cases for high-performing schools.

In terms of leadership strategies and shared leadership with senior school managers, principals of higher-performing schools were more involved in these practices. This finding is well documented in the literature. Hallinger, Brickman and Davis (1996) found that principals of higher-SES schools practiced more active instructional leadership than their colleagues in lower-SES schools. Similarly, Seashore, Louis and Wahlstrom (2004) noted decreases in shared and instructional leadership in schools with higher levels of student poverty and diversity. In this study, students of lower-SES attended lower-performing schools in overwhelming numbers.

Two other areas of signal difference were in the domains of differentiation for students and in the incorporation and use of ICT. As indicated in the above table 6.1, 44 % of principals in low performing schools encouraged the use of differentiation strategies to aid in boosting student academic performance. Similarly, 78% of low performing schools were adapting greater levels of ICT integration into their curriculum. These statistics however must be interpreted with caution. The need for differentiation is much greater in low-performing schools with their higher proportions of diverse abilities compared the more homogeneous cohorts that had entered the high –performing schools. Illustrative of this reality is the emphasis placed on CCSLC certification in lower performing schools. None of the high –performing schools entered students for CCSLC examinations, as they believed that their students possessed the competence to pass the more rigorous CSEC examinations. Hence, these higher performing schools offered individual curriculum modification to their students on an "as needed" basis, while at lower performing schools, curriculum modification for students formed part and parcel of the principals' overall repertoire of instructional leadership practices.

In conclusion, although there were many similarities in the leadership practices of principals of high-performing schools and low-performing schools, the analysis of trends suggests that these categories of schools differed meaningfully under four clusters of leadership practices. These included: differentiation in teaching, the incorporation and use of ICT, student support practices and parental involvement strategies.

6.3.4   Sub-Question 2

Are there any differences between the managerial and instructional leadership practices of male and female principals under USE reforms?

In this study, a total of 22 practicing principals participated in the final sample. There were 15 male principals and 7 female principals drawn from both government-owned secondary schools and government-assisted denominational schools. Four schools were single-sex schools, two exclusively female and the remaining two male only. The other 18 schools in the sample were co-educational institutions. The summary of the data of principals' responses by gender is presented in the following table.

Table 6.2   Leadership and managerial practices of Vincentian principals under universal secondary education by gender

Identified Instructional Leadership and Managerial Practices	FEMALE PRINCIPALS (7) (%)	MALE PRINCIPALS (15) (%)	Total respondents per sub-theme
Theme 6: Instructional Management Practices			
Professional Development of the Teaching Staff	7 (100)	15 (100)	22
Curriculum Modification and Innovation	4 (57)	13 (87)	17
Adjustment in Teaching Methodology	4 (57)	8 (53)	12
Differentiated Teaching and Learning	3 (43)	6 (40)	9
Incorporation and Use of ICT	4 (57)	11 (73)	15
Theme 7: Internal Relations Practices			
School mission, Vision, Culture & Interpersonal Relations	4 (57)	7 (47)	15
Student support Initiatives and the Culture of Care	4 (57)	9 (60)	13

Parental Involvement Strategies	5 (71)	9 (60)	14
Theme 8 : Organizational and Administrative Practices			
Leadership Strategies	4 (57)	7 (47)	11
Enhanced Roles for Senior Management Teams & HOD's	2 (29)	12 (80)	14
Theme 9: External Relations Practices			
Strategic Partnerships with External Agencies	3 (43)	11 (73)	14
Official Support and collaboration	5 (71)	11 (73)	16

Based on the above break-down of the data in table 6.2, it appears that under Universal Secondary Education, that there are not many major areas of difference between the instructional leadership practices and managerial practices of female principals and male principals. For instance, in four of the sub-themes explored, there were gender differences of 5% or less in the sub-themes of curriculum modification, differentiated teaching, student support initiatives and official collaboration with the Ministry of Education. There was also a 10% differential in the areas of school mission, vision, culture and interpersonal relations; parental involvement practices and leadership strategies These trends represent a fair level of homogeneity in the way male and female principals implemented various practices under Universal secondary Education.

As a general rule, the practices carried out by all principals tended to respond to the needs of students and the school and were generally gender neutral. The majority of principals focused on strong curriculum planning and implementation, on creating a culture of caring, on democratic leadership. Both the female principals and their male counterparts tended to emphasize parent training and parental involvement, teacher professional development, monitoring and evaluation of teachers, applying assessment and evaluation data for program improvement, using the resources of the schools creatively to provide programs for increased student support and student welfare. Both

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genders tended to promote good relations with the Ministry of Education for the overall development of their respective schools.

Nevertheless, there were three clusters of instructional leadership and managerial practices on which female and male principals differed meaningfully. These were the incorporation and use of ICT, with 71% of male principals reporting increased use compared to 57% of females. Secondly, 80% of male principals reported devolution of power by according greater responsibilities to members of their Senior Management Teams and to Heads of Departments. Only 29% of females reported a similar diversification of leadership responsibilities. Thirdly, in regard to the forging of strategic alliances with external entities, 73% of male principals reported higher levels of collaboration with these stakeholders compared to 43% of female principals.

In a nutshell, the foregoing analysis reveals that secondary schools principals were generally harmonized in many of the leadership practices applied based on gender. Male and female principals applied similar managerial practices and instructional strategies, with the exception of three areas mentioned above where female principals were more conservative in the application of practices in ICT, external collaboration and the sharing of leadership responsibilities.

6.3.5   Sub-Question 3

Are there differences between the managerial and instructional leadership practices of experienced and new principals under USE reforms?

In answering sub-question 3 on differences in leadership practices between new and experienced secondary school principals, I provided a summary of their responses in the table 6.3 below. For the purposes of this study, principals with more than five years' experience at the head of a secondary school are classified as experienced principals. There were 13 principals with more than five years' tenure. Conversely, there were 9 principals with less than five years in leadership and management of secondary schools.   Table 6.3 below gives a breakdown of the number of both experienced principals and inexperienced who mentioned that they had engaged in the key instructional and managerial practices identified in the analysis of data.

TABLE 6.3   Comparison of the instructional leadership and managerial practices of Vincentian secondary school principals based on years of experience

Identified Instructional Leadership and Managerial Practices	EXPERIENCED PRINCIPALS (13) (%)	NEW PRINCIPALS (9) (%)	Total Respondents per sub-theme
Theme 6: Instructional Management Practices			
Professional Development of the Teaching Staff	13 (100)	9 (100)	22
Curriculum Modification and Innovation	8 (62)	9 (100)	17
Adjustment in Teaching Methodology	8 (62)	4 (44)	12
Differentiated Teaching and Learning	5 (38)	4 (44)	9
Incorporation and Use of ICT	9 (69)	6 (67)	15
Theme 7: Internal Relations Practices			
School Mission, Vision, Culture & Interpersonal Relations	6 (46)	5 (56)	11
Student Support Initiatives and the Culture of Care	9 (69)	4 (44)	10
Parental Involvement Strategies	6 (46)	8 (89)	14
Theme 8: Organizational and Administrative Practices			
Leadership Strategies	8 (62)	3 (33)	11
Enhanced Roles for School Management Teams & HOD'S	9 (69)	5 (56)	14

Identified Instructional Leadership and Managerial Practices	EXPERIENCED PRINCIPALS (13) (%)	NEW PRINCIPALS (9) (%)	Total Respondents per sub-theme
Theme 9: External Relations Practices			
Strategic Partnerships with External Agencies	6 (46)	8 (89)	14
Official Support and collaboration	10 (77)	6 (67)	15

From the table above, there are seven sub-themes that reveal substantial differences in the degree of emphasis placed on their leadership practices by both new and experienced principals. Experienced principals have generally provided greater focus in adjusting teaching methodology, student support initiatives and leadership strategies, including the distribution of leadership roles and tasks to senior management and Heads of Departments. On the other hand, new principals have shown greater divergence in curriculum modification and innovation and working with external entities and in parental involvement practices.

On the basis of this table, it is clear that there are some important differences in the practices of both categories of principals, but these differences are not overwhelmingly marked. What is clear, however, from the overall trend is that both new and experienced principals do employ many of the same practices to manage their schools, but with some differences in degree and intensity irrespective of years of experience.

6.3.6   Sub-Question 4

Are there any differences between the managerial and instructional leadership practices of rural and urban secondary school principals under USE reforms?

For this study, there were 15 rural secondary school principals and 7 urban secondary schools that participated in the study. None of the rural schools were classified as high-performing schools while four of the urban schools fell into the high-

performing category. As such, four urban schools also received the majority of the students that were ranked highest on the Common Entrance Examinations. Table 6.4 below shows the leadership practices of principals of urban and rural schools. The analysis of differences in practices under USE is discussed below the tabular data.

TABLE 6.4   Comparison of the instructional leadership and managerial practices of rural and urban secondary school principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Identified Instructional Leadership and Managerial Practices	RURAL SCHOOLS (15) (%)	URBAN SCHOOLS (7) (%)	Total Respondents per sub-theme
Theme 6: Instructional Management Practices			
Professional Development of the Teaching Staff	15 (100)	7 (100)	22
Curriculum Modification and Innovation	11 (73)	6 (86)	17
Adjustment in Teaching Methodology	8 (53)	4 (57)	12
Differentiated Teaching and Learning	7 (47)	2 (29)	9
Incorporation and Use of ICT	12 (80)	3 (43)	15
Theme 7: Internal Relations Practices			
School mission, Vision, culture & Interpersonal Relations	7 (47)	4 (57)	11
Student Support Initiatives and the Culture of Care	10 (67)	3 (43)	10
Parental Involvement Strategies	11(73)	3 (43)	14

Identified Instructional Leadership and Managerial Practices	RURAL SCHOOLS (15) (%)	URBAN SCHOOLS (7) (%)	Total Respondents per sub-theme
Theme 8: Organizational and Administrative Practices			
Leadership Strategies	7 (47)	4 (57)	11
Enhanced Roles for School management Teams and HOD's	11 (73)	3 (43)	14
Theme 9: External Relations Practices			
Strategic Partnerships with External Agencies	10 (67)	4 (57)	14
Official Support and collaboration	11 (73)	5 (71)	16

The data show that there are a number of similarities between the instructional and managerial leadership practices of rural and urban secondary school principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. For example, 100% of both categories of principals stressed the need for greater professional development for their teachers. Close similarities in leadership practice were also reported in the focus on teachers' adjusting their teaching methodologies, in the emphasis on promoting school mission, vision, culture and interpersonal relationships, in overall shared leadership and leadership distribution and in their level of collaboration with the Ministry of Education. Similarly, 86% of urban principals made adjustments to their curriculum to accommodate the changed student clientele under USE, while 73% of rural principals engaged in a similar endeavour. These similarities in the findings suggest that there are a key set of leadership practices that both rural and urban principals believe are effective in improving student outcomes under Universal Secondary Education.

Further examination of the data presented in Table 6.3 however also revealed some important differences in the scope of their emphasis on specific practices. Principals in rural secondary schools placed greater emphasis on differentiated teaching (47%) compared to 29% for urban principals. Similarly, 80% of rural principals emphasized greater application of ICT compared to 43% of urban principals. Divergences of the similar intensity were noted for practices in parental involvement (75%), leadership strategies (47%) and greater involvement of senior management teams (75%).   Placed into the context of the quality of students assigned to rural secondary schools, these trends indicate that rural schools were faced with greater instructional and managerial challenges identified in chapter 4 and these differences represent the intensity of rural principals' responses to these challenges. However, it is also important to bear in mind the similarity of characteristics between low-performing urban schools and rural schools. Hence, the similarity in responses and practices among both sets of principals is not surprising or unexpected.

In summary, while the comparative data indicated some noteworthy differences in the breadth and depth of leadership practices between rural and urban principals, it is also evident that that there are many similarities not attributable simply to the rural-urban divide. Most rural secondary schools under USE and urban schools not classified as high-performing schools received a similar calibre of students and the similarities noticed in the practices applied by both sets of principals may be attributable quality of student intake.

As Teddlie and Reynolds (2000) point out, there is a strong link between low attainment and pupil intake". Hence, the leadership practices of rural and urban principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines may be attributable to the phenomenon described above by these researchers. Having evaluated the foregoing demographic attributes of principals' leadership practices, we now examine theoretical implications as well as their implications for policy and practice.

6.4 Implications for Theory

This study was based on the work of Grissom and Loeb (2009). Their study examined specific instructional and managerial skills of principals that matter most for successful school outcomes. Crucially, they found one set of factors grouped under Organization Management consistently predicted student achievement growth and other school success measures (Grissom and Loeb, 2009). While the findings in this study align substantially with many of the findings of Grissom and Loeb (2009), there are areas of divergences noted that have implications for possible modification to the original theoretical framework proposed by Grissom and Loeb.

Firstly, Grissom and Loeb's finding that Organization Management practices were the overarching set of practices that contributed consistently to student achievement and other school success criteria were not fully corroborated by the results of this study. Rather this study found that under Universal Secondary Education, a combination of classroom instructional leadership, principal distributed and shared leadership in conjunction with internal and external practices had some weight in principals' attempts to improve overall school performance and student outcomes. This finding is more in keeping with Louis et al. (2010) who recommend that principals pay attention to classroom instructional practice but not to the detriment of organizational and management issues.

Secondly, while the Grissom and Loeb (2009) Task Effectiveness Framework included five clusters of principals' instructional and managerial skills, this researcher deemed it practical in the context of the present study to combine Administrative and Organizational Management clusters of the original framework into one category. This adjustment to the Grissom and Loeb (2009) Framework was mediated by two considerations. A number of principal skills subsumed under Organization Management by Grissom and Loeb (2009) were not applicable to the context of Universal Secondary Education in which Vincentian secondary school principals operate. For example, Grissom and Loeb (2009) mentioned the task of hiring personnel. However, as the responsibility for the hiring of teachers falls under the central control of the Ministry of

Education, this practice was of little utility in determining the organizational practices of school principals in this domain.

Additionally, the implementation of standardized testing falls outside the parameters of secondary school principals' responsibility and therefore could not be included in the framework of this study. Similarly, other factors including: managing non-instructional staff, fulfilling compliance requirements and paperwork and supervising students at lunch, while important in their own right, are tangential to principal leadership practices under Universal Secondary Education. Having identified the absence or insignificance of these particular practices to the context of Vincentian principals in the study, I took the decision to modify the original framework.

When comparisons are made between the main factors included under the themes of the Grissom and Loeb (2009) framework and the salient practices of secondary school principals under Universal Secondary Education, I believe that there is sufficient justification for modification of the Grissom and Loeb (2009) Framework to make it more applicable and context-specific to the leadership practices of principals working under Universal Secondary Education. A few examples will suffice. The Grissom and Loeb (2009) Framework places strong emphasis on instructional management practices such as: using data to inform instruction, using assessment results for programme evaluation, informally coaching teachers.

The results from this study however suggest that practices such as curriculum modification and innovation, adjustment of teaching methodology, differentiated teaching and learning, the incorporation of ICT in teaching were the aspects of instructional management practices deemed predominantly important to principals implementing the new USE policy. While under both models, there is overlap in the importance of certain practices; for instance the professional development of the teaching staff, emphasis in both models the Grissom and Loeb (2009) model and the results of this study appear to differ.

Furthermore, there were other practices prominently mentioned in the Grissom and Loeb (2009) model that were not frequently mentioned by Vincentian principals among their repertoire of leadership practices. For Grissom and Loeb (2009), practices

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such as observing classrooms, formally evaluating teachers and providing feedback and counselling teachers were integral to their instructional management practices. In this study, only one principal mentioned counselling teachers as an important instructional practice. It therefore suggests the absence of practices such as classroom observations are not customary practices executed by Vincentian principals and provides an explanation for their low visibility among the leadership practices of the principals interviewed in this study.

A full comparison of the leadership skills mentioned in the Grissom and Loeb (2009) Framework and those emanating from principals interviewed in this study can be found in Appendix J. Hence, the refined model can be expanded to include aspects of principals instructional and managerial practices found a Caribbean context but were not previously included in the Grissom and Loeb (2009) Task Effectiveness Framework.

The expanded framework will therefore include items such as curriculum modification, empowerment of school management teams and Heads of Department, developing school mission, vision and culture, sharing and distributing leadership responsibilities, greater use and involvement of school counsellors, Student support initiatives, Parental training workshops, Managing Class sizes and student intake, Inter-school cooperation, Using external expertise for school development, Curriculum Modification and Innovation, Incorporation of ICT in education, Use of literacy coaches, Improvements in teaching Methodology and Creativity in Teaching and Alternative routes to certification. The key to this expanded framework is its flexibility and its adaptability to the context and culture in which schools operate.

Hence, while the Grissom and Loeb (2009) principal Task Effectiveness Framework is sound in its underlying empirical framework and is indeed an adequate tool in studying principal effectiveness practices, based on the current study, the framework can be further elevated to the status of being a more comprehensive framework if it takes into consideration the realities impacting on school principals operating in jurisdictions implementing the policy of Universal secondary Education.

This study has therefore sought to expand and build on the basal theoretical framework by identifying other factors that serve to enhance principals' leadership

practices in developing countries. With the importance of the theoretical constructs in the Grissom and Loeb (2009) Framework in perspective, we now examine the implications of the findings of the study for the work of principals and the policy of Universal Secondary Education.

6.5   Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings from the study of principal instructional and managerial leadership practices have brought to light a number of leadership and managerial implications for secondary school principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The findings also suggest that the policy makers in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines need to re-examine the USE policy, evaluate its shortcomings and take the necessary steps to ensure that the policy works as it was originally intended.

To fully appreciate many of these implications, it is necessary to revisit the literature examined in Chapters 1 and 2 of the study and to place these implications within the proper contextual framework.

From chapter 1, it was established that, in keeping with the United Nations Development Goals of 2015, the overarching aim of the policy of Universal Secondary Education was to ensure access to a high quality of education for all students transitioning to secondary schools (Marks 2009; Leacock 2009). The policy of Universal Secondary Education was also considered the *piece de resistance* in the policy-makers' overall strategy to bring about increased economic growth and development to a country seeking to modernize its human resources in the face of declining revenues from its traditional agricultural economic base. In the wake of the introduction of the policy, secondary school principals were entrusted with the key role of full implementation of the policy within the schools. School principals, who hitherto, had at best, only played a marginal role in nation-wide educational policy implementation had been called on overnight to be systemic agents of change as alluded to by Moura and Levy (2000) in Chapter 2.

The literature review pointed out that secondary school principals have a key role to play in the functioning of USE through their success or failure in implementing effective managerial and instructional leadership policies. The crux of this study evaluated those policies in light of the various challenges and constraints highlighted in the analysis of interview data in Chapter 4. These findings have a number of implications for the practice of school principals in their quest to improve student academic achievement and efficient school operations under Universal Secondary Education. Some of these implications are highlighted below.

The first implication addressed is that of USE policy implementation and policy coherence. The findings of the study indicate that the majority of secondary school principals view the USE policy in a favourable light. However, 32 % of the principals were dissatisfied with the lack of consultation and information provided to principals and teachers at the time of the policy implementation. Fullan (1982) in his discussion of the practice and theory of educational change, emphasized the need for consultation, and staff participation in addition to a key role for school principals. The findings also revealed a lack of readiness and preparedness on the part of the education system as a whole for the introduction of USE. Seven principals indicated that the timing of the policy had a negative impact on their ability to implement the type of strategies needed to make the implementation of USE a success.

Several researchers have pointed out the importance the need to pay attention to significant implementation conditions before the institution of a major policy reform (Fullan, 1982; Leithwood et al., 1991). In fact, Moore (1986, p.2) pointed out that educational policies detached from the conditions of implementation are not likely to be reflected in school practice". These excerpts from the literature review and the findings of the study show that policy-makers needed to ensure that the ground-work had been prepared for the implementation of USE. Two principals in the study indicated that a pilot phase to policy introduction would have allowed the policy-makers to assess, using empirically-based action research, the pros and cons of introducing Universal Secondary Education at the time it was introduced. Such an approach would have given secondary school principals sufficient data for honing their most effective leadership practices.

The application of leadership practices is intimately intertwined in the training and preparation of current and future school principals to assume leadership roles and responsibilities. Leithwood et al. (1991) stress the importance of building principals' commitment to educational change and innovation through the application of transformational leadership principles. While some effort has been made to train school principals in leadership, there are implications for the education authorities to ensure that all principals, vice-principals, members of senior management teams and individuals with the potential to become leaders are exposed to a programme of focused preparation for school leadership under the new USE policy environment.

From the findings of this research, a number of principals have harnessed innovative and creative ways to respond to the challenges of USE. However, many of these practices are carried out in isolation at the individual school level. The challenge for policy makers is to have these best practices disseminated at the systemic level. Elmore (2004) has suggested that school systems should create a common body of knowledge and skills associated with leadership practice. In his work, he describes this collaborative dissemination of best leadership practices as "systemic leadership" Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr & Cohen (2007) advocate more emphasis on instructional leadership and greater hands-on leadership opportunities for practising and potential school principals. The implication for policy-makers in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is to invest heavily in developing its human capital destined for school leadership as USE becomes more entrenched.

Another policy implication of this study of Vincentian principals' instructional leadership and management practices is the issue of greater autonomy for public school principals. Elmore (2008) has indicated that effective systemic leadership must stem from the principals themselves to bring about school improvement. The implication of this is that principals need to be granted greater powers and autonomy in their schools. Six public schools principals in this study reported that lack of autonomy as a downside to the implementation of more effective managerial practices at the building level.

Pont, Nusche and Hopkins (2008) went a step further when they stated that "policy makers need to provide higher degrees of autonomy with appropriate support" (p.

10). These authors also recommend "new models of distributed leadership and new types of accountability as well as training and development in leadership to accompany increased autonomy". (p.10). The implication of these suggestions is for policy-makers to examine both the top-down model approach to policy implementation as well as a relaxation of the bureaucratic philosophy of leadership that has hobbled the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of school leaders in the USE policy environment.

Another important implication for policy at the school level as well as the system level entailed strategies to improve the level of teacher quality as well as the effective monitoring and supervision of teachers. In the study, twelve principals discussed the impact of teacher attitude, teacher professionalism and teacher quality and their impact on school organization and functioning. The research on the importance of teacher quality is voluminous but unequivocal in regard to the key role that teacher quality plays in school improvement (Jerald, Haycock, Wilkins & Education, 2009; Donaldson, 2011; Evans (2011).

From the literature review, the improvement of teacher quality has been advocated by a number of the researchers. Warrican (2009) identified the development of the competency of all secondary teachers in literacy instruction as a key element in raising teacher quality. Marks (2009) advocated focused training in student assessment and analysis of student data to inform instruction to better diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses. King (2009) identified the development of teachers' competency in curriculum delivery as a key facet of improved teacher quality. The literature and results of the study show that principals' instructional leadership practices are intertwined with calls for commensurate improvements in teacher quality and professionalism at the school and system levels.

In terms of practice at the school level, organizational and instructional gains can be enhanced by greater attention to supervision and monitoring of classroom and teachers. Based on Grissom and Loeb (2009) Framework, classroom observations and teacher evaluation are two fundamental areas of principal instructional leadership practices. From this research, there was a noticeable lack of emphasis by Vincentian secondary school principals on this area of practice.

In the initial literature review, I highlighted four primordial sets of leadership practices that empirical research has identified as being fundamentally necessary for principals' success in instructional and managerial leadership. These practices which are assigned various terminologies by different researchers, include setting directions, developing people, improving teaching and learning and refining and aligning the organization (Hallinger, 2003; Waters et al., 2003). Jantzi (2005) and Leithwood and et.al, 2006}. These researchers point out that successful principals seek to exercise all these categories of leadership practices in combination to obtain substantial and positive results in school. The implication of such empirical wisdom is to show that Vincentian principals need to pay heed to the vital area of classroom supervision and monitoring as part of their repertoire of practices designed to improve the instructional programme system-wide under USE.

Additionally, the issue of optimal class sizes to deal with the fluctuating levels of student diversity and abilities identified in the research must be addressed. In Chapter 4, the controversial issue of class size was brought to the fore. It was presented as a major source of challenge for classroom teachers and this had implications for teachers' and principals' stress and workload as mentioned previously. Given the evidence of student misbehaviour, student problems in literacy and numeracy and student management concerns identified in the interview analyses, it is imperative that principals examine the extent to which smaller class sizes may lead to increased student output.

Class size reduction in California in 1996 resulted in gains in student achievement, fewer disciplinary problems, better parent teacher interactions and greater use of proven instructional strategies (Bascia, 2010). Principals and policy-makers under USE need to consider how implementing a class size reduction policy can result in improved educational quality since such a policy will address many of the concerns of principals and teachers grappling with similar phenomena under USE While the California experience had its unintended downsides such as budget shortfalls for teacher training and shortage of classroom space, the key implication for policy makers under USE will be to ensure optimal supporting conditions for teaching. Only then will school leadership gain maximum benefit from any class-size reduction initiative.

Issues of class size reduction do not exist in a vacuum. This issue is linked to the final and perhaps most important implication of principal leadership practices and Universal Secondary Education; that of quality and quality control to ensure optimum benefits from the introduction of the policy of Universal secondary Education. From chapter 2, the research commentators on USE were unanimous in their call for increased quality in secondary education commensurate with the increased access that had been realized (King 2009, Marks 2009, Miller, 2009, Leacock, 2009, Warrican 2009).These commentators had pointed out that USE at the time of its implementation was essentially a "bums-in-seat" policy, primarily concerned with meeting 'adjusted' UN Millennium Development goals of full access to secondary education by 2015. In reality, educational quality was by inference of secondary concern.

The fundamental questions then that school principals need to address at this juncture can be phrased succinctly: Is USE achieving its stated goals? To what extent are our instructional and managerial practices helping to achieve this goal? In my initial exegesis, I argued that USE was instituted as a fundamental tool of economic and social development and that the role of school principals was to implement the policy to achieve this stated goal through improved school management and better student outcomes. From the results of this study, 60 per cent of the principals interviewed agreed that USE was a good policy in theory. They however believed that the policy could have been improved with better consultation and preparation. These same respondents also believed that they needed greater institutional support to enable them to institute many of their instructional leadership and managerial practices creatively.

The study identified a number of potentially feasible practices being carried by Vincentian school principals, many of which are in their incipient stages and in need of further development. The challenge for policy makers is to help Vincentian principals to work towards continuous improvement and sustainability to ensure that the goals of USE, including quality, are attained as envisaged by the creators of the policy. The ensuing section will therefore provide a brief evaluation of USE over the ten year span since its implementation as included in the UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report policy paper (2015) and other official Ministry of Education reports.

6.5.1   A Retrospective Synopsis of a Decade of USE Implementation

In the context of this study, it will be enlightening to evaluate how the implementation of USE has evolved during the last ten years and to examine the policy changes that have been instituted to deal with the challenges identified throughout the investigation. According to UNESCO Education for ALL Monitoring Report policy paper (2015) for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 'St. Vincent and the Grenadines has made significant progress in education during the last two decades (Pg.5), specifically with reference to the provision of universal primary and secondary education for all its citizens.

With particular focus on the successes and shortcomings of the policy of Universal Secondary Education, the 2015 National Review Report (2015) identifies the following achievements.

(1) Greater investments in ICT education through the institution of a policy of 'one lap-top per child' for students in attendance at all primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. All schools were also equipped with access to broadband services as part of an all-inclusive approach to ICT integration. Analogously, secondary teachers have received short term training in the integration of ICT across the curriculum.

(2) There has been noticeable improvements in the scale of tertiary training and professional development for teachers at secondary education level. Using a two-pronged approach to teacher training, the education authorities increased the number of university graduates from 37 per cent in 2005 to 48.1 per cent in 2014. Additionally, university graduates already employed in the education system were provided with further pedagogical training at the Division of Teacher Education of the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Community College. However, while university training has increased overall, fifty-five per cent of secondary teachers still do not hold university degrees.

(3) A cadre of primary and secondary school principals was trained in school leadership and management. Fifty-eight percent of secondary school

principals currently hold at least an undergraduate degree in school management. (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Statistical Digest, 2014). Additionally, some training for education officers in school supervision was carried out.

(4) The curriculum of some rural secondary schools has been upgraded to offer Science –related disciplines to more students. Additionally, there has been an expansion in Technical-Vocational Education to include female students.

Notwithstanding these positive trends in education over the last decade, the UNESCO EFA National Education Review Report (2015) indicates that the education authorities are not totally satisfied with the improvements in the overall quality of secondary education since the implementation of USE in 2005. As a consequence, the National Review has included the following rubrics as an integral aspect of its national targets for 2015 and beyond:

1. An improvement in the quality of secondary education for all students and

2. An improvement in earned promotion rates through secondary grades in order to improve the earned transmission rates to tertiary education and the world of work. (p. 23)

It is enlightening to compare the conclusions of the 2015 Review Report on Education with the findings of the present study to have a deeper insight into the pace of education reform in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines since the implementation of Universal Secondary Education in 2005. In the area of literacy and numeracy, the National Review Report (2015) states:" Many students who move from the primary to the secondary level are not ready to cope with the secondary level programme. Of particular concern are: weak literacy and communication skills; weak numeracy skills; and weak study and concentration skills" (p. 37). Weaknesses in literacy persist in spite of the implementation of a Literacy Policy and Plan.

One of the key challenges identified in this study was the lower academic achievement of students since the implementation of Universal Access to Secondary

Education. Based on the outcomes/findings of the National Review Report (2015), the hard statistical evidence points to a continuing underperformance of students in the key areas of Mathematics and Language at the CSEC Regional Examinations. After a combined fourteen years of pre-school, primary and secondary education " fewer than a third of the students who actually sit the CSEC examinations are able to achieve the goal of at least five CSEC subjects including English and Mathematics" (p.37-38). Furthermore, the Review Report has highlighted the generally deteriorating performance of some secondary schools in Mathematics and Science: "The success rates in CSEC Mathematics and Science are as low as 9 per cent in some secondary schools in St Vincent and the Grenadines" (p.38)

Furthermore, student repetition rates currently range from 12.7 per cent to 17.8 per cent from Forms One to Five across the school system and the drop-out rate for all grades across the secondary school level remains relatively high at 10.1 per cent in 2014. (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Education Statistical Digest, 2014). According to the National Education Review (2015): "The rate of completion of upper secondary education is an important indicator of successful education systems" (p.37). In keeping with many of the key findings of this study, the review states that" while universal access to secondary education has significantly expanded opportunities at that level in St. Vincent and the Grenadines", education authorities are concerned about "the significant variability in the age of students entering Form 1, and the continued age variability of students across all forms" (National Education Review, 2015, p.37). This concern is therefore related to the rate of academic progression of students throughout both the primary and secondary systems.

Among the drawbacks identified in the body of this research was that of staff-related challenges. While gains have been made in teacher training and teacher certification, greater progression is required in the area of teacher performance and attitude. Similar conclusions from the National Education Review (2015) serve to confirm the continued relevance of the study's findings on staffing issues at the secondary level: The National Review Report (2015) addresses concerns about "the capacity and commitment of some teachers to the education of students, the initial solid training of teachers, the ability of some teachers to integrate cross cultural themes

across all subject areas and the willingness of some teachers to break away from an isolated classroom culture" (p. 39). Hence, ten years after the implementation of USE, the National Review Report (2015) concludes with this observation: "our major challenge is how to attract, reward and retain effective teachers and how not to continue to inflict ineffective teachers on students at any level of the system" (p.39).

Lack of parental involvement was highlighted as a major challenge impacting on the success of students in the USE environment. The 2015 National Review Report also highlighted this phenomenon as an on-going challenge under Universal Secondary Education: "There is need to increase and improve parental and community involvement in the education process using, for example, the Joyce Epstein's Model of parental involvement" (p. 39). In a related vein, the authorities have been trying to address the issue of student attendance and truancy by advertising for school attendance officers. However, these are still yet to be appointed.

The inadequacy of the system of primary school education was highlighted as a major contributor to the weakness of education under USE. The 2015 Review Report confirms" more has to be done at the primary level to improve the literacy and numeracy of the students so that they can cope better with their transition to secondary school. Finally, the national Review Report (2015) has cited the need for restructuring of the administrative arrangements at the Ministry of Education to reduce the administrative burdens on the Permanent Secretary and the Chief Education Officer who are " enmeshed and over-burdened in minutiae(p.46) " In conclusion, given the findings of the latest review of secondary education and its similarities to the key findings of this study, it appears that in spite of modest gains over the last ten years of USE implementation, there is still need for greater consolidation of these incipient gains. It is in light of these facts and statistics, that the next section proffers a number of pertinent recommendations for the overall workings and enhancement of USE.

6.6   Recommendations

In this section, a number of pertinent recommendations for (1): improving the leadership practices of principals in secondary schools and (2): for enhancing the

delivery of education under Universal Secondary Education generally are presented. The ensuing recommendations are based primarily on the analysis of the study data as well as on the broader context of school quality improvement initiatives undertaken in the course of routine, work-related secondary and primary school evaluations. These recommendations are addressed to policy makers, system-wide administrative education officials, parents and other stakeholders who can contribute directly or indirectly to the improvement of the USE policy. In so doing, they can help to facilitate the work of school principals as they seek to put appropriate measures in place for effective policy implementation. Some of these recommendations are as follows:

6.6.1   Strengthen the System of Primary Education

An important finding of this study was that the effectiveness of education at the level of the secondary school was being compromised by the weaknesses in the primary system of education. This finding was confirmed by the previous research on USE in both Africa and the Caribbean cited in the review of literature and by the results from the interviews with secondary school principals. Day (2011) studied the leadership practices of primary and secondary school leaders in Great Britain. He found a marked similarity in the professional values of successful heads at both the primary and the secondary level. The key characteristic of these successful heads was their ability to "translate their values, beliefs and ethics into their visions, purposes, strategies and practices" (p. 64). The ability to effectively communicate these values to internal stakeholders and the external community were hallmarks of these successful leaders.

Warrican (2009) points out that mastery of foundational skills of reading and writing at the primary level is a necessary prerequisite for cognitive functioning at the secondary level. This recommendation is for policy makers to effect a thorough overhaul of every facet of primary schooling in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Such an undertaking will reduce the complexity of secondary school management and will allow principals and teachers to focus on instruction at the corresponding stage of student development.

6.6.2   Provide a Higher Level of Resourcing and Support for Secondary Schools

Principals in this study mentioned an insufficiency of both material and human resources as constraints on their ability to effectively carry out many of the programmes they identified as necessary for school improvement. Resource –related challenges included insufficient reading specialists and literacy coordinators, need for ICT resources to fully integrate technology across the curriculum, lack of specialist teachers in Mathematics and Science. While these problems were not wide-spread or systemic, they represent frustrating circumstances at the level of the individual school and clearly had implications for deployment of teachers, for planning and coordination. Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr. & Cohen (2007) point out that state and district authorities have an obligation to provide the conditions and incentives that leaders and their teams require for improving the educational lot of all students. In this study, principals believed that higher levels of funding and the more equitable distribution of resources among schools represented one pathway to effective instructional leadership and management practice.

6.6.3   Implement Appropriate Programmes and Curricula to Meet the Diverse Needs of the Student Population

Leacock (2009) and King (2009) point out that academic education has traditionally been highly valued by societies in the Caribbean region since the establishment of elite grammar schools by the British. However, with the onset of USE and a more heterogeneous student population, these researchers have called for more relevant curricula to meet the needs of the diverse array of students at secondary schools. In this study, half of the principals interviewed pointed to the need for a less rigid focus on academics and a more diversified educational programme geared towards practical, hands-on subject offerings for students less likely to benefit from traditional approaches to certification. Marks (2009) also called for the establishment of comprehensive schools. Miller & Jules (2010) had indicated the importance of broadening the curriculum to include alternative education such as music, the performing arts to strengthen student expression and to promote community outreach. Many

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principals believed that greater investments in those alternative areas would help to enhance the effectiveness of their programs and management practices.

One rural principal in the study advocated the establishment of multi-purpose centres at each secondary school to as part of a plan for programme diversification. Programme diversification needs to be tied to the larger issue of decentralization of the education system to give school leaders broader powers in curriculum innovation. One rural principal called for a greater role for school principals in curriculum innovation: "Let *them make changes to the curriculum let them deal with the issues, because decentralized decision-making needs to be done, especially with USE". (Warren).* Indirectly, the effectiveness of principal leadership practices in instruction is linked to an expanded role in curriculum elaboration to meet the identified learning needs and career goals of their student clientele.

6.6.4 Forge Stronger Bonds with Parents and the Wider Community

Parental involvement in the education of students was identified in Chapter 4 as an area of major challenge to the managerial leadership of Vincentian school principals. Principals in this study saw parental and community engagement as vital to their effectiveness. The results of the study showed that Vincentian principals had implemented a number of measures to increase parental involvement. However, while their efforts are bearing fruit in some communities, this aspect of the USE policy remains a source of concern for principals.

The literature from Chapter 2 indicated the importance of trust and effective communication with parents (Campbell 1992, Angelucci (2008). Other researchers on parental engagement and parental involvement in the education of students and in the life of the school recommend such avenues as parental training, a greater role of parents on parent-teachers associations, sensitizing parents to develop a wide array of parenting skills, fostering of closer ties between the school and the wider community of environment, and making parents genuine partners in the nexus between the home and the school. (Labahn, 1995); Epstein, 2008)

From the study results, three principals were in favour of the creation of a nation-wide PTA as way of getting more parents involved as a way of standardizing the practices and approaches of parental relations with the schools. The establishment of vibrant and active parental involvement programs at the level of the local PTA was also seen as a way to give some impetus to the role that parents play in the overall delivery of education. Additionally, the issue of student attendance was linked to ineffective parenting in some cases. The appointment of school attendance officers working in conjunction with local and national PTA associations offers an avenue for improvement in this area of challenge that principals have identified under USE. The responsibility of principals and educators is "to develop goal-linked programmes that reach all families and help them to succeed" (Epstein 2008, p. 9). Attention to this recommendation will greatly enhance the overall success of USE and principals' effectiveness in school leadership.

6.6.5   Appoint more Supervisory Personnel to Oversee the Functioning of the Educational System

Another important policy recommendation at the level of the Ministry of Education is that of increasing the number of personnel in the management and delivery of supervision at that level. One experienced principal expressed the need for greater levels of supervision:

"I *would also like to see the Ministry of Education retooled so that comprehensive supervision and monitoring and evaluation of the entire system can be done". (Shane).*

Currently, the limited number of education officers involved in supervisory work as well as monitoring and evaluating the education system has not augured well for the optimization of the policy. The appointment of more personnel should go a long way in ensuring proper and efficient monitoring and management of the school system both at the level of the primary school and the secondary school. This move will also help to provide much needed support for principals in their work at the institutional level.

Additionally, this study recommends the establishment of supervisory school boards to assist principals in the strategic management of schools at the local level. As pointed out by Hopkins (2006) an integrated systemic approach involving classrooms, schools and systems are integral to the pursuit of enhanced student achievement. The need for closer supervision of the entire education system will redound to the benefit of leadership practice in secondary schools as gains in student quality and teacher performance should be the expected outcomes of monitoring and supervision. As Fullan (2009) points a new kind of leadership is necessary to change the status quo of the USE policy framework.

6.6.6 Re-Examine the role of the Teachers' Training College and its Programmes

The final recommendation for this study to policy makers and principals involves a re-examination of the role of the Teachers Training College. The student-related challenges highlighted in Chapter 4 makes it imperative to have an education system resourced by teachers with the breadth and quality of training necessary to provide adequate instruction at all levels of the system. The role of the Teachers' College will entail the design of training programmes that includes the teaching of literacy techniques, classroom management, student motivation, lesson planning, preparation and execution for the diversity of students in the USE environment. From the literature reviewed in this study King (2009) and Warrican (2009) both advocated greater involvement the Joint Teacher Education Board (JBTE) to oversee teacher professional development. King (2009) advocates "the training of a cadre of well-trained and professionally-developed teachers" (p.36). Warrican (2009) views the JBTE as "the agency to help secondary schools meet the needs of challenged students" (p. 75).

In terms of principal leadership practices, systematic training of new entrants to the profession and retraining of experienced teachers would contribute to a professional work force equipped to deal with the pedagogical and classroom management challenges identified earlier in the study. The onus is on policy makers and system administrators to create the conditions for principals to apply their leadership practices in environments conducive to teaching and learning. The next section will examine some

future directions for research in the area of leadership practices and Universal Secondary Education.

6.7 Suggestions for Future Research

The policy of universal secondary education is a broad–based policy that has impacted a number of stakeholders including, secondary and primary school principals and teachers, students, parents, policy makers and implementers at the government and bureaucratic levels as well as the wider society. Given the limitation of this study with its narrowed scope on the perceptions of 22 secondary school principals and their leadership practices under USE, future research needs to focus on the perceptions and experiences of this wider spectrum of stakeholders.

Potential future research can lead fruitful results if a broad-based study can be conducted among secondary school teachers to determine the impact of USE on their teaching practices, morale and motivation. Such a study will add to the base of research subjects who have participated in USE and should provide a greater representative sample of the views of that group of stakeholders. A similar study can examine the views of teachers on the instructional and leadership practices of secondary principals using a mixed methods approach.

Another possible line of enquiry might involve a comparative study of the perceptions of retired principals involved in the management of secondary schools before the implementation of the USE policy with the perceptions of current principals to determine the similarities and differences employed by both groups in dealing with the challenges of secondary education before and after the implementation of the new policy. Such a comparative study will provide greater clarity on changes in leadership practices pre and post USE policy implementation.

Parents and students have also been impacted by USE. It would be insightful if a future researcher can examine the impact of USE on parents and students to determine how these groups perceive the policy. The appropriate methodology for such future

investigations may involve the use of focus groups and questionnaires in order to ensure representative coverage of such a wide population.

Another fruitful direction for future studies may involve a full-scale evaluation of the policy from the perspectives of the policy makers. Such research may entail a cost-benefit analysis of the policy or a qualitative assessment of the policy to determine if it worked in accordance with the intended outcomes envisaged by the policy originators.

The introduction of Universal Secondary Education was not unique to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. It was the result of a collective decision taken by the leaders of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States at the summit in 2008 (Miller 2009). A comparative broad-based study of the experiences of secondary school principals throughout the OECS in the introduction of USE is timely. Such a comparative study will provide useful research data on the similarities and differences in the leadership practices of secondary principals throughout the region. The sharing of best practices in school and systemic leadership will help to strengthen principals' institutional know on how to respond to the challenges of USE.

The penultimate area of enquiry will involve an evaluation of the recently introduced Caribbean Primary Exit Examination to replace the Common Entrance Examination. This examination was offered to primary schools students for the first time in 2014 and due to its novelty, it is difficult for this study to address its impact on the quality of students transitioning to secondary school. However, future investigations of the effectiveness of the CPEA versus the Common Entrance Examination will provide fruitful insights into how secondary principals' instructional leadership and managerial practices have been impacted by the change in examination philosophy and approach at the primary level.

Finally, an in-depth study of the instructional and administrative practices of teachers and principals at the level of the primary school would be helpful in the future to determine the underlying causes of the general perception that the educational needs and competencies of students are not being served in the current system of primary school education. In the literature, Day et al., 2009) have pointed to the need to examine similarities and differences in the leadership practices of primary and secondary school

principals. A study of this nature may unearth the underlying causes of low levels of literacy and numeracy at that level that often must be remediated by secondary school principals and teachers, thereby leading to an improvement in the overall delivery of education at both the primary and secondary levels of the school system.

6.8   Discussion of Study Limitations

A study that addresses the instructional leadership and managerial practices within the framework of a broad and all-encompassing policy such as USE has some limitations. In this qualitative case study, the major limitation lies in use of the self-reporting viewpoints by the principals. While the views of secondary school principals are important, the perceptions of other stakeholders also hold equal weight. While the method is adequate in arriving at an overall picture of principals' leadership practices, I believe that the use of observational methods would have complemented the use of principal interviews. Observational data would have provided confirmation of the presence or absence of the practices mentioned by the principals in the interviews and would have provided a source of triangulation for the study. However, use of observations would have required a much greater time investment. Such large-scale data collection may not have been possible given the window of time available for data collection and analysis for this study.

Another limitation of the study, particularly given its grounding in the Grissom and Loeb (2009) theoretical framework, was the failure to seek out the views of vice-principals and teachers on the instructional leadership and managerial practices of school principals. Grissom and Loeb (2009) surveyed vice-principals and teachers as part of the triangulation process. However, given the use of interviews, carrying out interviews with 26 vice-principals simultaneously may have resulted in an unmanageable collection of data that had implications in terms of time and cost constraints. The use of a survey would have been more cost effective, but as pointed out in Chapter 3, the need for rich, thick data emanating from the respondents was key consideration for using an in-depth qualitative case study approach based on interviews.

The final minor limitation was the unavailability of four of the principals for participation in the study. While this limitation was in no way inimical to the outcomes of the study, the participation of all voices would have given a sense of completeness to the study as the views of every principal with their unique perspectives would have provided an even richer source of data. Taken as a whole though, the participation of 22 of the 26 principals that made up the population was more than adequate in its representativeness.

6.9   Summary of the Main Findings of the Study

The main findings of this study are set out in two parts. Part 1 summarizes the findings from Chapter 4 on the challenges confronting secondary school principals under Universal Secondary Education. Part 2 summarizes the findings on the instructional leadership and managerial practices of Vincentian principals under USE as examined in Chapter 5.

One of the main findings of this study was that there was a high incidence of students admitted under USE with severe deficits in literacy and numeracy. This study confirms the findings of Warrican (2009) and Warrican and Leacock (2009) who identified literacy as a major challenge in the implementation of USE as well as Marks (2009) who pointed out that weaknesses in literacy and numeracy had not been factored into the equation at the time of the implementation of USE. The findings of low student motivation and lower levels of student achievement under USE were confirmed in a Ugandan study by Werner (2011) in her investigation of teacher support for USE in Uganda.

The research by Thompson (2009) on disciplinary problems in Barbadian schools supports the finding in this study that disciplinary problems were a major challenge to the effectiveness of principals' managerial practice. Similarly, Werner (2011) finding of high absenteeism in Uganda USE secondary school dovetails with the finding on student attendance issues and student attrition highlighted in the current study.

This study also found that teachers' resistance to the implementation of USE was a significant issue. This finding departs from the findings of Werner (2011) in Uganda. She found that Ugandan teachers' opposition to USE was based on remuneration rather than psychic rewards. This study findings showed that teachers' unwillingness to adapt to the changes brought about by the introduction of the new policy and fear of the removal of the status quo. Miller (1996) and Blom and Hobbs (2008) noted that inadequate teacher training and preparation had hampered the smooth operations of USE in many countries. This was also an important corroborative finding of this study.

Additionally, this study identified principals' dissatisfaction with teacher performance, teacher quality and teacher professionalism. Research carried out by King (2009) and Marks (2009) supports this study in that those researchers recommended attention to teacher training, teacher quality and teacher professionalism as areas that need attention by policy-makers in order to improve the functioning of the USE policy. Importantly, the previous studies that investigated USE and teacher perceptions did not identify teacher resistance to change as a downside of the implementation of the policy.

Managerial and instructional leadership practices of principals were impacted by larger class sizes in this study. Bascia (2010) study on class size reduction in Ontario supported Vincentian principals' concerns about the need for class size reduction were well-founded. This finding therefore supports the bulk of the extant research into the benefits of class size reduction.

Principals' increased workload and job-related stress featured prominently as a notable finding in this study. Chapman (2005) also found that an increase in principal workload was a natural by-product of the implementation of USE in Uganda. Similarly, the system-related findings of this study are documented in much of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. For example, Lesforis (2010) research on teachers' perceptions of USE in Saint Lucia documented similar findings on the negative impact of primary education on teachers and principals as well as system-wide unpreparedness for the implementation of USE.

One important exception not documented in the studies carried out by Lesforis (2010) Chapman et al. (2009); Mulkeen, Chapman, DeJaeghere, & Leu, (2007) and

Werner (2011) was the lack of autonomy for public school principals in the context of their research. This finding represents another important departure from the previous studies carried out on the implementation of the USE policy. The other system-related findings of inadequate material and human resources and the need for increased training for teachers and principals under educational reform are well documented by the voluminous research on those themes (Sperling & Balu 2005, Blom & Hobbs, 2008, Darling-Hammond et al. (2007); Day 2011)

The final key finding in Chapter 4 that complicated principals' managerial and instructional leadership was the challenge posed by low parental engagement and negative community values. This finding coincides and supports the findings of Day et al. (2013) on the negative attitudes of lower-SES parents to education as well as the research carried out by Epstein (2008) on parental involvement in secondary schools. Overall, while much of the previous literature on USE and principals managerial practices were corroborated by the findings in this section, secondary school principals lack of autonomy and teacher resistance to change represented added value of the findings of Part 1 of the study to the overall literature on principal instructional and managerial practices under Universal secondary Education.

This section summarizes the Instructional Leadership and managerial practices of secondary school principals working in the USE policy environment in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

In keeping with the literature review on principal instructional leadership practices, in this study Vincentian principals placed a high premium on the development of staff through the initiation of professional development activities. This finding is supported in Leithwood (1994) model of transformational leadership as well as is an integral part of the practice labelled 'developing the school's instructional programme' (Hallinger 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Vincentian principals' instructional practice in this area is closely aligned to international approaches to teacher professional development.

Curriculum Modification and Innovation as well as creativity in teaching also represented important instructional leadership practices espoused by Vincentian

principals in this study. There is a strong body of previous research that confirms the importance of this finding in the repertoire of instructional practices utilized by principals in several countries. This finding is strongly supported in the literature review that highlighted that a central practice of successful principal instructional improvement through knowledgeable management of the curriculum (Weber, 1996; Hanny, 1997; Louis & Wahlstrom 2008). However, the outstanding difference between the literature and this study was the breadth of curriculum modification and innovation being implemented by USE principals on order to respond needs of a very diverse student clientele. USE principals resorted to radical curriculum engineering designed to alter drastically the current curriculum being offered to students.

This study also found that Vincentian principals relied heavily on the use of streaming, ability grouping and alternative certification as an administrative tool for organizing instruction in the USE environment. In the leadership practices literature, these practices are subsumed under the general rubric of 'managing teaching and learning' (Leithwood & Jantzi 2000; Hallinger, 2003). However, the major point of difference between USE principals' leadership practice and the literature is the key emphasis placed on alternative certification for lower performing students, particularly following the application of remediation practices. In this sense, this study builds on the existing literature by broadening the connotation ascribed to the practice of managing the teaching and learning programme.

The incorporation and use of technology in education was another instructional leadership practice that USE principals relied on in enhancing the teaching and learning environment that found support in the literature review. However, the literature reviewed only looks at the incorporation and use of technology as an indirect and peripheral practice of principals. By contrast, this study reveals that USE principals saw the incorporation of technology as a substantial and high priority tool for improving instruction in USE schools. This finding of emphasis of principals on use of ICT as an instructional tool is well documented in the literature (Hallinger & Lee. 2011; Sinclair & Matlala 2011, Barrett, 2008) and this study conforms its importance in contemporary instructional practice.

Another substantial finding in this study was the importance that Vincentian principals ascribed to the promotion of school mission, vision, school culture and the building of strong interpersonal relationships as a fundamental strategy of their leadership practice. Similar practices of focus on mission and vision are emphasized throughout the literature review (Weber 1996, Waters et al., 2003 & 2005, Cotton, 2003). These findings show that under USE the practice of setting directions through the promotion of the school's mission, vision and organizational culture coincides with the findings of many stalwart researchers in the field of instructional leadership.

Two other noteworthy findings emanating from this study revolved around the level of student support and the culture of care and nurturing promoting by Vincentian principals as well as the measures many schools had put in place to reach out to families. This finding ties in with the literature reviewed in chapter 2 of the critical role of parents in student achievement. The findings showed that Vincentian principals often initiated parental and student support practices not frequently mentioned in the literature. The use of home visits, community outreach programmes, breakfast programmes for students, lunch hour assistance to students with literacy issues constituted part and parcel of a larger philosophy of nurture a and care with the implementation of USE. The expanded role offered to school counsellors formed an innovative approach of many principals also. The study confirms principal practices in parental involvement documented by Epstein (2008) but goes a step further in its emphasis on the ethic of care practiced by USE principals.

The broadening and expansion of leadership responsibilities has been one positive outcome of Universal Secondary Education. This study found that the majority of principals used distributed leadership, shared leadership and strategic leadership practices for school improvement. In this sense, this study corroborated the previous literature on the role of distributed and shared leadership. Pont et al. (2008) found that principals were increasingly distributing leadership roles and tasks to school management teams and teacher leaders. This finding supports the findings of this study, as Vincentian principals, faced with increasing managerial and instructional responsibilities have sought to make their leadership more effective by involving other

personnel with identified leadership capability. Grissom and Loeb (2009) findings harmonize with these findings from the broader literature.

Finally, this study found that Vincentian principals have also relied on external liaisons and agencies as a broader aspect of the distribution and sharing of leadership responsibilities under USE. Pont et al. (2008) support this finding of external partnerships and collaboration with outside agencies being an important aspect of successful school management. In this study, collaborative external relationships extended widely and included principals creating linkages with some primary school, reflecting one of the realities of USE. Principals believed such liaisons would help them to improve their own practices, while helping the primary school by sharing some of their best practices in general instructional leadership and management.

Having summarized the main findings of this research project, the next section looks at the contribution of this study to the general literature on principal leadership and the significance of this study in the expanding literature on Universal Secondary Education.

6.10 Research Contribution

At the outset of this study, an attempt was made to situate the study within the context of the current literature on Universal Secondary Education and on principals' instructional leadership and managerial practices. The majority of studies reviewed on USE examined teacher support for Universal secondary Education (Lesforis, 2010), teacher support for USE (Werner 2011), head teachers' support for USE (Chapman et al., 2009), the leadership styles of secondary school principals and school performance (Nsubuga, 2008). What makes sets this particular study apart from its predecessors is its focus on the creative and innovative practices that Vincentian principals needed to employ to function within a policy framework in which they had little input, even though the expectation was that the success of the policy rested ultimately on their actions and abilities.

From the leadership literature, several studies have been carried out in the domain of principal instructional and managerial leadership practices. Some key studies examined the relative impact of principals' managerial and instructional leadership on student achievement in middle schools (Klinginsmith, 2007). Other studies looked at instructional and managerial leadership from the viewpoint of assistant principals. Flamini (2010) studied one principal's instructional leadership practices in a high-performing school of urban diversity, while Powell (2004) examined the leadership practices of principals in successful at-risk schools. While this study does have some commonalities with the preceding research, its key contribution lies in the analysis of the effective managerial and instructional practices that principals working in the new policy environment of USE. This study isolated elements of principals' instructional and managerial practices which are unique to the USE policy environment.

Additionally, a number of excellent empirical studies were examined in the review of literature on principals' leadership practices. The works of renowned leadership luminaries were reviewed. Leithwood et al. (2004) examined core leadership practices of school leaders. Cotton (2003)   provided an excellent meta-analysis of 25 best practices linking principal leadership and student attainment. Hallinger (2004) produced a comprehensive treatise on principal leadership practices. In England, Day et al. (2009) studied the impact of leadership on student outcomes in primary and secondary schools while Silins and Mulford (2002) studied the interrelationship between leadership and organizational learning in an Australian context. The common thread among all these studies was the context in which they were carried out. The focus was on the leadership practices of principals in developed countries.

None of these researchers tested the relevance of their theories in a third-world context. The context of this study therefore sets it apart from its predecessors in instructional leadership and management in that the focus of this study was on the identification of the leadership practices of principals in a developing nation working under the dictates of a new education policy. As a consequence, one important contribution of this study lies in its trend-setting potential for further investigations of the work of principals in a developing nation. It also lays the platform for comparative analysis of the work of principals in a broader international context.

6.11 Contribution to Theory

While theory-building was not the *raison d'être* of the study, the slight modification of the Grissom and Loeb (2009) Framework to the context of school leadership in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines represents an important contribution to theory expansion Hence, this study's contribution is also established by its application of a relatively new but appropriate theoretical framework to explain the instructional and leadership orientations of school principals in a developing country working to improve education in a traditional bureaucratic setting.

In adapting the Grissom and Loeb (2009) Principal Task Effectiveness Model, I compared the constructs of their model to the emergent categories from the analysis of the data. In cases where there were similarities in terminology or practices, fidelity was maintained with their framework. However, in instances, where a practice or category was not relevant to the context of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, these practices were included into the modified framework as shown in appendix J. Additionally, Grissom and Loeb (2009) included five broad themes in their model. For the purposes of my analysis, these were collapsed to four major themes as there was much overlap between the Organization and Management themes that had been separated in their model. In my adjusted model, these themes were subsumed under one broader theme called organization and management Relations.

Moreover, whereas the Grissom and Loeb (2009) theoretical model stressed the construct of Organizational Management as the main explanatory variable to account for student achievement and other success measures, this study expanded the boundaries of that organizing conceptual framework by showing that under USE, other explanatory constructs are equally relevant. As a consequence, the research revealed that proactive leadership practices such as distributed, shared and transformational leadership skills, the creation of supportive school cultures and a clear school vision and mission complemented by parental outreach, the use of external expertise and a focus on instructional innovation all contributed to improved school success under USE.

In a nutshell, the revised model thereby establishes a varied organizing framework for studying principals' leadership practices within the boundaries of a

developing country with especial reference to USE. It therefore represents a small but important addition to the instructional and managerial leadership theory network.

6.12 Conclusion

This study has examined the leadership and managerial challenges facing secondary school principals under Universal Secondary Education. It also examined the instructional leadership and managerial practices that these principals employed to counteract the identified challenges and to make their schools more effective in terms of their operations and student achievement. As the conclusion of this study looms, it is important to answer some pertinent questions. Namely, who are the beneficiaries of this study? What benefit will be derived from an increased knowledge and awareness of secondary school principals' practices contextualised in a remote and relatively unknown part of the world called Saint Vincent and the Grenadines?

The findings of this study are not restricted to the principals and policy-makers directly impacted by this research. Rather, this study had its genesis in the work of several expert trailblazers in the field of instructional and managerial leadership as illustrated in Chapters 1 and 2 of the report. Its findings and impact therefore go beyond local audiences and interest groups. Rather, it extends beyond national and regional confines. It seeks to establish its place in the comparative literature on principal leadership in a global context. While many of the findings corroborate and confirm current theories and practices originating in developed countries, this research has brought a broader focus to the field of educational leadership internationally.

Specifically, this study should be of interest to the policy makers promoting Universal Secondary Education and to all system administrators and educational leaders working in the OECS sub-region where USE has been implemented or is being contemplated. Based on the findings of the study, it appears that Vincentian secondary school principals support the philosophy underlying the USE policy. They acknowledge that the policy has attained one of its broad goals, full access to secondary education to vast number of students. This study has shown however that Vincentian secondary school principals are more preoccupied with issues of quality and how they can make a

difference to the improved delivery of the policy through their instructional leadership and managerial practices.

To this end, Vincentian principals have taken a number of proactive and creative initiatives to achieve quality education for all under USE. In the face of major instructional and managerial challenges, principals have sought to enhance the climate of learning and the outcomes of learning in their schools under USE. From the findings, it emerged that principals have introduced, albeit on a limited scale, new and innovative curricula, adjustments in pedagogy and new assessment strategies. With the recent one lap-top per child initiative, increased emphasis is being placed on the use of technology in education, greater efforts have been made by principals to increase student support services and there has been an increase in teacher training particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy instruction and remediation. These improved practices augur well for the overall effectiveness and sustainability of USE.

In summary, the thesis of this research was that USE had brought a number of unanticipated and unintended challenges Vincentian secondary school principals. It also sought to investigate the instructional and managerial strategies and practices employed by principals in response. The results of the study show that Vincentian school principals were only partially successful in their endeavours to achieve what Hopkins (2008) describes as "sustained" educational transformation. What is clear from the research however is that principals need to do a lot more to arrive at sustainable improvements in the management of their schools.

The research also suggests that the success of principal instructional and managerial practices will depend much more on broader policy initiatives required to transcend their efforts at the school and classroom levels. Vincentian secondary school principals need the institutional and policy framework to synchronize with the rudiments of their innovativeness for sustained student achievement and managerial effectiveness over time. This study has helped bring that awareness to the fore.

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Appendix A.

Interview Protocol for Secondary School Principals

Topic: An Analysis of the Managerial and Instructional Leadership Practices of Secondary School Principals under Universal Secondary Education Reforms in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

BACKGROUND INFORMATION -PRINCIPAL

Name:

Gender: Female……….   Male………….

Number of years in the Principalship:

Number of years as principal of this school:

Qualifications:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION –SCHOOL

Name of School:

Number of Employees supervised:

Student Enrolment:

Type of School: Government-owned……. (2) Government-assisted………….

School Location: Urban………….   (2) Rural……………..

Date and Time of Interview

Research Questions

(1)   What are the specific managerial and instructional leadership challenges that principals face in implementing the policy of Universal Secondary Education?

(2)   What managerial and instructional leadership practices have principals employed to deal with demands of Universal Secondary Education?

Interview questions

1. Describe some of the managerial challenges that you have had to deal with as you have worked under the policy of Universal Secondary Education.

2. What are the instructional challenges that you have had to deal with in shaping the learning climate in your school in working under the policy of USE?

3. How have your roles and responsibilities as a principal changed since the policy of Universal secondary has been implemented?

4. How is the staff of your school organized?

5. What are the responsibilities of each role with regard to implementation of USE?

6. How did their roles change as a result of the implementation of USE?

7. Can you describe some of the strategies that you have been using to manage the instructional programme of your school?

8. Can you provide some insight in to your programme for the professional development of teachers?

9. What strategies do you employ to create an effective learning climate in your school?

10. Have these strategies changed since implementation?

11. Has the composition of the student body in this school changed since USE?

12. What instructional and curricular approaches have you used to deal with the change in the diversity of the student population under USE?

13. How do you use assessment and evaluation data?

14. Can you give me some insight into the approaches you have been using to manage staff relations and other school personnel?

15. What approaches do you use to deal with non-academic student issues (such as student discipline, student welfare & support services etc.) at your school?

16. How would you describe your approach to instructional leadership and management?

17. Do you ascribe to a particular leadership theory?

18. Do you have programs or activities in place to create family and community involvement in your school? Can you describe them?

19. How do you manage interpersonal relations between staff members?

20. Can you give me some examples of how you manage relations between staff and students?

21. How do you employ the resources of your school to optimize the teaching and learning objectives of your school's programme?

22. Can you give me an overview of your relationship with the Ministry of Education and other external agencies affiliated to the school?

23. What measures have you taken to ensure a safe school environment?

24. What links do you see between your instructional and managerial strategies and student outcomes?

25. Are there any other issues that you would like me to know about in relation to instructional leadership and school management at this institution?

Thank you for your valuable input into this study. Your participation and cooperation are very much appreciated.

Appendix B.

Letter to the Chief Education Officer in The Ministry of Education of Saint Vincent and The Grenadines Requesting Permission to Conduct Research in the Secondary Schools

[…]
Surrey, British Columbia,
Canada, […]

17 April, 2012

Dear Madam,

I am writing to you to introduce myself and to request your assistance in carrying out the data collection phase of my proposed research into secondary education in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. My name is Keith Glasgow and at present I am enrolled as a research student at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, Canada. I am currently undertaking a research study on the implementation of Universal Secondary Education in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and its impact on the leadership practices of secondary school principals. The purpose of the study is to examine the views of principals on the way their instructional and managerial practices have been affected by the implementation of the policy of Universal Secondary Education.

I am seeking your permission to carry out the study in a number of secondary schools in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and specifically to ask your permission to invite the principals in each secondary school to participate in the study. As the study employs a qualitative research paradigm, the data collection procedures will involve the use of semi-structured interviews with current, practising secondary school principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

I plan to gather the data during the month of May, 2012. I shall provide the principals with the required consent forms as well as the Interview protocol to be used during the interviews. I also plan to have the interviews audio-taped as part of the research process. I expect each interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes, and will conduct the interview at a time and location convenient to the participants. On completion of the study, a copy of the research report will be made available to the Ministry of Education and can be obtained from the principal researcher, Keith Glasgow, at the Bethel High School, Campden Park, Saint Vincent.

I would like to assure you that every effort will be made to protect the identity of the schools, their districts and the principals interviewed or observed. In the event that you have any concerns or would like additional information, the primary contact will be my dissertation supervisor, Assistant professor, Dr. Daniel Laitsch. His contact details are as follows: Dr. Daniel Laitsch, Simon Fraser University, Surrey […] The secondary contact is Dr. Hal Weinberg, the Director of the Office of Research Ethics at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. Canada, and V5A. His telephone number is: […].

Electronically, they can also be contacted at (1) […] (primary contact) or at (2) […] (secondary contact). I thank you kindly for your anticipated participation. I thank you kindly in anticipation of a positive response.

Yours sincerely

........Keith.B. Glasgow.....

Keith B Glasgow (Mr.)

Appendix C.

Letter of Permission from the Chief Education Officer

Ref No:

In replying the date and number
Above of this letter should be quoted

Tel: 1(784) 457-1104/1(784) 457-2676
Fax: 1(784) 457-1114

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Halifax Street, Kingstown
St. Vincent and the Grenadines

April 19, 2012

Mr. Keith Glasgow

Surrey, British Columbia
Canada

Dear Mr. Glasgow,

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of April 17, 2012, requesting permission to conduct research on the implementation of Universal Secondary Education in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and its impact on the leadership practices of secondary school principals in a number of secondary schools in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

You are hereby granted such permission.

By copy of this letter, the principals of the secondary schools will be notified of such permission and will be requested to grant you their cooperation as you seek to conduct your interviews, which will last for approximately sixty to ninety minutes and which you plan to have audio-taped.

It is my sincere hope that you will provide the principals with the required consent forms and the interview protocol.

The Ministry of Education extends its best wishes to you as you complete your research and dissertation.

Sincerely,

Lou-Anne Gilchrist (Miss)

c.c: Deputy Chief Education Officer
         Senior Education Officers
         Principals, Secondary Schools

Email:
Administration: office.education@mail.gov.vc
Minister: minister.education@mail.gov.vc
Permanent Secretary: ps.education@mail.gov.vc
Chief Education Officer: ceo.education@mail.gov.vc
Literacy Crusade: dirlit.education@mail.gov.vc

UNESCO: unesco.education@mail.gov.vc
EXAMS: seoexams.education@mail.gov.vc
Skills Training: dirskillstrg.education@mail.gov.vc
Curriculum Unit: seocurriculum.education@mail.gov.vc

Appendix D.

Consent Form

Simon Fraser University

Consent Form for Human Participation in Research at Simon Fraser University

Name of Researcher: Keith B Glasgow   Faculty of Education

Phone : […]   E-Mail: […]

Principal Supervisor: Dr. Daniel Laitsch

Telephone: […]   E-Mail: […]

Topic: An Analysis of the Managerial and Instructional Leadership Practices Of Secondary School Principals under Universal Secondary Education Reforms in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Purpose and Description of the Study

The present study examines the instructional and managerial leadership practices of secondary school principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Its main objective is to determine the nature of the managerial and instructional leadership practices that secondary school principals are using to deal with the increasing demands placed on schools with the implementation of the policy of Universal Secondary Education. In order to execute this study, it is important to hear directly from the secondary school principals about their experiences with the new policy and its impact on their leadership practices. The study uses a qualitative research design, through the modality of semi-structured interviews, to elicit the perceptions and views of principals in respect of their leadership practices from a managerial and instructional standpoint. To this end, a cross-section of principals has been identified to participate in the study in order to provide insights into

the workings of USE and its effects on their managerial and instructional leadership practices in the secondary schools.

Assurance of Confidentiality

Your participation in this study will be of tremendous benefit to you as well as to all principals and other educational leaders in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. First all of all, I would like to thank you for your valuable time and for your consent to participate in this research project.

Additionally, I would like to request your permission to audio-tape our interview. This study involves absolutely no risk to you the participant. The interview questions are non-intrusive and are designed to collect information purely about your perceptions of leadership practices under Universal Secondary Education in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. While there are no identifiable risks to you the participant, there are benefits to be derived from your involvement. The study itself will be of immediate benefit to the participants as an investigation of principals' leadership practices will provide relevant insight in an area of leadership in which the principals are directly involved and which should therefore help to inform and improve their own practice. Principals will be given access to the final report as a copy of the study can be obtained from the principal researcher at the Bethel High School. Campden Park.

Your role in the research will be that of a respondent in a face-to-face semi-structured interview with me. A copy of the interview protocol will be sent to you prior to the interview which will be arranged at a convenient time and venue agreed on by both parties. I take this opportunity to reassure you that all your responses will be held in the strictest confidence. Every effort will be made to protect your identity as well as the identity of the school under your leadership. Only I and the doctoral supervising committee will have access to the interview data. The collected data will be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet at my home and will be stored until June 2014 after which they will be destroyed.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the option of not participating in the study if you are not so inclined. Even if you initially indicate your

willingness to participate, but for any reason, believe that you no longer wish to continue your participation, it is your complete prerogative to withdraw wholly or in part from the study without any negative consequences or repercussions to you. Your decision will be fully respected.

Findings will be presented in aggregate and no statements made in the report will be attributed to you or your school at any stage in the research process. The duration of this interview will be approximately one hour. On completion of the study, participants will be able to access a copy of the final document from me, Keith Glasgow at the Bethel High School, Campden Park, Saint Vincent. I have obtained permission to conduct the study through the office of the Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education, Kingstown, Saint Vincent. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time from the study, even after you have given your consent. Withdrawal from the study will have no adverse effect on your employment or evaluation. Should you have any questions, concerns or complaints or should you need additional information in respect of your rights as a participant in the research process, you can contact the following officials at Simon Fraser University.

The primary contact will be my dissertation supervisor, Assistant professor, Dr. Daniel Laitsch. His contact details are as follows: Dr. Daniel Laitsch, Simon Fraser University, Surrey, […] The secondary contact is Dr. Hal Weinberg, the Director of the Office of Research Ethics at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. Canada, and V5A. His telephone number is: […]. Electronically, they can also be contacted at (1) […] (primary contact) or at […] (secondary contact). I thank you kindly for your anticipated participation.

Signature Declaration

Now that we have clarified the confidential aspects of the consent document, are you willing to provide your consent to participate in the research by attaching your signature to the document?

Yes……………………… No…………………….

Signature of participant

………………………………………………………………………….

Appendix E.

Letter of Invitation to Principals of Secondary Schools in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

An Analysis of the Managerial and Instructional Leadership Practices of Secondary School Principals under Universal Secondary Education Reforms in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

[…]
Surrey, British Columbia
Canada, […]

23 March, 2012

Dear Participant,

I am writing to you to introduce myself and to invite you be part of an important research project on secondary education in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. My name is Keith Glasgow and at present I am a postgraduate research student at Simon Fraser University. I am currently undertaking a research study on the instructional and managerial leadership practices of Vincentian secondary school principals under the policy of Universal Secondary. The purpose of the study is to examine the views of principals on the way their instructional and managerial practices have been impacted with the implementation of the policy of Universal Secondary Education.

I am seeking your permission to be a participant in the study. Your participation is entirely voluntary. As the study employs a qualitative research paradigm, the data collection procedures will involve the use of semi-structured interviews with current, practising secondary school principals in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. As part of the data –gathering process, I would like to ask your permission to audio-tape the interviews. The interview would be of the duration of 60-90 minutes and will seek your experiences and insights into USE and its impact on your leadership practices. I would be using an interview guide to be provided in advance to structure the interview, but I anticipate that the interview will flow according to the interests and experiences of the participants. As part of the verification processes built into the study, I would like to seek your permission to return a copy of the transcribed interview to you to enable you to confirm the accuracy of the statements contained in the transcript. To this end, I would like to invite you to choose a time and venue for the interview that would be most convenient to you. I hope that the interview can be carried during the month of May, 2012.

The information collected will be useful in understanding the broader implications of the policy of Universal Secondary Education and will provide insights for principals on some of the best practices that can be applied in dealing with instructional and managerial issues impacting on the secondary schools. The results which will be shared with all principals should provide you with useful ideas in dealing with the myriad of complex and new educational issues surrounding the implementation of the USE policy. The final report will be made available to all participating principals and can be obtained from the principal investigator, Keith Glasgow, at the Bethel High School, Campden Park, Saint Vincent.

I assure you that your participation will be held in confidence, and that data will be reported in aggregate or with identifiable information removed to protect the identity of the school and the district as well as you the participant. In the event that you have any concerns or would like additional information, the primary contact will be my dissertation supervisor, Assistant professor, Dr. Daniel Laitsch. His contact details are as follows: Dr. Daniel Laitsch, Simon Fraser University, Surrey, […]. The secondary contact is Dr. Hal Weinberg, the Director of the Office of Research Ethics at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. Canada, and V5A. His telephone number is: […]. Electronically, they can also be contacted at (1) […] (primary contact) or at […] (secondary contact). I thank you kindly for your anticipated participation.

I sincerely thank you for your assistance and I look forward to the opportunity to work with you. In anticipation of a positive response

Yours sincerely

……………………………………………………

Keith B Glasgow

Appendix F.

Schedule of Interviews with Secondary School Principals

Schedule Of Interviews With Secondary School Principals In Saint Vincent And The Grenadines Respondent	Date
1	6th June, 2012
2	19th June, 2012
3	22nd May, 2012
4	28th May, 2012
5	30th May, 2012
6	17th June, 2012
7	26th May, 2012
8	1st June, 2012
9	15th June, 2012
10	18th June, 2012
11	25th May, 2012
12	31st May, 2012

Respondent	Date
13	13th June, 2012
14	29th May, 2012
15	12th June, 2012
16	11th June, 2012
17	11th June, 2012
18	12th June, 2012
19	19th June, 2012
20	24th May, 2012
21	21st June, 2012
22	14th June, 2012

Appendix G.

Excel Spreadsheet of Codes and Frequencies for Research Question 1 Chapter Four: Challenges Confronting Vincentian Principals

Analytical Categories	Frequency	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	R14	R15	R16	R17	R18	R19	R20	R21	R22	Total
STUDENT ACADEMIC AND MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES																								
Literacy and numeracy issues		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	19
Severe difficulties in reading		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	18
Inability to read and decode words			X			x								X			X							4
Reading below grade level based on Grade 6 test results		X		X	X										X			X				X		6
Impact of large numbers of students on in-house resources																	X	X						2
Difficulty of organizing instruction for mixed-ability groups						X				X													X	3
Correlation between student behaviour and literacy and numeracy		X	X	X						X	X	X			X			X						8
Numeracy challenges	2								X	X	X	X	X	X	X							X	X	7
Low student motivation		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			X	X		16
Performance of students prior USE		X	X	X		X	X		X			X	X		X		X							8

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Analytical Categories	Frequency	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	R14	R15	R16	R17	R18	R19	R20	R21	R22	Total
Student readiness for USE			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X	X		X		X	14
Disciplinary issues under USE		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	19
Improvement in student behaviour		X				X			X											X				4
Lack of social skills		X				X			X														X	2
Student attendance Issues		X		X			X		X		X		X	X	X		X				X			10
Student tardiness		X	X	X	X		X							X										5
Free lunch as reward for attendance				X			X																	2
Absconding from school							X				X		X			X								4
Student attrition											X				X	X			X		X		X	6
Incentives to remain in school		X	X	X					X	X														5
STAFF-RELATED CHALLENGES																								
Teacher failure to adapt to change										X		X	X		X		X	X						7
Failure to adopt new teaching methods							X			X	X	X				X								7
Motivational talks to teachers						X						X						X						3
the performance of experienced teachers		X										X			X							X		4

Analytical Categories	Frequency R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	R14	R15	R16	R17	R18	R19	R20	R21	R22	Total
Difficulties in teachers adjusting to USE					X			X	X					X							X		5
Teacher job-related issues	X	X			X	X		X	X	X	X			X		X	X		X				12
performance of teaching staff	X	X		X			X						X	X		X					X		8
Transfers of teachers to other schools		X								X	X				X								4
Teacher professionalism		X				X										X			X				4
Teacher quality issues					X				X	X	X	X			X							X	7
Cooperative teachers in Use implementation		X	X									X		X							X		5
Insufficient teacher training and experience	X				X			X	X		X		X	X	X			X				X	9
SCHOOL LEVEL CHALLENGES																							
Principal stress related to managing schools	X	X	X		X				X	X	X				X	X	X	X		X	X	X	13
Insufficient time to do monitoring and supervision			X							X						X							3
Increase in workload	X				X				X							X		X					6
Inadequate human resources in the arts											X												3

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Analytical Categories	Frequency	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	R14	R15	R16	R17	R18	R19	R20	R21	R22	Total
Inability to implement programmes due to teacher shortage					X						X			X				X	X					5
SYSTEM-RELATED CHALLENGES																								
Lack of preparedness for USE implementation		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X		X	16
Failure to inform about USE implementation				X		X	X	X	X			X		X									X	7
Negative impact of primary education		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X			16
Need for more human and material resources			X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X				11
Discontinuation of programmes				X							X													2
Using personal resources to procure teaching materials		X	X														X	X						4
Lop-sided allocation of human resources among schools											X					X								2

Analytical Categories	Frequency R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	R14	R15	R16	R17	R18	R19	R20	R21	R22	Total
Inadequacies in ICT resources in some schools		X			X		X				X					X	X						6
Lack of autonomy for public school principals	X	X	X							X	X			X			X						7
Suspension of students	X										X											X	2
Top-down approach to policy implementation	X		X								X			X			X	X				X	7
PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY CHALLENGES																							
Low parental support		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X			X	X		16
Students living on their own			X		X	X	X								X	X	X						6
Inadequate attendance at PTA meetings		X	X		X	X		X	X		X			X	X	X	X			X		X	12
Community Challenges			X		X			X	X						X	X	X						8

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Excel Spreadsheet of Codes And Frequencies for Research Question 2 Chapter Five

Analytical Categories	Frequency	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	R14	R15	R16	R17	R18	R19	R20	R21	R22	Total
Instruction Management Practices																								
Professional Development of the Teaching Staff		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	22
Training of teachers		X	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X				14
Improving teachers classroom management skills		X	X			X					X	X		X				X			X			8
Monitoring and Supervising learning		X			X					X			X							X	X			7
Lesson Planning		X				X	X		X	X		X		X										8
Time-off for planning							X							X										2
School Development and Instructional Planning			X		X	X																		3
Specialized instruction in literacy and numeracy		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	15
Integrating reading across the content areas		X	X								X													3
Organizing workshops in assessment and evaluation		X									X						X							3

Analytical Categories	Frequency	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	R14	R15	R16	R17	R18	R19	R20	R21	R22	Total
Using assessment and evaluation data		X	X				X	X				X	X	X	X		X				X	X		11
Monitoring and Coaching newly-hired teachers			X										X	X										3
One-on-one meetings with teachers		X																						1
Preparing teachers to deal with CSEC curriculum			X																					1
Curriculum modification		X	X	X	X	X	X		X					X	X		X	X			X		X	13
Reducing workload of lower-performing students		X		X	X	X	X		X							X	X	X					X	10
Allocating more hours to core subjects		X		X	X					X	X						X	X					X	8
Additional instruction before official start of classes																	X				X			4
Increasing vocational subjects		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X		X	X	X				X		11
Alternative programmes and certification		X	X	X	X		X			X		X			X	X	X	X						11
Holistic education for all students		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X			17

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Analytical Categories	Frequency	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	R14	R15	R16	R17	R18	R19	R20	R21	R22	Total
New approaches to curriculum delivery	X												X	X					X			X	X	7
Creation of remedial classes			X	X			X		X	X							X	X					X	8
Integrated approach to teaching reading		X	X						X	X	X			X			X	X			X		X	9
Primary school teaching strategies		X					X		X								X	X						5
Phonics		X					X																	2
Reading as a special subject		X						X		X						X		X					X	6
adaptations in teaching methodology	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	22
Streaming/ability groupings		X	X	X			X				X	X				X	X	X			X			10
Diagnostic testing of students		X			X		X			X			X			X	X	X					X	8
Differentiated teaching			X		X					X			X		X			X		X		X		7
Block Scheduling and Strategic time-tabling							X				X		X		X				X					5
Selling the CCSLC to parents			X	X					X		X	X			X	X	X	X		X	X		X	12
Adoption of ICT		X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	16

Analytical Categories	Frequency	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	R14	R15	R16	R17	R18	R19	R20	R21	R22	Total
Use of computer-aided instruction for reading		X	X			X		X						X			X	X			X			8
One lap-top per child initiative		X				X			X		X					X	X			X			X	8
Support of the MOE for ICT-enabled instruction		X	X				X	X		X				X		X					X		X	9
INTERNAL RELATIONS PRACTICES																								
Focus on school mission vision and culture		X	X							X						X	X					X	X	7
Fostering interpersonal relationships		X	X					X	X		X			X				X					X	8
Student support initiatives			X					X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X					X	10
Financial and material support for students						X	X	X	X		X							X		X	X			8
Expanded role for school counsellors			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X	X		X	15
Improving home-school relationships																								11
Home visits				X		X	X										X							4
Parental education programmes		X		X		X				X				X			X		X				X	9

Analytical Categories	Frequency	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	R14	R15	R16	R17	R18	R19	R20	R21	R22	Total
Parental engagement strategies		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X			X			14
ADMINISTRATIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES																								
Distributing leadership tasks based on teacher expertise						X								X						X				3
Appointment of deans of discipline						X		X	X					X										4
Team-work and teacher leadership		X	X	X			X		X		X		X	X				X		X	X			11
Specialist roles for HOD's		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	18
EXTERNAL RELATIONS PRACTICES																								
Support from external agencies		X	X			X			X			X	X	X		X	X	X			X		X	13
Contribution of the EPMU		X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X				X	X	X					X	12
Role of the police in school security				X		X							X			X				X	X			6
Satisfaction with MOE support		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X				X			X		12

Appendix I.

Comparison of Grissom And Loeb Themes and Researcher-Derived Themes

Comparison of Grissom and Loeb Principal Task Effectiveness Factors and Vincentian Principals' Leadership Practices from the Present Study

GRISSOM AND LOEB (2009) ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES	CATEGORIES DERIVED FROM THIS STUDY
Instruction Management	Instruction Management Practices
	Professional development of the teaching staff
Using data to inform instruction	Training of teachers in literacy and numeracy
Developing a coherent educational program across the school	Monitoring and supervision of teaching and learning
Using assessment results for program evaluation	Helping teachers to improve classroom management skills
Formally evaluating teachers and providing instructional feedback	Promoting strategic lesson planning and delivery
Classroom observations	Using School Development Plans for data collection and instructional planning
Utilizing school meetings to enhance school goals	
Planning professional development for teachers	Integrating reading across the content areas
Implementing professional development for teachers	Organizing workshops for assessment and Evaluation
Evaluating curriculum	Mentoring and coaching newly hired teachers
Directing supplementary after-school instruction	Preparing teachers to deal with the CSEC curriculum
Releasing/Counselling teacher	Curriculum Modification and Innovation

GRISSOM AND LOEB (2009) ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES	CATEGORIES DERIVED FROM THIS STUDY
Planning professional development for prospective principals	Adjustment of student academic workload
	Adjustment of teaching techniques for varying ability levels
	Introduction of alternative certification programmes
	Creation of ability groupings for students
	Integrated Approach to the teaching of reading
	Integration of accommodations to boost student performance.
	Block scheduling and Strategic timetabling
	Diagnostic testing of students
	Promoting the use of ICT-enabled instruction
Internal Relations	Internal Relations Practices
Developing relationships with students	Promoting school mission, vision and culture
Communicating with parents	Building a favourable image of the school
Attending school activities (e.g. sports events)	Developing Interpersonal Relationships and cooperation
Counselling students or parents	Sharing best practices in teaching
Counselling staff about conflicts with other staff members	Promoting greater networking among teachers
Informally talking to teachers about students	Promoting student support initiatives
Interacting socially with staff	Providing financial and material support to

GRISSOM AND LOEB (2009) ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES	CATEGORIES DERIVED FROM THIS STUDY
	disadvantaged students
	Encouraging the use of peer tutoring
	Enhancing the role of school counsellors
	Promoting parenting education programmes
	Outreach to parents through organizing home visits
Organization Management Developing a safe school environment Dealing with concerns from staff Managing budgets and resources Managing personal, school-related schedule Maintaining campus facilities Managing non-instructional staff Interacting/ Networking with other principals Hiring personnel	Administrative and Organizational Practices Distributing leadership tasks based on teacher leadership and expertise Providing leadership training to staff Appointing deans of discipline Enhancing the leadership involvement of school management teams Assigning specialist roles to HOD's in school supervision Creating specialist committees to enhance teacher leadership
Administration Managing school schedules Managing student discipline	

GRISSOM AND LOEB (2009) ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES	CATEGORIES DERIVED FROM THIS STUDY
Fulfilling compliance requirements and paperwork Managing student services (e.g. records, reporting) Supervising students Managing student attendance-related activities Fulfilling special education requirements	
External Relations Communicating with district to obtain resources Working with local community members/organizations Utilizing district communications to enhance goals Fundraising	External Relations Practices Developing relationships with feeder primary schools Engaging external agencies in professional development Building funding partnerships with external agencies Involvement of Peace Corps personnel in teaching and learning Engaging the police in school security Sponsorship of students by external agencies Maintaining close liaisons with the Ministry of Education.

Appendix J.

Teacher Training and Certification in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Teacher's College Trained Teachers and University Graduates in the Secondary System of Saint Vincent and The Grenadines

Percentage of trained teachers in secondary schools from 1995/1996 to 2011/2012

Year	Total number of secondary teachers	Total number of Trained Teachers	Percentage of Trained Teachers
1995/1996	394	131	33
1996/1997	315	200	63
1997/1998	370	202	56
1998/1999	472	194	41
1999/2000	406	210	52
2000/2001	405	199	49
2001/2002	421	196	47
2002/2003	435	191	44
2003/2004	468	172	37
2004/2005	490	253	52
2005/2006	555	260	47
2006/2007	569	177	31
2007/2008	597	306	51
2008/2009	679	384	57
2009/2010	603	320	53
2010/2011	650	389	60
2011/2012	680	396	58

(Source: Ministry of Education Statistical Digest 2011-2012)

Percentage share of graduate teachers in secondary schools 1995/1996 to 2011/2012

Year	Total number of teachers	Total number of Graduate Teachers	Percentage of Graduate Teachers
1995/1996	394	143	36
1996/1997	315	200	63
1997/1998	370	137	36
1998/1999	472	146	39
1999/2000	406	155	38
2000/2001	405	149	37
2001/2002	421	162	38
2002/2003	435	165	38
2003/2004	468	169	36
2004/2005	490	180	37
2005/2006	555	203	37
2006/2007	569	210	37
2007/2008	597	219	37
2008/2009	679	102	15
2009/2010	603	140	23
2010/2011	650	121	19
2011/2012	680	116	17

(Source: Ministry of Education Statistical Digest 2011-2012)

Appendix K.

Growth in Secondary School Enrolment in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Growth in Secondary Enrolments by Grade and in aggregate for 1995 - 2012

Year	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Total
1995/1996	1729	1804	1453	1474	1179	7639
1996/1997	1618	1865	1606	1387	1214	7690
1997/1998	1619	1767	1782	1434	1173	7775
1998/1999	1666	1733	1716	1616	1267	7998
1999/2000	1650	1813	1612	1491	1373	7939
2000/2001	xxxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx
2001/2002	1802	1703	1588	1504	1276	7873
2002/2003	1757	1924	1480	1468	1280	7909
2003/2004	2112	2008	1699	1436	1374	8629
2004/2005	2330	2364	1805	1540	1352	9391
2005/2006	2818	2423	2183	1733	1500	10657
2006/2007	2630	2920	2260	1959	1471	11240
2007/2008	2676	2509	2612	2095	1771	11663
2008/2009	2466	2653	2397	2269	1640	11425
2009/2010	2424	2452	2412	2287	1565	11140
2010/2011	2342	2482	2282	2170	1651	10927
2011/2012	2362	2214	2203	2011	1629	10419

(Source: Ministry of Education Statistical Digest, 2012)

Appendix L.

Secondary Schools Enrolment ranked according to student Population

Secondary school	Enrolment
Saint Vincent Grammar School	724
Girls' High School	704
Emmanuel High School Mesopotamia	676
Bethel High School	639
Georgetown Secondary school	561
Central Leeward Secondary	523
Dr. J. P. Eustace Memorial	509
St. Joseph Convent, Marriaqua	485
North Union Secondary	480
St. Joseph Convent, Kingstown	451
St. Clair Dacon Secondary	429
St. Martin's Secondary	377
West St. George Secondary	359
Petit Bordel Secondary	330
Intermediate High School	328
Bishop's College, Kingstown	314
Mountain View Adventist Academy	277
Troumaca Secondary	266
Buccament Bay Secondary	260
Sandy Bay Secondary	244
Adelphi Secondary	234
Union Island Secondary	226
George Stephens Senior Secondary	199
Bequia community High School	197
Bequia seventh day Adventist Secondary	114
Average for All Schools	401

(Source: Ministry of Education Statistical Digest, 2012)

Appendix M.

**Performance Results of High and Lower Performing Schools at CSEC
Examinations from 2000 – 2012: Percentage Pass Rates**

SCHOOL	12	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	03	02	01	2000
H1	97	98	94	91	93	92	95	92	97	96	94	89	90
H2	87	90	90	84	84	87	85	82	84	82	89	81	82
H3	89	89	86	82	73	78	83	80	82	71	87	80	82
H4	65	72	71	69	50	76	70	79	85	86	85	74	70
L1	59	69	65	39	32	40	51	56	71	80	70	64	61
L2	56	51	59	50	38	39	52	53	63	60	77	55	53
L3	65	60	76	53	47	63	36	60	55	59	52	59	49
L4	54	56	59	49	48	36	40	38	56	50	54	52	41
L5	58	77	74	72	60	53	41	63	64	67	72	70	68
L6	43	33	44	51	44	45	48	49	60	51	75	83	77
L7	55	72	78	66	68	71	73	65	78	81	79	71	66
L8	52	62	64	54	44	54	56	67	67	72	74	59	56
L9	43	56	34	32	37	26	27	45	64	68	51	51	52
L10	68	78	78	82	67	76	73	75	76	82	86	78	80

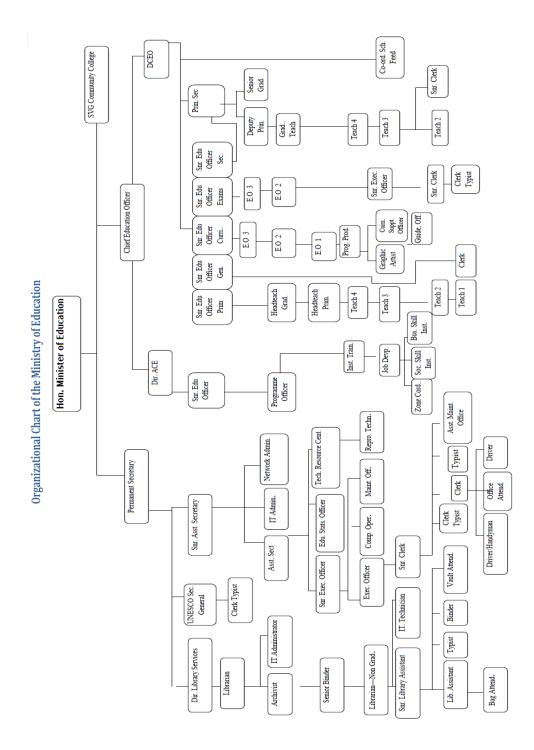| SCHOOL	12	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	03	02	01	2000
L11	55	49	60	45	47	54	46	53	63	71	72	71	74
L12	72	71	83	66	60	66	71	79	73	81	71	52	62
L13	74	69	76	70	60	47	55	60	65	81	81	69	61
L14	54	63	80	51	45	55	43	57	91	69	52	53	55
L15	51	50	49	49	45	57	37	36	58	67	81	61	68
L16	54	52	55	57	51	64	63	56	67	75	58	47	53
L17	61	78	80	64	50	51	64	64	83	65	49	40	52
L18	42	44	70										
L19	44	41	64										
L20	47	42	44										
L21	77	73	70										
L22	34	38											

(Source: Ministry of Education Statistical Digest, 2014)

Appendix N- Figure 1. Map of St. Vincent & Grenadines

Appendix O- Figure 2.

Organizational Chart of the Ministry of Education

Organizational Chart of the Ministry of Education