

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction to the study

The purpose of the study is to explore how leadership and management dynamics (between principals, vice-principals, Heads of Departments (HOD) - [SLMT], teachers and students) influence secondary school effectiveness in Lagos State schools. Measuring a school's performance is not just be about a hasty review of the traditional indicators of school effectiveness, but a complete understanding of the leadership and management dynamics that contribute to an effective school system. That is, it requires a review, analysis and understanding of the influence of the internal leadership and management context, the practical interaction process between internal key role-players, display of expertise, time and commitment to the task of teaching in the school.

“Urban high schools have a unique set of challenges. They have larger enrolments than sub-urban or rural schools; even the teachers experience fewer resources and have less control over curriculum. Moreover, there are morale issues and significantly higher rates of discipline problems, the students have fears associated with safety, spend less time on homework, have higher absentee rates and are more likely to take weapons to school. In addition, students lack family stability and high teacher absentee rates and recruitment difficulties are associated with hiring excellent teachers” (Calabrese, Goodvin and Niles, 2005: 437).

Problems associated with urban schools will not be solved instantly. The leadership and management dynamics of different schools which may contribute to school effectiveness have been of great interest to the researcher. This is because while some schools attain high levels of academic achievement, others do not; therefore, understanding the process by which those results are being achieved or not, are important.

Wrigly (2004: 288) writes that he “would not wish to argue against the existence of a ‘school effect’. Despite uncertainty about certain claims and proofs, it seems indisputable that some schools not only achieve superior success in examination and test results, but also in terms of a broader view of educational achievement than other schools in similar environments. The problem lies rather in an inadequate articulation of what counts as success”. The question

thus is that, the reason some schools achieve success to a superior extent, while other schools may merely aspire towards it is not glaring.

The “results of school effectiveness research suggest that instructional leadership and management are important characteristic of effective schools. Effective principals appear to be characterized by the performance of leadership tasks which are positively connected to student achievements such as, emphasis on basic subjects, provision of an orderly atmosphere and a learning climate, setting instructional strategies, coordination of instructional programmes, supervising and supporting teachers, orientation towards educational development, innovation, mission-orientation and dissemination of school’s vision” (Kruger, Witziers and Slegers, 2007: 2), with emphasis on students support, assessment and academic reports and thus, the realization of educational goal (Buckridge and Guest, 2007:133-146).

The concept of effectiveness (Sheerens, 1992:37) is clearly related to a means-end relationship. When applied to educational phenomena, effectiveness refers to “the extent to which educational means or processes result in the attainment of education goals through focus on the quality of instructional leadership”. This position with respect to leadership and school management implies that effective school leaders should not just concern themselves with classroom management alone, but should also take care of the smooth running of administrative and organizational matters, such as instructional leadership, learning and teaching in the classrooms and the records of student achievement (Scheerens, 1990:69).

The ability of schools to transform themselves (Davidoff and Lazarus, 1997:153-154) is to a great extent “dependent on the quality of leadership in the school”. Therefore, Sterling and Davidoff (2000:27-29) state that commitment to lead may be an initial step to take in changing a negative situation to a positive one. Therefore, a conscious choice has to be made in order to be a leader and; grow as a leader in order to become an effective leader. However, leadership pledge absolves a school leader from making justifications why an unpleasant condition cannot be reversed to a positive one.

1.2 Context of the study

Legislation on Secondary education in Nigeria is hinged on the concurrent legislative list of the constitution (FGN, 1999) according to which the Federated States, as well as the Federal Government can legislate on laws regulating education. Therefore, there are Federal Government owned and managed schools, including individual Federated States owned and managed schools, which are controlled by the States' Ministries of Education via the Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM). The TESCOM is also responsible for teacher recruitment, deployment, remuneration, welfare, discipline and disbursement of funds to secondary schools. Individual secondary school's leadership and management are headed by a principal, with the collaboration of the vice-principal and Head of Departments (HODs) to achieve school success. Each school's principal is accountable to the Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) in each Federated State and Lagos State schools are no exemption.

Secondary education is a comprehensive type of education that runs between September in a particular year up till July in the following year; it also carries a core curriculum, designed to broaden the knowledge and outlook of students. Secondary schools are segmented into junior and senior secondary schools of three years each (FME, 2000). On successful completion of Junior Secondary School (JSS), students are expected to proceed to the next level of Senior Secondary School (SSS) programme. The medium of instruction at both the JSS and SSS level is English, being the official language in Nigeria. The schools used in this study are located within the same socio-economic environment (less than five kilometres apart from each other). In addition, both sampled schools in this study are exclusively controlled and operated by the Lagos State Government in Nigeria, based on equal financial and administrative decisions.

The Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSSC) is awarded to students on completion of the final senior secondary examinations. The examinations are organized and administered by two different examination bodies - the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council [NECO] (FME, 2000). These two examination bodies share similar objectives of examining the final year (SSS 3) students, in order to prepare successful and qualified students for higher level of education (University, polytechnic or Colleges of Education).

1.3 Rationale of the study

Kruger, Witziers and Slegers (2007:1-20) believe that “there has been a growing research attention to the influence of school leadership on school effectiveness and school improvement, but little is known about how principals’ affect student outcomes, which strategies they use in order to improve their schools and; how educational management and leadership is affected by a range of institutional and contextual factors like, school size, school location and type of students”. The reservation to the above is noted by Sun, Creemers and de Jong (2005:92-122), when they clarify that, “due to differences in development, degrees of centralization and decentralization, purposes and approaches to education in the different countries of the world, contextual factors dictate the indicators of school effectiveness, as effective learning for a student occurs when there is a compatible match among these factors”.

Kruger, et. al. (2007:1-20) add that in schools “the most important and practical issues entailed in understanding the principal’s role in contributing to school effectiveness, concern the means by which principals have an impact on school outcomes, as well as the interplay with contextual forces that influence the exercise of school leadership”. They agree that even researchers “could not resolve the most important and practical issues involve in understanding the principal’s role which contribute to school effectiveness”. Bell (2002: 407-424) in his reaction believes that principals cannot manage schools alone. Moreover, they can neither convey the burden of motivating to others reach the objectives of the school, nor complete school tasks without outstanding backings from their co-workers.

“Perhaps the most significant weakness in the school effectiveness discourse is the fundamental vacuum at its very core. It lacks any clear conceptual rationale that links the characteristics that commonly describe an effective school, with a dynamic model of school leadership and management in such a way that it might be possible to explain the relationships between those characteristics and improved student performance. The precise nature of the relationships between an effective principal, the classroom performance of the teacher and the learning of a particular student is largely ignored in the school effectiveness literature” (Bell, 2002:407-424).

In order to solve the ineffective nature of schools leadership, Huber (2004:669-684) proposes professionalism, thus he establishes that professional school leadership is “described as a firm and purposeful, based on sharing leadership responsibilities, involvement in and knowledge about what goes on in the classroom. That means that, it is important to have decisive and goal-oriented participation of others in leadership tasks, real empowerment in terms of true delegation of leadership power (distributed leadership) and, that there is a dedicated interest in and knowledge about what happens during lessons - (effective and professional school leadership action focuses on teaching and learning, and uses the school’s goals as a benchmark)”.

Kruger, et. al. (2007:1-20) acknowledge that “systematic empirical validation of the different research models” on how a principal’s leadership influence student outcome “is missing and more research is needed, in which not only the question as to whether principals affect school outcomes, but also the question about through which paths such effects are achieved”. My over-riding rationale for this study is my patriotic concern for the plight of secondary students who under-achieve academically, while their counterparts achieve in similar schools located within the same context, operated and; managed under the same financial and administrative considerations by the Lagos State government.

1.4 Problem statement

Positive academic outcomes of students indicate a benchmark of effective schools, because the school and the teacher in particular are held responsible for students’ progress in terms of measurable learning goals, both in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domain (Mortimore, 1998). Kruger, et. al. (2007:1-20) maintains that the “principal is presented as the locus of management expertise and an individual who carries the burden of responsibility for planning. Thus, the principal is located within a hierarchical view of school management in which the principal is the solitary, heroic and accountable leader who personifies the totality of leadership skills and managerial” competencies.

Boyd (2004:160-173) concludes that “education and efficiency are not antithetical, because if we want to use educational resources as wisely and effectively as possible in order to benefit as many students as possible, we must evaluate the relative success of alternative policies and practices. Therefore, whether teachers like it or not, the pressures for greater efficiency,

effectiveness and accountability in education by the principal are inescapable and will not disappear”. The question that arises then is, whether some schools were themselves the cause of superior gains in academic achievement, as a result of the reflection of their more advantaged managerial effectiveness, distinctive policies, processes and practices from an overall perspective (Kruger et. al., 2007:1-20).

Arguing against the overall importance of school context as a predictor of managerial relevance, Newell and Van Ryzin (2007:465-471) states that “the field of school improvement has been criticized, but nevertheless with some merit for sometimes giving the impression that school context is not absolutely important and that any school can with appropriate action, improve significantly. However, “from a theoretical perspective, leadership theory has posited that situations and contexts are crucial for establishing effective leadership. There are numerous aspects of the context within which leadership takes place could influence the nature of leadership and management” (Goldring, Huff, May and Camburn, 2008:332-352).

In reaction to the statement above, Wrigly (2004:227-244) declares that “despite scepticism about certain claims and proofs about key players in the school, it seems indisputable that some schools achieve greater success not only in examination and test results, but also in terms of a broader view of educational achievement, than other schools in similar environments. He also raises alarm that managerial goals are being offered as a substitute for a more fundamental debate on curriculum and pedagogy”. Bell (2002:407-424) continues that “principals and their staff move towards inclusive forms of management and leadership that are collegial rather than hierarchical, holistic rather than fragmented and instrumental”.

Coincidentally, the development of a knowledge base among education researchers on school effectiveness and school improvement reveals that school management and teachers really make a difference (Barber, 2004:3-7). Based on that, Creemers and Reezigt (2005:259-371) made known their convictions that school effectiveness better focused on discovering “what works” in education and “why”. Therefore, the problem that puzzles the researcher is, to understand why students from two secondary schools situated not far from each other (less than five kilometres apart) and in the same socio-economic environment in Lagos State; but do not obtain comparable academic achievements. To this extent, the exploration of how school leadership and management dynamics contribute to school effectiveness is the focus of this study.

1.5 Research questions

The main research question for the thesis is formulated as follows:

- ***How do leadership and management dynamics contribute to school effectiveness?***

For the purpose of clarity, the following sub-research questions were asked:

- What does the literature inform about school leadership and management dynamics contributing to school effectiveness?
- What does the literature inform about classroom leadership and management dynamics contributing to school effectiveness?
- What is the relationship between the dynamics of school leadership and school effectiveness?
- What is the relationship between the dynamics of school management and school effectiveness?
- What is the relationship between the dynamics of classroom leadership, management and classroom effectiveness?

1.6 Aims and objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to explore how leadership and management dynamics contribute to school effectiveness.

The objectives of the study are to determine:

- What the literature informs about school leadership and management dynamics contributing to school effectiveness.
- What the literature informs about classroom leadership and management dynamics contributing to school effectiveness.
- The relationship between the dynamics of school leadership and school effectiveness?

- The relationship between the dynamics of school management and school effectiveness.
- The relationship between the dynamics of classroom leadership, management and school effectiveness.

1.7 Significance of the study

- The researcher hopes that this study will extend knowledge and understanding of how the practices of leadership and management of internal key role players in the school - SLMT, the teacher and student leader - may contribute to an effective school.
- The study hopes to also reveal the understanding of how the leadership and management practices of the school SLMT, may influence teacher leadership and management practices towards the attainment of effective teaching and learning in the classroom, hence, effective school.
- It is also hoped that the findings of this study will inform policy and practice on ways of ensuring enhanced leadership and management practices in schools in order to attain effectiveness.

1.8 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this research is built on the school effectiveness concept of Scheerens (1990) and Prinsloo's leadership and management model (2009). They both consist of contextual, multi-level and multi-factor internal variable factors such as school leadership/management variables, educational facilities, positive school culture and climate variables and other achievement goal-oriented variables which may influence student achievement. The conceptual models of the study assisted the researcher to investigate how school leadership and management may assist a school in promoting a positive learning environment for all students, which in turn influence their academic achievement.

In addition, Scheeren's conceptual framework (1990) and the Prinsloo's (2009) model both consist of external variable factors such as student socio-economic background, state and

district educational policy, teachers union and community variables which may influence school leadership and management. Moreover, both Scheerens's conceptual framework (1990) and the Prinsloo's (2009) model guided the research questions in the study to in order to generate a better understanding of the phenomenon under study (see details in Fig. 1.1 and Chapter 2, Fig. 2.1 for details).

The major dissimilarities between the conceptual framework and the model used in this study are: in utilising the classroom level of the conceptual framework of Scheerens, it is clear that detailed classroom factors leading to student achievement at the classroom level, e.g. teacher quality, instructional strategies, assessment and evaluation of student progress, monitoring of pupils and per pupil expenditure variables could contribute to effective school. However, these variables will undoubtedly continue to assert a positive influence on student achievement, because they serve as inputs towards the attainment of school effectiveness. On the other hand, Prinsloo's (2009) education management and leadership model shows a clear internal leadership and management variables such as school culture, climate, change, conflict management, conceptual skills and human relations skills required by the internal school SLMT.

Therefore, the conceptual framework of Scheerens (1990) guided the researcher in developing a relevant literature in Chapter 3 and was also used in finding answers to the fifth research question, through focus on the classroom level of the conceptual framework; while Prinsloo's education leadership and management model was utilized to develop the literature in Chapter 2 and also used to find answers to the third and fourth research questions.

In summary, the features of both the conceptual framework and the model were concurrently used as a means of understanding and explaining the findings of the study, as they shed detailed light on some of the variables in the diagram similarly and differently. They however both provide insight on the mechanism of achieving school effectiveness. Conclusively, based on the conceptual framework of Scheerens (1990) and Prinsloo's (2009) school leadership and management model (2009), I argue that if all the levels of variables and conditions in the conceptual framework and model were completely met, students will have a positive attitude towards learning, thus resulting in school effectiveness.

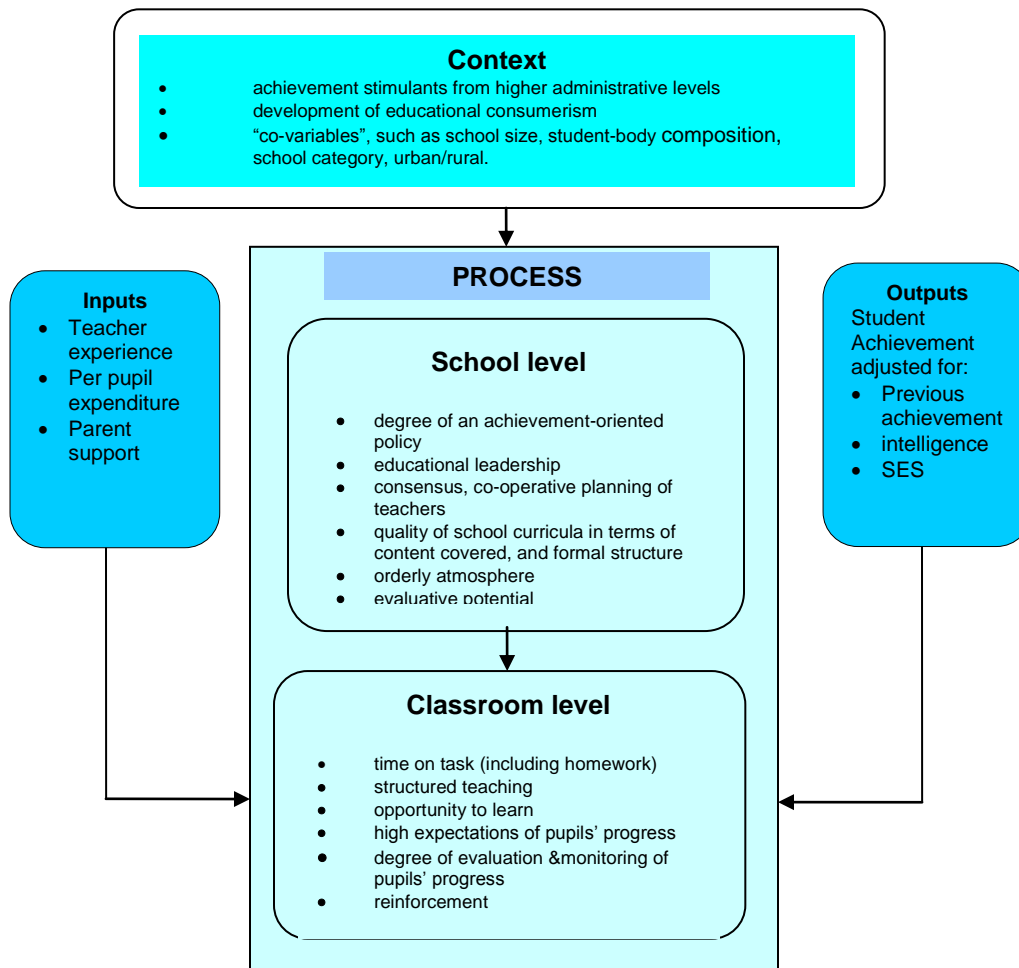


Figure 1.1: School effectiveness model developed by Scheerens (1990:69)

1.9 Research paradigm

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005:183), a research paradigm is a basic set of belief that guide actions, dealing with the first principles, 'ultimates' or the researcher's worldview. The study was located in the pragmatist's research paradigm. Such research paradigm does not constitute any one system of philosophy or world-view, but draws on what fits best from the different philosophical paradigms. For the pragmatists the researcher is free to choose methods and techniques that best meet their needs (Cresswell, 2007:19).

The qualitative approach was used and the researcher accepts that there are many realities, and not a single universal one is applicable in the research world. That is, the researcher accepts that reality is subjective and constructed by the participant. The researcher also assumes that reality consists of an individual's mental constructions of the object with which he or she engages, thus the engagements impact on the observer and the situation being observed. Therefore reality is best understood from the perspective of the participant who experiences it (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:54).

This research is founded on the constructivist paradigm which is premised on a particular pattern or set of assumptions concerning reality (ontology); method of knowing reality (the knower and the known). That is, to understand the phenomenon well, the researcher closely interacted with the participants' through interviews, observations and document analysis/reviews of what occurs in the natural setting (epistemology) and particular ways of knowing about reality (methodology).

Constructivism postulates that meaning is socially constructed and since meanings attached to a phenomenon may be multiple, varied, subjective, it should be arrived at through discussions and interactions with participants who experience the phenomenon. Moreover, the phenomenon should be understood by focusing on the context in which the participant live and work (Cresswell, 2007:20-21).

1.10 Research method/design

The case study research design was employed in this study. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:254) suggest that case studies could be used "to portray 'what it is like' to be in a certain state of affairs, to catch the close-up reality and the 'thick description of participants' lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for a situation". Cresswell (2008:265) "defines case study as an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g. an activity, an event, process) based on extensive data collection". This study explores in-depth, leadership and management practices and experiences of internal school stakeholders (SLMT, teachers and students) in its real-life context, through different types of data. These data are descriptive and detailed, with a narrow focus and combines subjective and objective data.

The case study design was utilized, whereby two cases are described and compared to provide insight into an issue (Cresswell, 2008:465). Hence, the researcher developed an in-depth comparison of two different secondary schools located within the geographical and same socio-economic environment, in order to know how the internal school leadership and management dynamics of the SLMT, teacher and student leader (class captain) in each school contribute to its performance or under-performance. In order to establish a thorough understanding of each school, the following profiles were explored:

- History of the school
- Socio-economic environment of the school
- Climate and culture of the school
- Principal's previous experience and qualifications
- Number of teachers in each school and their qualifications
- student enrolment
- teacher-student ratio
- Parental support and;
- Technical support (for example, laboratory and laboratory equipment; teaching equipments and materials), School physical structure and facilities and their maintenance, guidance and counselling, and so on, were considered to give supporting evidence to the reasons for students' academic results at each school.

1.10.1 Research sample and sampling technique

Two public secondary schools were purposefully sampled from the same socio-economic environment. One achieving and under-achieving school respectively, were sampled in one of the six existing education districts in Lagos State. These schools were purposively sampled, as they constitute a sample that satisfies the specific needs of the investigation (Cohen, et. al., 2007:114-115). The effective and ineffective status of the two purposively sampled schools was gathered through evidence of students' academic performances kept by the Education District. More so, the schools are located in the sub-urban area. In each of the two sampled schools, a principal, vice-principal, Head of Department (HOD's) – [SLMT], teacher and student leader - otherwise called class captain, were sampled from each of the two

schools. By implication, five participants emerged from each of the sampled schools, adding up to a total of ten participants in the study.

Table 1.1: Categories of samples in the interview

Categories of Schools	Students	Teachers	HODs	Principals	Vice-principals	Total
Achieving school	01	01	01	01	01	05
Under-Achieving School	01	01	01	01	01	05
Total	02	02	02	02	02	10

1.10.2 Data-gathering methods

Data gathering is was done using interviews, observation and document analysis technique, In addition, the final academic records of students' performance in each school for the past three years were retrieved from the national examination body - West African Examinations Council (WAEC) - for check and verification, in order for the researcher to ascertain the performance and under-performance status of the two sampled schools. The literature was also used to identify and develop leadership and management indicators of school effectiveness which were used to analyse the data collected.

The *a priori* approach was adopted in the analysis of data. Accordingly, *a priori* themes are (predetermined themes) which are developed before data collection begins, based on a theory which has been developed, conceptual frameworks, previous research findings and other sources (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009:329). They are also referred to pre-existing or *a priori* codes ("pre-figured categories") that guide the coding process often from a theoretical model or the literature (Cresswell, 2009:152).

1.10.2.1 Interviews (semi-structured)

The principal, vice-principal and Head of Department (HOD) - SLMT- of each sampled schools were interviewed in-depth, on how school leadership and management practices and behaviour may contribute to effectiveness of their school. Moreover, the teachers and the students were interviewed on how teacher leadership and management in the classroom may contribute to student academic performance, hence school effectiveness.

1.10.2.2 Observations

Complete observation of each of the sampled schools was carried out by the researcher. The final year examination records of students in each of the school were observed as well and checked for verification at the Education District office concerning the performance and under-performance status of the sampled schools. Moreover, the profile of individual performing and under-performing was observed and reviewed (see 4.1). The researcher also observed teachers' classroom leadership, management and students' conducts during lessons, according to identified indicators in the conceptual framework and the literature. This was done in order to find answers to the research questions in the study (see observation details and observation schedules in 4.6.3 and Appendix 8 and 9 respectively).

1.10.2.3 Document analysis

Analysis of documents such as school policies, code of conduct for regulating teaching and learning, lesson plans, academic records of students and other records that were made available to the researcher by the participants were analysed for triangulating the interview and observation data.

1.10.2.4 Field notes

Field notes were also used to record what the researcher hears, sees (observes), experiences and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the process of data collection. The interview guide was also used as the main instrument to obtain first-hand and in-depth information.

1.10.2.5 Reflective diary

The researcher encouraged each of the teachers observed to keep a reflective diary or notes, which contained details of their informed self-judgments on each of their lessons, with a view to improving their teaching practice in subsequent observations made done by the researcher. The reflective diary that contained reflexive opinions of the sampled teachers as regards the reflections of their teaching and classroom management in the classroom was documented (see 6.6).

1.11 Trustworthiness

In an effort to establish the trustworthiness of data collection and analysis, followed the Lincoln and Guba's (2005:24) criteria of 'credibility', 'transferability', 'dependability', 'confirmability', which are the naturalists equivalent to the conventional terms 'internal validity', 'external validity', 'reliability', and 'objectivity' respectively. Triangulation was used to determine points of similarities and differences in qualitative data collected from participants through interviews, observations and documents analysis of the study, as a basis for credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings.

Moreover, trustworthiness of the research was established through the use of multiple source of data collection. Multiple sources of evidence from literature review, interviews, participants' observation and documentary sources of data were utilized and that process, made available chains of evidence that were triangulated and compared for the purpose of data enrichment and credibility. Nevertheless, member check was done on transcribed data by the participants in the study.

1.12 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is usually based on an interpretive philosophy that is aimed at examining meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:99). Therefore, it assisted in determining relationships between emerging patterns/themes through qualitative inferences identified and also discussed similarities and differences that corroborate or disagree with the conceptual framework and the model used in this study. The

contents of the interviews, observations and documents were reviewed and coded to determine their relationship with the identified *a priori* themes and codes in the literature.

The themes of this study are leadership and management. Therefore, Chapter 2 and 3 of the literature were used to expose and determine the most important indicators or sub-themes of leadership and management, which may contribute to school and classroom effectiveness respectively. By implication, criteria which could be used to measure the leadership and management actions of education leaders were developed from the literature, based on explanatory *a priori*. The *a priori* sub-themes were used to determine whether the leadership and management codes generated from the interviews, observations and document analysis, deviate or are similar to the criteria laid down in the sub-themes of school and classroom leadership and management, spelt out in the literature review in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively.

1.13 Ethical considerations

The ethical considerations of the University of Pretoria, designed to guide the conduct of a research of this type were strictly adhered to. As a result, ethical clearance was applied for and obtained through the University of Pretoria Ethics Committee. Thus, the researcher obtained permission (Informed consent) from participants and relevant authorities involved in the research in order that their rights and dignity are protected in the course of the research.

1.14 Delimitations to the study

This study is delimited to leadership and management and their influence on school effectiveness in Lagos - Nigeria. Although there are many sub-themes, indicators or criteria of school leadership and management themes in the literature and because a single study of this nature cannot exhaust all of them, the researcher only addressed few of them in order to understand how they influence school effectiveness. Also, the study does not acknowledge other school variables which determine student achievement, for example, socio-economic status of parents/sponsor, parental style, environmental influence, positive self-concept, individual student's learning style, motivation to learn and so on.

School effectiveness variables are many, complex and complicated and their impact cannot be entirely explored in a single research project. Therefore, for the problem to be addressed in its totality, data should also be gathered from parents and the education department as they may become part of other studies. That will enable future researchers to be able to probe adequately into other aspects of variables, which could lead to school effectiveness and student academic achievement in Lagos State-Nigeria.

1.15 Structure of the research

The structure of the thesis are briefly outlined and explained as follow.

Chapter One

This opening chapter consists of the introduction, context, rationale, problem statement research questions, aims and objectives, theoretical framework/model, methodology, ethical consideration, limitations and the conceptual clarification of the study.

Chapter Two

This chapter focuses on leadership, management, school effectiveness details indicating how they may contribute to school effectiveness.

Chapter Three

The chapter discusses literature on classroom leadership and management showing how they may enhance school effectiveness.

Chapter Four

The chapter focuses on the philosophical foundation underpinning of the study, detailed research design and methodology of the study.

Chapter Five

This chapter reveals the empirical aspect of the study. Thus, it includes the data analysis interpretation and discussion of the data collected on school leadership and management contributing to school effectiveness.

Chapter Six

This chapter reveals the empirical aspect of the study. Thus, it includes the data analysis interpretation and discussion of the data collected on classroom leadership and management contributing to school effectiveness.

Chapter Seven

Chapter Seven deals with the overall conclusion on the thesis and these include summary of the thesis, findings, empirical and theoretical significance and recommendations of the study.