'THE NEED TO BEHAVE AS PROFESSIONALS': A CASE STUDY OF FIVE TEACHER LEADERS IN AN URBAN PRIMARY SCHOOL IN PIETERMARITZBURG, KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA

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BY

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DECLARATION

I CHAMAIN PILLAY, declare that the work presented in this document is my own. Any references to work by other people has been duly acknowledged.

Signed: --

I declare that this dissertation has been submitted with/without approval.

Signed: Supervisor--

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Date: 15 December 2011.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my late father Thomas Marrian it was through his values that he instilled in me that I made it in life. His motto was that you must always finish what you start in life. I thank him for exposing me to educational opportunities and being my guiding light. May his soul rest in peace.

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ABSTRACT

South Africa is a complex country that has undergone fundamental changes in the last sixteen years. One of the major areas that have been greatly affected by these changes is education. Due to these drastic changes, schools are being placed under tremendous pressure to deal effectively with this reformation. In addition, the strike action in (2007) and the recent strike action in (2010) that occurred in our country, brought the teaching profession once again in dispute. The broader public has therefore become very curious in their quest to find out if teachers are promoting effective teaching and learning in their schools. In light of this, this dissertation works from the premise that these teachers play an important role as leaders in their schools. The need to act as professionals is crucial, if teachers are to be positive role models to their learner. The aim of this study is to discover how teachers understand professionalism, and to investigate some of the obstacles or challenges they face in leading their schools to be professional places for teaching and learning.

The study was designed as a case study which was conducted within the interpretive paradigm and was mainly qualitative in nature. Data was gathered by means of survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, a focus group interview, documents and observations. The case study was an urban primary school in KwaZulu – Natal, South Africa. Data was predominantly qualitative and was analysed using thematic content analysis.

Findings of the study indicate that teachers understand professionalism to mean training for a specific period of time with the necessary skills and knowledge to impart into our learners. Also it is a specific code of ethics. The main barriers to teacher leadership and professionalism were a lack of empowerment by management and an overemphasis on control by the principal, the lack of parental involvement with regards to teaching and learning and the behaviour portrayed by some teachers that of frequent absenteeism became a barrier in performing their duties professionally. The enhancing factors were that teachers worked collaboratively with each other.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa is a diverse and complex country that has undergone fundamental changes in the last sixteen years. I also believe that because of this diversity and our apartheid past it also affected the quality of education and the way we teach and learn. One of the major areas that have been greatly affected by these changes is education. Due to these drastic changes, schools are being placed under tremendous pressure to deal effectively with this reformation. My study is therefore based on teacher leadership and it is a concept associated with the empowerment of teachers that leads them to improve their professional practice (Harris, 2005). The focus is on how teachers understand professionalism and the factors that promote or hinder teacher leadership and professionalism in school.

My interest stemmed from the negative publicity that many teachers had to endure during the recent strike action in (2010) and the previous strike action in (2007). Therefore the teachers' professional identity has become the focal point of interest. I believe that being a teacher myself and who is someone that always puts the needs of the learner first, I felt very humiliated when the publics' opinion of teachers seemed to be that they are lazy and only put their own interest first. The after effect of the strike created many divisions in schools amongst staff members because different unions expected different levels of loyalty and support from their members.

The democratic government under the new dispensation has played a pivotal role in trying to address the past mistakes in our education system. During the apartheid era schools were segregated into racial groups and this perpetuated inequality amongst the racial groups. The inequalities that existed, because of government policy at the time, had a negative effect on the quality of the education that was offered to some groups particularly, Black South Africans, (Christie cited in Jason, 2010). Being a victim of apartheid myself I also experienced discrimination at school because I came from that era. I remember being forced to sing the national anthem every morning and Christianity was the dominant religion that was promoted at school. In fact every prayer had a Christian ethos to it. Although I am of

Indian origin apartheid also affected me because I came from a very poor family background, my parents were not allowed to get well paid jobs and they were also recipients of a poor education system which made it even harder for them to find a good job. Apartheid was not only a political system, but bore serious repercussions for the poverty that most black people still experience today (Christie, 1985).

It can also be argued that low job satisfaction has been identified as a major cause of the teaching crisis in many countries. Crossmoor and Harris cited in Soobramoney (2008) conducted a survey in the United Kingdom and found from their research that educators in secondary schools experienced the most job dissatisfaction, especially in state schools. Their study indicated that systemic factors such as the inability to obtain relevant information or advice from their superiors and incompatible work demands from managers were the main factors that lead to job dissatisfaction amongst teachers. This can be linked to the strike action that took place in our country South Africa when teachers went on strike for better services and better pay prospects. On the other hand within our South African context Govender (1996, pp. 20-22) argues that teachers in the disadvantaged areas in South Africa were products of a poor quality education system, and hence cannot be described as 'professionals. From Govender's point, it suggests that teachers therefore enter the classrooms with a disempowering education training background without the necessary skills and competencies to truly regard themselves as professionals. Christie (1994, p. 284) maintains that "the reasons for the demise in black schooling may be traced to the years of opposition to apartheid and the resistance struggle, waged within schooling from 1976 onwards".

 The author further argues that post 1994, intervention is needed in these 'African' schools to change the culture of teaching and learning rather than to restore a culture that was undesirable (Christie, 1998, p. 295). The new government inherited a fragmented, discriminatory, and unequal education system (Christie 1998). Soudien (2006) also explains that because the delivery of quality education was slow many felt that the ideal solution to a quality education was imminent. However, the need for transformation calls for teachers, communities and the government to work together. As I move to the next section in this chapter I highlight the background and motivation for the study, and provide a problem statement to the study. The significance of the study and the research questions that were answered by the study will be elaborated. The author concludes with a brief description of the methodology used in this study and layout of the dissertation.

1.2: BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

This study is located within the context of educational leadership and management and examines the way teachers understand professionalism. The study examines teachers' understanding of the term professionalism and factors that promote or pose barriers to teachers taking up leadership and professional roles in their school life. The study is based on a primary school in the Pietermaritzburg District in KwaZulu-Natal.

My interest in this study emanated from the strike action that took place in 2007 and 2010 in our country South Africa. It drew a lot of attention on the teaching profession. Many parents and learners were concerned about the unethical behaviour of some of the teachers especially during the strike action. This opinion of teachers is really damaging to most teachers who are committed and will go the extra mile to help our learners. There was a lot of negative publicity in the newspapers about teachers being lazy, frequently absent and only put their own needs first. Therefore, my aim for undertaking this research study stemmed from the fact that I most certainly regard the teaching profession to be a very respectable profession. I wanted to gain insight on how teachers understand professionalism and to look at what challenges and obstacles these teacher leaders face even today in leading their schools as professionals in their everyday working life.

As a level one educator myself, I came to the realization that it is not only the principal who is responsible for the good performance of the school. All educators are responsible even the level one teachers. Being a level one educator myself I also felt responsible for providing quality education towards teaching and learning. Against this backdrop, my study was designed to establish teachers' understanding of what it means to be professional within the practice of teacher leadership. I believe that there is a need to develop and encourage teachers to be involved in leadership so that a healthy culture of teaching and learning can be created that empowers all teachers on the staff to become leaders. I became interested in the confidence, or lack thereof, teachers have in themselves to participate in decision-making processes.

Many teachers felt demotivated because of the hierarchical and less democratic culture particularly in my own school. On the other hand Smyth and Dow (1998) cited in Harley *et al.* (2000, p. 288) suggest that "Whereas education, under apartheid, encouraged teacher

conservatism and compliance, new curriculum legislation increases teacher autonomy and professional discretion". Therefore the progression in policy and legislation design was aimed at enhancing teacher leaders.

The challenge lay in how the policy is being implemented. We need to investigate to what extent new policies, that were designed to replace rigid, bureaucratic practices in schools, have been successfully implemented in schools. It is also crucial that we gain insights into the extent to which teacher leaders are leading in their schools. It is equally important that we collect and pay attention to factors that promote or hinder teacher leadership and professionalism in our schools

In the light of the above, I determined that the following key questions would guide this study:

1.3: KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.3.1 How do teachers understand professionalism?

1.3.2 What factors enhance or hinder teacher leadership and professionalism in schools?

1.4: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The purpose is to find out some of the factors that would enhance quality teaching and learning and might promote the development of teacher leadership. It is my aim in the study to make a small contribution to the knowledge of how teachers lead and to get their professional view in our South African schools. In doing so, the study might help close the gap that exists in some schools on how teachers relate to professionalism. It could be suggested that positive change that facilitates positive attitudes and practices could be a catalyst for professional growth and development.

A qualitative design was used to frame the investigation of the questions in this study. The research was mainly qualitative in nature and located in the interpretive paradigm. I chose this paradigm because as a researcher, I believe that people define their actions by providing different interpretations to their actions due to different contexts, and knowledge is created through an interaction between the researcher and the participant. The school was the focus of my case study and the unit of analysis was the five teacher leaders. The research period started in the first term of 2011 and ended in the second term of 2011. Since the study was to be carried out for a long period, my own school seemed appropriate and convenient for the

study, owing to the inconvenience and complications which would be expected had the study been conducted outside the school.

The data collection methods that I used were survey questionnaires, a focus group interview, individual interviews, observations and documents. These activities attached to the case study approach were in line with a case study being "a holistic research method that uses multiple sources of evidence to analyse or evaluate a specific phenomenon or instance"(Anderson and Arsenhoult, 1998, p.52). Thematic and content analysis was used to analyse data where I categorised data and identified themes and patterns using data collection instruments which I mentioned earlier on. My case was part of a group research project where I happened to be one of the eight researchers. All the students undertook to do research in their prospective schools to examine how teacher leadership and professionalism was practised and understood in the South African context. We also wanted to ascertain what issues impacted positively or otherwise on teacher leadership and professionalism in their school.   As a group we, developed the research questions, the research design and the instrument together, led by our supervisor. We obtained clearance from the University of KZN to embark on the research project. The necessary permission was secured from the Department of Education as well as the principal and staff at each of the case study schools.

1.5 LAYOUT OF THE STUDY

This section serves to conclude and outline the chapters that will follow in summary form. This will help the reader to develop an understanding of the whole study.

 In this chapter I have highlighted the purpose of the study. Introduce and discussed the background of the study and a brief description on the nature of the study. Other aspects include motivation for the study and research questions.

Chapter two constitutes the literature review wherein literature dealing with leadership and professionalism are reviewed with the intention of establishing solid ground from which the concept of teacher leadership and professionalism emerges. Both international and local literature was reviewed. This chapter also explores the theory of different forms of leadership for example distributed leadership.

This chapter three focuses on the methodology and design of the study and discusses the research process, ethical considerations and limitations of the study. It is in this section where the author reflects on her experience of doing research.

Chapter four pertains to the presentation of findings obtained from the data collected and discussion,

This chapter five provides a summary of the findings as well as recommendations that may be considered to sustain to a positive environment and to be considered in future research.

CHAPTER   TWO: **LITERATURE REVIEW**

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is going to discuss literature relating to leaders as professionals and what it means for teachers. The aim is to acquire insight into the various factors that may promote or pose barriers to the development of teachers as leaders and how professionalism in some schools within the South African context, is understood and practised in reality.

The insights that informs this study is literature reviewed from research done in South Africa and other parts of the world concerning leadership and professionalism and in particular the notion of teachers as leaders who are professionals. Teacher leadership is more likely to occur in schools where the leadership by principals foster a more supportive, collegial culture and where there is collaboration amongst all staff members and this is why distributed leadership is examined. This chapter will therefore look at whether teachers are leading their schools better to ensure that they are professional places for teaching and learning. Also to gain some insight if teachers really understand professionalism and what does it mean to them. This review includes the different definitions of the following terms: leader in the school context; teacher; leadership; teacher leadership; distributed leadership and professionalism. Lastly, my focus then moves to the factors that promote or inhibit teacher leadership and professionalism in schools.

2.2 DEFINING LEADER IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

Well, the dictionary meaning of leader is someone who guides or directs, but my interest is a leader in the school context who guides and leads the school. In many of our South African schools this would probably be the principal. This is also aligned to the thinking of Davidoff (1997) as the author explains that a leader is perceived to be an individual in a formal position of power, the head of a school. Ash and Persall (2000) who developed the Formative Leadership Theory, express the view that "there are numerous leadership possibilities and many leaders within the school and leadership is not role specific" (p. 16). They base their theory on the concept of the teacher as leader and the principal as the leader of leaders and as the chief learning officer. In the past it was commonly known for principals to perform most of the managerial and administrative tasks, but in our current context the collective efforts as well as the expertise of individual members is needed to ensure the smooth and effective running of schools. Similarly, Grant (2007, p. 2) is of the opinion that in the school context a

teacher can be a leader too, irrespective of the position they hold. Further the author argues to lead one need not be only in a formal position but one can lead from an informal position as well. More recent studies have indicated that 'authority' to lead need not be located in the person of the leader but can be dispersed within the school and in-between and among people (Day *et.*, 2000, cited in Muijs and Harris, 2008 p. 112). Davidoff still argues that being a good leader means having the flexibility to recognise the difference and respond appropriately, so that you as a leader are not bound by rules, but guided rather by wisdom and intuition.

In my opinion I disagree with Davidoff to a certain extent because in the school context a leader is bound by rules and regulations. Although it is important to be guided by wisdom and understanding sometimes, I believe in the school context a leader would be in a safer position by following the rules. As leaders in schools we all have natural instincts to know what right and wrong is because a person is born with values and morals. For Riches (1993, p.12) cited in Davidoff (1997) leaders in education must be able to set clear goals, develop and sustain the culture of the school, support and respect colleagues, lead by example, and must be able to set and translate a mission and vision of the school into action. I concur with Riches because in a professional learning environment a leader must lead by example for others to follow.

Whilst in the school context there are leaders who do not lead as good role models because in some schools, there are leaders who tend to abuse their power because they are in this leadership position. As Kotter (1996) describes poor leaders as having limited vision, the inability to remove obstacles to the achievement of the vision, under-communication, lack of planning for short term wins and the inability to institutionalize change. I would think this is more evident with autocratic styles of leaders were the principal wants to be in sole charge of the school and it is his way or no way like in the case study research (2011). This kind of leaders in schools most definitely sow division among staff members, and to teachers who want to take the initiative to lead feel restricted because the culture in the school does not create opportunities for teachers to lead. This was evident from the recent case study research.

Heron (1992) has a different view on understanding the concept of a leader and suggests that in an effective and democratically run school a leader needs to be directive, consultative and autonomous. Firstly, leaders need to be directive at appropriate times and in appropriate

ways. Consultation and negotiation are not always necessary, nor advisable, therefore leader's need to be given the trust and the prerogative to make decisions and steer the school on a particular course and to gain clarity when necessary. Secondly, it is absolutely necessary for leaders to negotiate and consult. Without consultation and negotiation, there is unlikely to be shared ownership of any change process, and implementation of ideas is likely to be constrained by lack of commitment. Thirdly, leaders need to know when to delegate authority so that they do not hold the reigns of power unilaterally. Delegation of responsibilities provides an opportunity for other members of the school community to take responsibility for, and to participate in, the life of the school in a more meaningful way. I do agree with some of the suggestions made by Heron about the way a leader should be, but this is not possible in some schools because some principals do not want to consult and use their power by being in this position to oppress others who are not in a leading position. This is also evident in the recent case study research (2011). Therefore the key people for leading change in schools are the teachers, because as research has shown a leader is someone that guides and leads a school. It is very important that teachers start fulfilling this new role for leading in their schools and not leave this domain to the principal alone. Our South African school policies' are teacher friendly and encourages teachers to take up leadership roles in their schools. I now move on to discuss what does it mean to be a teacher?.

2.3 UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF TEACHER

According to the Norms and Standard (1996) from a South African context a teacher is someone who engages in class teaching, including the academic, administrative, educational and disciplinary aspects and to organise extra and co- curricular activities so as to ensure that the education of the learner is promoted in a proper manner. Also to engage in class teaching which will foster a purposeful progression in learning and which is consistent with learning areas and programmes of subjects and grades as determined. I particularly like this concept of a teacher "To take on a leadership role in respect of the subject, learning area or phase, if required" (Norms and Standard, p. 3). This is very seldom practised in most schools because management delegates how assessments should be done for most teachers in our schools and very little freedom is given to teachers to lead within or beyond the classroom.

The Norms and Standards a policy document for teachers also stipulate that teachers should contribute to the professional development of colleagues by sharing knowledge, ideas and knowledge (Norms and Standard p. 3). Whilst still discussing the Norms and Standards for

Educators which is the ruling policy for teacher education and the recognition of qualifications for the purposes of employment in education. This policy further complicates my understanding of the role of a teacher because the phrase 'educator' includes educators in the classroom, heads of department, deputy- principals, principals and departmental officials. The homogenising of these different roles in the education system, from teachers to district managers occludes the central role of teaching in any education. The phrase 'educators in the classroom' is further frustrating which assumes that teaching takes place only inside the classroom.

According to the South African Council for Educators Act 31 0f (2000) a teacher is someone who acknowledges the noble calling of this profession to educate and train learners in our country. The attitude, dedication, self-discipline, ideals, training and conduct of the teaching profession also determines the quality of education in this country. Lastly, a teacher's behaviour should not bring the teaching profession into disrepute. I have discussed the concept of teacher and leader to some extent. I now move on to explore the term leadership more fully and what relevance it has to the term teacher and leader.

2.4 LEADERSHIP IN GENERAL

Leadership in education has generated an enormous amount of interest among researchers. Yet, despite a large research base the search for a singular theory of leadership has proved to be somewhat futile. According to Fullan (1999, cited in Coleman, 2005) the author states leadership is the ability to work in teams and the ability to develop others, having drive, confidence and vision, being accountable and ability to use influencing tactics and thinking styles. For Lazarus (1997) they define leadership as an art and that it relies on intuition and personal judgement rather than merely following established procedures. The traditional form of leadership is also evident in the work of Troen and Boles (1994) in the United States where they refer to the hierarchical nature of public schools being based on the 19th century model, with the adversarial relation of administration as management and teachers as labour. On the other hand Grant (2008) from a South African context, refers to the concept of leadership being "commonly equated with headship and often seen as the domain of the male (p. 2)". Authors such as (Barth,1990, and Senge, 1990) view leadership as 'transformational' or 'liberating'.

Leadership has been defined in several ways. Leadership as defined by Strogdill (1974, p. 41) is behaviour that causes individuals to move towards goals they find to be important and that creates in followers a sense of well-being. Building on the knowledge from these authors, I further argue that when a person is given some form of leadership duty to perform it uplifts their spirit and they tend to feel good about themselves. For Boles and Davenport, (1975, p. 45) Leadership is a process in which an individual takes initiative to assist a group to move towards goals that are acceptable, to maintain the group, and to dispose of the needs of the group. Contrasting definitions, leadership, as noticed in the definitions above, it is clear that leadership is a diversified concept. Therefore the conception of leadership is not limited to a leader's actions but also on their personality character is implied for example, in Deal's (1985) work. Deal (1985) advocates that leadership also involves a type of personality or character trait that is unique to a leader, and this view about leadership also resonates with David and Lazarus's (1997) definition. According to O' Connor (1996) leadership is the ability to present a vision so others want to follow.

For Charlton (1993) education in particular is assumed to be the process by which school managers direct and influence teachers and learners to perform educational tasks. I therefore align myself to the thinking of Charlton because school managers should direct and guide leaders in schools and not delegate tasks. The author suggests that school leadership involves competencies and processes which are required to enable and empower ordinary people to do extraordinary things in the face of adversity and to constantly turn in superior performances to the benefit of the learning organisation. Stemming from the above discussion I would argue that effective leadership and management is needed in order for schools to be run successfully. Therefore leaders create the school culture where as managers operate within the culture. Literature on educational leadership suggests that leadership in schools is not the domain reserved for school principals only but can be dispersed to all staff members in a school Grant (2007). With this view in mind I now move on to the concept of teacher leadership with more meaning and understanding

2.5 DEFINITIONS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Even now, we are a long way from a common understanding of teacher leadership. Confusions about definitions and expectations of teacher leaders abound. I believe it is largely due to the fact that the notion of teacher leadership is a relatively new concept in many countries and especially in our country like South Africa which has seen many changes

taking place because of our apartheid past. Yet the concept of teacher leadership has been established in Canada, Australia, United Kingdom and the United States for a while.

According to Wasley (1991, p. 23), teacher leadership is "the ability to encourage colleagues to change, to do the things they would not ordinarily consider without the influence of a leader". Therefore in my opinion the context in which teacher leadership is to be enacted plays a crucial role in determining whether teacher leadership can operate successfully in that school, especially if the structural, political and cultural aspects of the school does not influence it. For Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001, p. 5), "teachers who are leaders, lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others towards improved educational practice". According to Boles and Troen (1994, p. 14), these authors contrast it to the traditional notions of leadership by characterizing teacher leadership as a form of "collective leadership in which teachers develop expertise by working collaboratively". Similarly teacher leadership for Harris (2005, pp. 80-81), is "premised upon the ability to empower others to lead. It is a shared commodity owned by those who work within the school and those who work on behalf of the school".

However, I assumed that because teachers are competent in the classroom through the facilitation of student's learning, that teacher leadership was mostly confined exclusively to the classroom where the teacher's sole responsibility is to teach learners. Here, again I gained this kind of perception because of the context that I work in. This mostly occurs when the senior management team is not prepared to change and are afraid to relinquish their powers. This problem of 'letting go' is also reported by Singh (2007) who claims that in her study school management members felt that they were responsible and accountable for the running of the school and believed that promoting teacher leadership would hinder their prospects of leading. Contrary to this belief, I argue, that teacher leadership does not mean that the role of the principal and the SMT become redundant. However, it does suggest that SMT is vital in promoting teacher leadership and creating opportunities for ordinary teachers to lead. In Grant's study of eleven South African teacher's as cited in Pillay (2008), the understanding of the concept of teacher leader and its value for school transformation, it emerged that school management teams tend to "monopolise leadership roles instead of making it a collective action by all educators" (2006, p. 527). Closely linked to this thinking, some of the teachers felt the same about their school context in my research (2011) where teachers felt they were delegated into doing things and no opportunities were created for them to lead. I would strongly suggest that the task of the school management team should be, to bring about

stability and build a united workforce together in a productive relationship. Grant's writing about leadership on South African Schools during the apartheid era also reveals that leadership is to be understood in terms of position, status and authority (2006, p. 512). Whilst still within the South African context Grant (2005,p.44) is of the opinion that teacher leadership is not only restricted to the classroom but extends beyond the classroom. It therefore implies that teachers must stop focusing too much on just being classroom based leaders, but they must extend their services throughout the school. It includes teachers working collectively with all parties concerned thus promoting a culture of shared vision, mutual respect and trust within the school.

Grant (2005) concurs with Harris (2004) because research focuses too much on the principals and head teachers and tends to neglect the roles of ordinary teachers who are not in formal positions and this is where the gap in the literature lies because teachers are confined to mostly informal roles. Grant also argues that although this view is limiting and therefore its focus must be on teacher leadership the concept of teacher leadership must pave the way for teachers to lead in formal positions as well (2008b p. 416). I concur with Grant's definition because within our context the Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) clearly states that teachers should be leaders, administrators and manager. Yet, the definition of teacher leadership is not easy and there seems to be little agreement of the term teacher leadership. Research within the South African context clearly shows that leadership is still reserved for people in senior management positions. This is one of the responses of one participant on research done by Jasson (2010, p. 101) " no authority is given to teachers only the principal makes decisions, the SMT do not give teachers the opportunity to take up any leadership in the school". Judging by that statement I therefore assume that there is a need to explore why distributed leadership should be promoted in schools.

2.6 TEACHER LEADERSHIP WITHIN A DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK

For me, the concept of teacher leadership lies in the willingness and the desire for change and therefore it will contribute towards whole school development. Teacher leadership as it is described in the research literature, provides an important starting point in exploring how distributed leadership works in schools as it provides " operational images of joint agency in action and illustrates how distributed forms of leadership can be developed and enhanced to

contribute towards whole school development and improvement" (Muijs and Harris, 2003, p.440).

There are a few clear definitions of distributed leadership because it has many interpretations. Spillane, (2006) views it as having multiple leaders. For Harris (2007), it is about leadership activities that are widely shared within and between the members in the organization. This definition therefore suggests that leadership is not centred around the principal or members in formal or informal positions but that it is participatory and interactive amongst all staff members. According to Grant (2005) who is a prolific writer from a South African context she describes that "While traditional notions of leadership are premised upon an individual managing the organization alone, distributed leadership is characterized as a form of collective leadership where all people in the organization can act as a leader at one time or another" (Grant, 2005, p. 1-2). Similarly, Gronn (2000,p. 334) suggests that the orthodox way of thinking about leadership be changed with the idea that leadership is something that takes on a distributed form. Distributed leadership makes provision for the flow of influence in organizations and it distances itself from an automatic connection of leadership with headship. Distributed leadership therefore caters to a more flatter organizational structure. Timperely (2003) agrees that the idea of leadership as distributed across multiple people and situations has proven to be a useful framework for understanding the realities of school and how they might be improved.

Steyn (2000) from a South African context, discusses how empowerment and teamwork amongst staff, can have the capacity to bring about immense change in South African schools. According to Steyn quality education can only happen when teachers are totally committed and empowered, believe in themselves, are openly invited in decisions of the school and are made to feel part of the school. Steyn also admits that empowerment is not complete freedom to do as an individual or team wants and cautions that management must not assume that the staff already has the skills needed to succeed in an empowered environment. This is where the gap in the literature lies because management does not have the time, and expense required to train staff members.

 Another observation is by Mosage and van der Westhuizen (1997) who conducted research from a random sample of two hundred and sixty teachers, and forty principals in Gauteng, South Africa. In their study the teachers were asked to respond to what they liked to participate for each of the 29 management activities at their schools. The response was that

they would like to participate in every aspect of the school. Surprisingly, the study found that teachers were not allowed in management activities such as budgeting, teacher evaluation, staff development, orientation of pupils and school-policy making. This indicated that effective leadership was not being distributed in these schools. Therefore the manner in which members within the organization interact and communicate and the commitment that exists amongst them is crucial to how teachers will contribute to the school improvement Therefore, engaging many people in leadership activity is at the core of distributed leadership in action. Research has shown that arguments for distributed forms of leadership and school improvement are powerful, as noted by Mulford (2002) cited in Harris (2003) student outcomes are more likely to improve where leadership sources are distributed throughout the school community and where teachers are empowered in areas of importance to them.

Some researchers suggest that the sharing of leadership does not mean that the principal does not play an important role in the school. I therefore respect this view and it is therefore supported by Bennet ,Harvey, Wise and Woods (2003,p. 9) who propose that " the impetus for developing distributed leadership may be found in a ' top down' initiative from a strong or charismatic leader". Sometimes one needs a strong leader in a school to take the school forward and at the end of the day the principal is still the accounting officer. For Harris and Spillane (2008) these authors argue that the increased workload of leaders has made it easy to distribute leadership roles in schools. To me this could imply that some principals do not want to share leadership roles amongst the staff but are forced to do so because of their increased workload and sometimes they pass on duties that do not empower teachers as leaders but proclaim it to be shared leadership. Teacher leadership can develop naturally among professionals who learn, share, and address problems together. Therefore when teacher's engage in leadership roles especially within a distributed framing it empowers teachers to realize their professional worth while still maintaining the centrality of their teaching roles (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). I now move on to explain the term professionalism more fully.

2.7 DEFINING PROFESSIONALISM

 Professionalization is normally understood to refer to the process whereby an occupation increasingly meets the criteria attributed to a profession Hoyle, (1995). However the author suggests that professionalism has two components which may or may not be related. Put simply, these components are the improvement of status and the improvement of skill. The

author also refers to professional development as a process whereby a practitioner acquires and improves the knowledge and skill for effective professional practice. The author also cautions us that although knowledge gained through experience is important it is insufficient to meet our professional demands, therefore the practitioner has to draw on a body of systematic knowledge through a lengthy period of higher education. Fullan has similar ideas about professionalism and explains that by engaging regularly in continuous professional development is a very important commitment to learn and also regarded as essential if professionals at all levels at any organization are willing to remain up to date in their knowledge, enthusiastic about their work, self confident and clear about their purpose (Fullan, 1995, p. 265).

Perhaps it could therefore be assumed that a profession is a job that performs a crucial social function that requires a certain degree of skill and lengthy training. However, it cannot be taken as axiomatic that professionalism is invariably accompanied by professional development. It is likely to be the case that long periods of training leads to a general improvement of knowledge and skill, but (Hoyle, 1995) cautions us that the relationship cannot be guaranteed. Much will depend upon the nature of the professional development itself. The importance of professional identity has indeed been argued from various perspectives. One of these perspectives is the relationship with quality and innovation in teaching. This is underpinned by aspects of professional identity which strongly determines the way teachers teach and lead. There are various interpretations to the meaning 'professionalism'. Levine defines professionalism as "have moral structure that is meant to guide the professional's actions. Professionals must agree to uphold this moral structure" (1992, p.11). For Schon (1983) the author views professionalism as "a concept of reflection – in action, learning from one's interaction with clients. A reflective professional "gives up the reward of unquestioned authority in exchange for substantive knowledge and enters into a continuing knowledge of self-education" (Schon, 1983, p. 299). I would think that this reflective relationship resembles a typical relationship between teachers and learners. In this interaction teachers have a type of practical knowledge, a know – how that is reflected in the intelligent activities of the classroom.

However, Hoyle defines professionals as occupational groups whose members have "responsibility, client orientation, autonomy, ethical behaviour and high status" (1986, p. 80). Further the author states that a profession is an occupation which performs a crucial function, the exercise of this function requires a considerable degree of skill, and the skill is exercised

in situations which are not wholly routine, but in which new problems and situations have to be handled. I concur with most of Hoyle's definition especially ethical behaviour because just as we bring morality into our profession, we also bring a well set of prioritised values. Therefore when we speak of professional values we speak of purposes that each professional should have in common with others for example trust, respect, loyalty, honesty and commitment.

There is little doubt that teaching has increasingly met the conventional criteria of a profession. Over the recent years the following developments have occurred. The length of initial training for teachers has increased. The academic content of initial training has increased, particularly with the advent of the B. Ed. Degree. Courses in educational studies have become more academically grounded in the foundation disciplines (Hoyle, 1995). On the contrary Lindsay (1983) believes that all this definitions therefore includes teachers or educators but it does not spell out clearly as to how teachers fit into this professional status. Lindsay observed that teaching in many countries including the United States of America, India and several in Africa did not require the same level of preparation as medicine, engineering, and law except at university level. The author is of the opinion that teaching lacks the status associated with professions such as medicine and law citing reasons such as poor salaries, low socio-economic conditions status origin of those who choose teaching as a career and there are too many teachers.

School teachers also are currently faced with numerous challenges such as struggling for high salaries, too many bosses, for example, senior teacher, master teacher, senior management, principal and deputy principal and also everything is prescribed. According to Lindsay (1993) adverse conditions such as large class size and low self esteem increases the tenuousness of their claim to professional status. Troen and Boles (2005) believes it is time to look at the teacher crisis and examine why few of the academically able candidates choose teaching as career. This is particularly evident in some of our schools because if there is a vacancy in a school the department sends anybody and most of the time schools are getting teachers that do not fit the ethos and culture of the school. On the other hand research has shown that South Africa has a shortage of teachers, with few people wanting to enter a profession with bleak pay prospects. It is also failing to produce enough engineers, geologists and other professionals due to problems at its schools.

In the South African context teachers are bound by the rules of (SACE) South African Council For Educators (1996) which stipulates the conduct for educators and how they should behave within the profession. It could be said that some teachers do not understand what the term 'professionalism' means because they do not behave in an appropriate manner to fit this profession for example, reported in an article by Ngqulunga (2011) the title of this report was "why didn't this teacher help him?". It was about a little child who the teacher did not help when he was burnt at school. The teacher displayed very unprofessional qualities because she did not fulfil one of the seven roles of an educator and that was her pastoral care. She did not promote the well-being and human rights of the learner and treat him with respect and dignity. She also discarded the fact that the parent must be a partner in the school and did not conduct herself with respect and dignity. As Bruner, (1986) cited in Levine (1992, p. 53) explains that "schools must become safe comfortable places where children realize what it means to belong and contribute to the community of humankind". In my opinion teachers who display sound professional skills will therefore benefit children today and in the future through their commitment, dedication and support and also be role models to the next generation of teachers. With this view in mind I now move on to how should teachers lead as professionals?

2.8 TEACHERS AS PROFESSIONALS

The professional teacher is first of all competent in the classroom through the facilitation of student's learning and therefore a professional teacher as a leader starts with being recognized as a capable teacher with the students. Teachers can also be leaders of change beyond their classrooms by accepting more responsibilities that can benefit both the learner and the school as a whole. Troen and Boles (2005) argue that in America the quality of classroom teaching has not improved. As a matter of fact, in a study conducted by the Milken Family Foundation cited in Troen and Boles (2005, p. 22) principals reported that the quality and quantity of teacher applicants in their schools have declined and they expect the decline to be more dramatic over the next five years. These authors believe that if the teaching profession is to succeed then there must be a creation of a career ladder. They describe a career ladder as a multi-tiered structure in which different teachers have different job descriptions and responsibilities. Starting from the bottom of the ladder would have these rungs, Teaching Interns; Associate Teacher; Teachers; Professional Teachers and Chief Instructors. These authors argue that this model would not only transform the teaching profession, but create a culture in which mentoring, supervision, and professional

development are no longer 'adds- on' but integral components of a system built on power-sharing, teamwork and collaboration. Troen and Boles (2005) believe that when teaching becomes a 'real profession' more academically able people will be attracted to it and colleges and universities will be forced to improve the quality of their education and better prepared teachers would enter our classrooms. I only hope something like this can be adopted within our South African context.

Whilst within the South African context, a report by Clark (2010) mentions that many teacher colleges had to close and they have been incorporated into the universities and that universities tend to focus mainly on the academic rather than the professional aspect of 'teacher training'. The author attributes this to teachers not having enough practical experience in the classroom and being poorly prepared in the classroom. On the other hand Mngoma (2010) reports on lazy teachers, absent teachers and unproductive teachers making it very clear that the three top unions are not going to protect these guilty teachers any more. The report also claims that the Minister of Basic education blames bad teaching for the poor matric results in 2009 for example some teachers as it was reported avoided, teaching certain parts of the curriculum for example physical science and accounting. They also pointed out that approximately 1.4million pupils entered the education system in 1998 for grade one, roughly 24% successfully completed their National Senior Certificate in 2009.

Good teaching is *sine qua non* of schooling (Hoy and Hoy, 2003).These authors suggest that although there are no simple answers to what good teaching is, we know that it is anchored in expertise. Expert teachers work from integrated sets of principles instead of dealing with each new event as new problems. They have broad professional knowledge in academic subjects, teaching strategies, curriculum, student characteristics, learning contexts, teaching goals, and pedagogical content knowledge Hoy and Hoy, (2003). Perhaps these are some of the tools for probably enhancing their teaching profession.

2.9 ENHANCING TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

Teachers can build on their professionalism especially if it involves working with the staff in staff development programmes and capacity building workshops. Research by Lieberman, Saxl and Miles (1998), Steyn (2000) and Mosage et al., (1997) have found that empowering teachers, by giving them leadership roles motivated them and positively affected the way they performed in schools and at the same time boosted their confidence level. Crowther, et al., 2000) suggests that in order for teacher leaders to be successful there must be acceptance by

both the public and by the profession. In view of this statement, teachers must therefore gain the respect of the public and be proper role models and build collegial relationships within the community and if there is mutual respect, trust, commitment and care by both parties it will surely enhance the way teachers behave as professionals. In Crowther, et al's., study one principal reported that "I regard the teachers here as guardians of the culture and they take responsibility for many projects that fits the school's vision. This is so because the school's vision states that together we achieve creation of life- long learning, an enriched community with flexible pathways to the future" (2002, p. 15). It is good to notice that although principals may take the lead in cooperative and professional endeavours, in the end it is the teachers who determine their success. Above all, all teachers must communicate a clear vision of excellence and continuous professional development consistent with the goal of improving teaching and learning.

However, I believe it is the provincial education department's duty to offer the required quality curriculum and managerial infrastructure in order to adequately support schools, as well as ensuring that all department officials are competent to be able to monitor education. All teaching and learning material must be delivered on time. In-service training must be administered timeously and by competent officials. Lastly, underperforming schools and incompetent teachers must be supported and given some kind of remedial action and teachers must be paid their correct salary and on time.

Teachers must therefore remember that they are the most important asset in a school and they must therefore work at an acceptable standard at all times and create room for improvement and by always maintaining a high standard of performance at all times whether it is in the classroom or out of the classroom. It is therefore imperative that teachers should take the initiative to build team spirit, provide support and encouragement for other teachers and exercise patience and tolerance if they want to build this teaching profession for teachers to lead with pride and dignity. Let us now look at what are some of the barriers to teacher leaders and professionalism.

2.10 BARRIERS TO TEACHER LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONALISM

Whilst our focus is on promoting teacher leaders to be professional and how to behave as professionals there are a number of barriers to teacher leadership being implemented positively in schools.   Lack of time is a major barrier to teacher leadership (Leithwood 1999, Harris 2004 and Grant 2006). Goldring and Rallis (1993, p. 49) cited in Steyn (2000) suggest

that principals should revise and redesign the use of time because the time factor plays a vital role as an impediment to teachers being actively involved in professional decision making of the schools because it involves additional meetings. This also widens the gap in the literature for teachers leading as professionals from being implemented successfully.

Lieberman and Miller (2006), p. 22) also note that the reason why teachers found assuming other professional leadership roles difficult because they felt that it was extra work added to an already over-burdened curriculum and workload. I therefore agree with these authors because in some of our South African schools there is no such thing as teachers being treated as professionals because teachers are delegated to do extra work which forms part of their work. Teachers often spend time after school engaging in these activities and this discourages them from being involved in professional leadership roles like mentoring and curriculum development because they feel that it infringes on their personal time. In my personal opinion many principals in the South African schools are not very keen on teachers up grading themselves professionally and feel threatened by their achievement therefore they do not want to develop them professionally for fear of ordinary teachers knowing more than them and it is all about power and status.

The South African Schools Act (1996) and the Norms and Standard for Educators (2000) are also misleading and does not give a clear cut guide line on the roles of the SMT in promoting teacher leaders as professionals through a distributed framework and there is no clarity on how level one educators can lead beyond the classroom, because it states that teachers are leaders within the classroom. Therefore gaps exist in the literature between policy and practice on the effective development of teacher leaders and professionalism in many of our schools. Research has also shown that the unions also contribute negatively towards teacher professionalism, by calling on teachers to strike at any time, leaving our learners stranded in crucial times especially when they are writing matric exams. This attitude infuriates the public and the teaching profession comes into disrepute.

2.11 SUMMARY

In conclusion, this literature review explored definitions of leader, teacher, leadership, teacher leadership, distributed leadership and professionalism and how they are all linked together to understand the concept of teacher leaders as professionals. The different authors also discussed how professionalism is understood and especially what does this mean for teachers who are also regarded as professionals. Therefore it is very important for teacher

leaders to conduct themselves in a manner that fits the reputation of being known as a professional. Being a professional is a trained person who has the vital skills and knowledge and who is morally aware of his/her environment. Finally, this review also highlighted, the factors that promote teacher leadership and professionalism, like collaboration, shared decision, more parental involvement, support from the principal and more professional workshops for teachers to attend. Lastly, the barriers were autocratic principals, lack of involvement by parents, lack of support by other teachers, time, teacher absenteeism, and not enough workshops.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The reader now knows that the purpose of this study was to find out how teacher leaders understand professionalism, especially within the South African context in general, and in my school in particular. The purpose was to find out some of the factors that would enhance the quality of teaching and learning and in the process might promote the development of teacher leadership.

With the above aims being the focus of my study, the study aimed in answering the two research questions stated in chapter one.

The purpose of this chapter is to present a detailed description of how the study was carried out. The first part provides an explanation of the design and methodology used, as well as the justification for the methods, the research site (including access, ethical issues and sampling). The second part focused on the data collection process and techniques. In depth description of how each instrument were used are provided, together with a rationale for their use, and a critique of their effectiveness. Relevant literature was used for each method to validate and substantiate the choices made. The third part of the chapter focuses on data analysis and this is where I explain how both quantitative and qualitative data were analysed and presented. The last part of this chapter looks at trustworthiness as well as the limitations of this study.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

My research design assumed a qualitative case study format. Qualitative research according to (Litchman, 2006) mainly focuses on asking the 'Why' questions. Qualitative research typically studies people or systems by interacting and observing the participants in their natural environment, and by focusing on their meanings and interpretation (Holloway & Wheeler, 1996).Therefore in my study I employed a qualitative approach because it is concerned with describing and understanding human interactions and lived experiences. Connected to this dynamic characteristic of qualitative research is the realization that the research problem can be approached in several ways (Litchman, 2006).

There are several ways of gathering, interpreting, and acknowledging multiple realities in the findings (Creswell, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Litchman, 2006) cited in Chang (2006). Since my study is qualitative in nature, it means that the data is in a form of text and aids in describing events in social life. Thus, for this study it was necessary for me to ask the 'why' questions since I wanted to find out the teachers understanding of being professional. It does not follow a standard or empirical set of procedures (Lincoln & Guba, 2006). Thus, for this research I chose interviews and observations to facilitate the collection of qualitative data, primarily because of the freedom it allowed me to modify the interview protocols as the process unfolded.

My study falls within an interpretive paradigm. It is interpretive as it strives to comprehend how teachers in their naturalistic setting understand and respond to the concept of teacher leaders and the issue of professionalism. Doing research within this paradigm means that the researcher presents reality from the perspective of the participants being researched (Henning, 2004; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) interpretive paradigm provides relevant information to the researcher in terms of "subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind social action" (p. 6). According to this paradigm people are regarded as social beings and as such, influence one another, knowledge must be socially constructed and it changes as the life – worlds of people change (Seidman, 1998). Hence, in this study, I tried to find out how teachers understand professionalism. The participants in my study provided an in-depth description of themselves, about the factors that hindered or promoted the development of teacher leadership and professionalism based on their everyday lived experience.

3.3 METHODOLOGY

A case study was adopted as the general approach intended for this study. Anderson (1998), states that there is little agreement on what constitutes a case study. He defines a case study as a holistic research method that uses multiple sources of evidence to analyse or evaluate a particular phenomenon. It could be argued that case studies are designed for the intention of investigating viewpoints from participants using different sources of data. A case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (Creswell, 2007). Therefore my aim for using a case study was to gain an in depth and complete understanding   of the intricacies of my case under study.   In my case the teacher leaders in their natural environment had to look at the case in its' real life context. I explored the lived experiences of the five teacher leaders with

regards to their understanding professionalism. My intention was to always allow the data to speak for itself on the factors that might promote or inhibit teacher leadership and professionalism in the study.

According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999, p. 225) case studies are ''intensive investigations of particular individuals." They further add case studies are usually descriptive in nature and provide rich longitudinal information about individuals or particular situations (p. 255). For example, in this study, the school was the case and my five teacher leaders were units of analysis. Yin (1994) believes that some of the best and most famous case studies are those that have been both descriptive and exploratory. Both descriptive and exploratory fit the nature of my study hence five teachers were chosen to provide a "rich, thick, description of a phenomenon under study" (Merriam, 1998, p. 29). The aim of my study was to provide an in-depth exploration and description of the teachers' understanding of professionalism and, factors that contribute or promote teacher leadership and professionalism in their school. This case study research therefore allowed me to gain insight into the real dynamics of the participants in the study as well as the situation.

The process of conducting the study involved observations of five teacher leaders, who were also interviewed individually. They were also requested to participate in a focus group interview and questionnaires were also administered. The strengths of the case study can be viewed clearly when one looks at the various definitions by different authors. For Mouton (2004) case studies are usually qualitative in nature and therefore allows for large amounts of data. The advantage of this is that large amounts of data allows the researcher using the case study approach, to go into greater depth and get more detail on the case that is being examined (Neuman, 2000). This definition therefore relates well to my study since I was able to explore and document rigorous description of experiences, beliefs, and values of teachers about teacher leadership and professional practises in their school. For Stake (1995) a case study approach catches the complexity of a single case. Even a single case study is multiple because ideas and evidence from different participants, as in my study, can be linked in many different ways to ensure data is true, real and can be trusted. Case studies also rely on multiple sources of evidence with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion Stake (1995). Therefore this case study allowed me to generate data and insight through a thick and detailed description of the case in relation to its context.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The project was carried out over two school terms, which were the 1st and 2nd quarter of 2011. The data collection methods used were observations, questionnaires, interviews, both focus group and individual interviews. Document analysis was also included. Although my study was mainly qualitative in nature there was a quantitative dimension to it were questionnaires were used so that I could benefit from important data from different sources. I believe that these instruments for collecting data were useful for obtaining the outcomes achieved and were very effective. Observations took place throughout the research process where the five teacher leaders were observed to investigate whether they were leading as professionals in their school, and according to what they said was their understanding of professionalism. For this purpose an observation schedule which is about 'zones and roles of teacher leadership and professionalism borrowed from grant (2008) and also a rubric borrowed from Harris and Lambert (2003) was used. The next part of this section provides a detailed account of the data collection process.

3.4.1 Observation

As part of my study I felt that it was necessary to observe the teachers on how they relate to professionalism and if they were involved in leadership duties. I also made notes of what I observed them doing in the classroom, staff meetings or when they were just going about their daily activities. Unlike some of the data collection tools which were used for a stipulated time, observations were carried out throughout the research process. In my study I used participant observation as a source of data because of their contextual relevance in the immediate setting (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007). I believe observations were important in my study because I needed to view aspects with a critical eye and question some of the assumptions which I paid little attention to because I considered it to be part of my everyday job. Hargreaves (1967, p. 193) concurs with this statement and describes the advantages of participant observation as a research method for those carrying out studies in institutions in which they work.

Observations played a vital role in addressing the two key questions i.e. What are some of the factors which promote or hinder teacher leadership and professionalism in schools? And the second one how do teachers understand professionalism? The observation schedule borrowed from Harris and Lambert (2003) was particularly useful to detect activities which included leadership activities and professional matters. I also used the rubric to get in-depth

data of the activities and aspects of the school which could not be produced by other methods (Forster, 1990, p. 197). I was able to record what I was seeing first hand rather than relying on the perceptions or opinions of the participants. I believe as an observer, I was able to see what the participants could not see. One of the strengths of using observations was that it provided me with data from all members of the school. The findings which emerged from the observations helped me to make links to my other data collection instruments.

As much as observations has its strengths it can also have its limitations, as Neuman (2000, p. 209) says "Observations are inevitable filtered through the interpretative lens of the observer". For some critics their argument is that observations can never provide us exact representation of what happens in reality because the researcher will keep on interpreting what he/she observes. McMillan and Schumacher (1993) argue that this can become further complicated by the fact that an observer may select what to observe and what to record. Important data could be lost in this process. Lincoln Williams (1998, p. 136) cautions us of the possible paternalism entailed in participant observation, and "the arrogance of researcher invading another group's world to get information to relate to the outside world". I therefore had to worry about my power relations in the research arena. Lastly, observations can be very time consuming.

3.4.2 A Survey – Questionnaire

At the beginning of this study, a survey was conducted in which the questionnaire was the source of data. The questionnaire was designed for the entire teaching staff at my school. Sixteen questionnaires were administered to all teachers including the senior management team (SMT). The questionnaire was divided into three sections including closed and open-ended questions. Section A dealt with biographical information, section B dealt with teacher leadership and professionalism and section C included open – ended questions based on teacher leadership and professionalism.

In my study the open – ended questions were useful because they indicated the prevailing conditions of teacher leadership and the particular trends of teacher leadership and professionalism in my school Verma and Malik (1999). One of my reasons for using a questionnaire is that it can be administered to a large number of people (Clark, 1999). In my case I was fortunate to conduct a survey in my own school and the return rate of response was 100 percent.

According to Borg (1981) the author states that the most difficult problem in conducting a questionnaire study is to obtain a sufficient percentage of responses. The author further suggests that if this percentage is below 70 percent, for example, then little confidence can be placed in the results reported. One of the advantages of self administering the questionnaire was that I could explain the purpose of the research to the participants. Thus, in my study, the percentage of responses was positively accomplished. According to Merriam (1998) on the other hand answering the questionnaire without my presence could have posed its own problems, participants could have answered them arbitrarily, or they could have just answered assuming that was the answers I was looking for.

3.4.3 Focus Group Interview

The focus group interview was conducted towards the end of the 2nd term of 2011. According to Cohen *et al.* (2007, p. 336) focus group interviews "are contrived settings, bringing together a specifically chosen sector of the population to discuss a particular given theme or topic, where the interaction with the group lead to data and outcomes". For Powell and Single (1996, p. 231) this means that these authors share a similar view as Cohen *et al.* and define a focus group as a "group of individuals selected and assembled by a researcher to discuss and comment on, from personal experiences, the topic that is the subject of research". I believe that a focus group interview has its' benefits because especially as in my context where teachers did not feel free to engage in leadership duties, they did not feel intimidated to talk when talking in a group. On the other hand it could also have its disadvantages because sometimes the others in the group could hear what the other participants said as a group and could discuss what they said with others. In my study the focus group was chosen to get a collective view from the participants on their understanding of professionalism and how is teacher leadership practised in their school.

The five teacher leaders who were the primary participants were not very enthusiastic on being interviewed as a group and only three of the five teacher leaders were interviewed. I used a tape recorder. I also made notes so that I could later refer back to when needed. Questions that were prepared in advance were administered to the participants and they were encouraged to speak freely about their concerns on professionalism and teacher leadership in their school. From a methodological point of view, I concur with Clarke (1999) who argues that focus group interviews have the advantage over questionnaires and structured interview schedules. This is because focus group interviews allow the participants the freedom to raise

issues that are important to them, rather than responding to a set of predetermined questions. Furthermore, participants feel safer and more secure if they are with their peers. This was evident in my case study from the three who agreed to be interviewed. Clarke further suggests that this method of collecting data is inexpensive and is also an efficient way of collecting data.

3.4.4 Semi – structured individual interviews

Semi- structured individual interviews were held with the five teacher leaders during the 1st term of 2011. According to Babbie and Mouton (1998, p. 288) these authors explain that a definition of a qualitative interview as being "a conversation in which the interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation and pursues specific topics raised by the respondent". For Verma and Mallick (1999, p. 286) an interview is a "conversation between the researcher and the participant, however it is different from an everyday conversation in that the researcher is the person who sets the agenda and asks questions". In my case I was the researcher who had a conversation between myself and the participants.

The use of the semi-structured interview allowed for flexibility (Henning, 2004). Therefore in my study, if a respondent did not understand a question or required some sort of clarification then I the researcher intervened and clarified the issues that posed a problem. I believe that by using individual interviews it was a good data collection tool to find out what a participant thinks in terms of his/her beliefs and values. In my study the semi-structured interview was a good data collecting tool to find out if teachers understood professionalism because I was talking to them face to face, and I could hear and see their expressions on what they agreed and disagreed on. It also allowed me the opportunity to probe further. If I needed clarity on a certain issue I went back to the participant for further feedback.

All five interviews were conducted during non contact time with the learners. Each interview lasted about 30 to 40 minutes. Unfortunately in my case I was not allowed to use a tape recorder because I come from a small school and because of past controversies the participants felt insecure to be tape recorded for fear of being victimised. The interviews were therefore hand written which I later transcribed. Some of the interviews were conducted in the staffroom and some of the teachers chose their own classroom. While the individual interview is a good data collection tool, it has its limitations. According to Dyer (1995) power relations can influence the process of interviewing. I believe that this could have played a small part in my case, because some participant's outlook of me being the researcher in the

study changed, when being interviewed and their responses were like they were giving answers that they thought I wanted to hear.

3.4.5 Documents

I also looked at documents such as professional development circulars and unions and professional development policies. These documents aided as a data collection tool because it helped me to see if teachers understood professionalism like the way it is described in the policy document and if it is practised like that, or if policies say one thing and in practise it is something else. Document analysis can also generate a lot of data and I was able to compare some of the study from the focus group and individual interviews. I noticed that most participants had very conflicting views about their unions and professionalism. What was interesting to note was that most of the participants spoke about ethics and professionalism and some of the participants made reference to the SACE code of conduct as a document for teacher professionalism**.**

3.5. The Research site

The research site for this study was a primary school in Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu – Natal. This school was once a very prominent school and excelled academically in the past, boosting top doctors, teachers, accountants, lawyers and many more professionals. The school has all the necessary facilities of an urban school, but lacks adequate resources. This school is classified as a section 21 school because it has tarred road surfaces leading to the school and a brick building. This school could once host over a thousand students because it is a fairly large school, but now only has a roll of 450 learners. The pupil teacher ratio is manageable. This school was once a former House of Delegate school. Today the school comprises more of the African learners, but the teachers are mainly Indian. The surrounding area of the school which was once in a better position before, has now become a very poor socio-economic environment. The majority of the learners come from this environment and they do not pay school fees. Therefore the school cannot afford the necessary resources required to sustain and maintain the school like it was in the past. The government does not give the school much funding because it is classified section 21, and only section 20 schools get funding from the department because they have no tarred roads and are in the deep rural areas. The school may be situated in an urban area, but the learners are extremely poor and most of them come from dysfunctional families.

Due to the poor and low socio economic status of the surrounding community, the school has been offered a feeding scheme by the Department of education. The school comprises of one principal two Heads of Department (HOD) and 10 level one teachers, only one male teacher, no deputy principal because of our low student numbers. All the teachers are fully qualified teachers and employed permanently by the Department of education. The principal tries to maintain the school building to a required standard but gets no satisfaction because the local community are always breaking into the school.

The local community and the school do not have a very good relationship. This information has relevance to my study because in order for the school to be thriving and successful there should be a good relationship and partnership between the community and the school. As much as the principal tries to include the local community of partaking in the activities of the school they seem to display a lack of interest. According to (SACE) which serves as guidelines for the Code of Conduct on professional issues clearly stipulates that the community and school must work together as partners in education for the successful running of our schools.

The school has a well resourced library which is a big asset to the school. The school has one physical education teacher who works very tirelessly with the sport activities at the school. The medium of instruction in my school is English. Discipline and control can be very hectic sometimes because some of the learners can become very difficult because the majority of teachers are female and some of the learners tend to see them as being vulnerable. The school is fully functional and everyday is utilized to its maximum potential. Children are engaged in schoolwork everyday and make progress everyday. Despite some of its contextual problems the school's focus is on teaching and learning .Some of the teachers are actively involved in fun – raising events so that the school can raise extra money to buy the necessary equipment for normal and proper functioning of the school and for the learners.

3.5.1 Acess Issues

In order to gain access to the staff as research participants in my study, a letter requesting permission for access to the school to conduct the study was sent to the principal of the school. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) maintain that access to school can be gained through gatekeepers such as principals or other influential members of the staff. These authors also argue that social access crucially depends on establishing interpersonal trust (p. 123). In my communication book I explained the aim and nature of this study to the principal,

my identity, as well as that of the university and the contact details of my supervisor were also given to the principal. I also explained in my letter that my study was not a commission of enquiry or an evaluation of the school. I assured the principal that the identity of the school will be protected and that in no certainty that I would be using the teachers contact time with the learners to conduct my study. I promised the principal that I would not make the focus of my research to hinder the productivity of my teaching and learning in any way. The reason for the choice of site was that I teach at the same school and access would be easy for me and the participants.   According to Creswell (2007, p. 482) fieldwork means that "the researcher gathers data in a setting where the participants are located". Therefore as a full – time teacher I realised that I would not be able to go to other schools and do research because of time constraints. Besides doing research in my own school I would be in a familiar environment and I would feel more comfortable in my own school. Sometimes doing research in one's own school can have its disadvantages which I will discuss later in this chapter under limitations

3.5.2 Sampling

 According to Merriam (1998, p. 60) sampling can be defined as "the selection of research site, time, people, and events in field research". The type of sampling that I used to select my five key participants was purposive sampling which is defined by Cohen *et al*. (2007) as they state that "in purposive sampling, (often but by no means exclusively) a feature of qualitative researchers, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought" (pp. 114-115).The field of study was my own school so I could say that my sampling was both purposive and convenient

For Arsenault and Anderson (1998, p. 125) the field "is used generically in qualitative research and quite simply refers to where the phenomenon exists." I was fortunate enough because being at my own school and doing research there, I had a good understanding and perspective of the teachers that I thought would be able to answer my research question because, they have many years of teaching experience and they could also identify with the challenges in their school that prevents teacher leadership and professionalism from being developed in the school. All participants were given consent forms to participate in the study.

The five teacher leaders that I chose displayed teacher leadership skills according to Harris and Lambert (2003, p. 44). Although these teacher leaders spent most of their time in the

classroom they took on leadership roles at times where innovation and development was needed. I believed that in investigating how teachers lead in my school, contextual factors were likely to have an effect, and therefore I carefully chose my five teacher leaders to do an intensive investigation on the factors that may promote or inhibit teacher leadership and professionalism in their school. I deliberately chose these five teacher leaders because I knew that they would answer my research question. They were highly pertinent to the phenomena of my study. I chose these five teacher leaders because they were willing to participate in the research. Two were management members and three were level one teacher's. I wanted to get both their perspectives on the case under study. Besides they all had their own unique qualities about them. Therefore one of the strengths of using a case study approach was that it enabled me, the researcher to cover contextual conditions as well, because case studies are usually descriptive and detailed, with a narrow focus, combining subjective and objective data (Dyer, 1995).

3.5.3 The Participants

At the beginning of this study the participants included the entire staff during the survey stage of this research process. This was where all the teachers in the school were requested to answer the questionnaire which was about teacher leadership and professionalism. As researcher, I worked with five participants who were the primary participants in the study. I chose my participants selectively because I wanted a diverse group of teachers including members of other race groups, teachers belonging to different unions and one non union member, because I wanted my study to have a mixture of views about teacher leadership and professionalism from diverse situations. The five participants included three level one teachers and two Senior Management Team members (SMT). The reason for including two (SMT) members was, I wanted to get their view as well as level one teachers input on how teacher leadership and professionalism is understood and practised in their school. All five participants were aged between 35 and 55 years. Their experiences ranged from 12 years to 28 years. All these teachers were female. They were seasoned and qualified teachers. Further information about these teacher leaders are covered in chapter four.

3.5.4 Positionality of the Researcher

As a researcher, I am also a member of staff at the school. There were possibilities that some teachers were reluctant to go in-depth about teacher leadership and professional matters of the school for fear of me having too much knowledge about their personal thoughts about the

school. I constantly, reminded them that this is a research and is quite different from our normal usual settings at the school, this is where confidence and autonomy is very important. I assured participants that interviews will not be divulged to anyone and no one would be victimised in any way.

To further address my position as a researcher participants were interviewed individually at a time convenient to them, so others would not know who my interviewees were. I had to always adopt a neutral stance at all times and not in any way influence or manipulate the data in any way because I know the inside politics of the school. I wanted the data to speak for itself. I was also very careful of not divulging information that could bring the school into disrepute. I was also lucky that I gained the trust and respect of all participants.

3.6 ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethics according to Clarke and Dawson (1999, p.91) have traditionally been seen as a set of general principles "invariantly and validly applied to all situations". Ethical issues always played on my mind throughout my study. Cohen *et al* (2007) argue that ethical principles are mediated within different research practices and that they take on a different significance in relation to these practices. Case studies often deal with matters that are of "public interest but for which there is neither public nor scholarly right to know" (Stake, 2005 p. 459).

According to Clarke and Dawson, (1999) consent of the participants to participate in any research is vital and participants must all receive a clear explanation of what the researcher expects of them, so they can make an informed choice to participate voluntarily in the research. In my study a number of ethics were observed and guaranteed: confidentiality; anonymity; informed consent; access to transcribed scripts; permission to use a tape recorder was sought but participants wanted me to hand write the scripts for fear of them being identified on the tapes. According to Neuman (2000) the researcher must respect the autonomy of all people participating in the research. Participants were also briefed about the research task and were informed that they were at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time should they feel uncomfortable to further participate. Their confidentiality was also ensured as codes would be used instead of their names.

Whilst I was in the process of collecting data I had to make sure that my research causes no harm to the participants, to the school and to any other people. I always made sure that no physical, emotional, social or any other misfortune was caused because of my research.

Research should be of benefit, either directly to the research participant, or more broadly to other researchers or society at large (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993). I followed the ethical principles of Durrheim and Wassenaar (2001, p. 66) as autonomy, nonmaleficence and beneficence. The principle of autonomy according to Durrheim and Wassenaar (2001) entail respect of autonomy of all people participating in the research. The research should do no harm to the participants (nonmaleficence) and should be of benefit to the participant (beneficence).

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data. Sense is attempted to be made of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities. These authors are of the opinion that in qualitative data research there is no single or correct way to analyse and present qualitative data, hence one should abide by the issue of fitness for purpose. For Neuman (2000) qualitative data results heavily on interpretation and multiple interpretations can be made on one set of qualitative data. In this study the quantitative data derived from the questionnaires was captured on the SPSS system (Statistical package for the Social Science) which allowed the researcher to arrange the data in excel or word, for example, in graphs or frequency tables.

According to Fink (1995) when using a survey questionnaire as in my case, important issues need to be raised and resolved before quantitative data analysis. Some of them include the need for prior editing for each completed questionnaire, checking the missing value of data, screening the data for incorrect values if the correct response is obvious, reviewing the entire data set, and the researcher may allow corrections to be made by the respondents. The reliability of other findings was also protected to a certain extent.

Qualitative data was analysed using thematic content analysis. For Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999, p. 140) data analysis can be defined as " reading through your data repeatedly, and engaging in activities of breaking the data down (thematising and categorizing) and building it up again in novel ways (elaborating and interpreting)". In my study the themes were extracted from the different sources of data from my interviews, observations, as well as the survey and analysed through content-analysis procedures which involved analysing data into sub-topics, topic, and finally arriving at themes. These theories

were also backed up by information that was captured in documents such as professional development circulars, union and professional development policies.

The rubric borrowed from Harris and Lambert (2003) was used to categorise the different aspects of professionalism of the five teacher leaders during the observation stages. In analyzing the data I also drew on Grant's (2008) Zones and Roles model of teacher leadership to see if teachers were leading as professionals (zones 1-4) and what roles (1-6) they were performing as teacher leaders in their school. Furthermore, I wanted to develop an insight into what were the factors that promoted or inhibited teacher leadership and professionalism in this case study. The reason for the data collection was to gather evidence to support the above mentioned model of teacher leadership and professionalism.

3.8 ENSURING TRUSTWORTHINESS OF DATA

Mitchell and Jolley (2007, p. 137) describe interpretive validity as " the ability of the research to catch the meaning, interpretations, terms, intentions that situations and events (i.e. the data) have for participants themselves…."Therefore in my study the type of validity that emerged was called interpretive validity the participants in my study were asked to clarify aspects of situations or events as I did not make up my own interpretation resulted in interpretive validity. The issues of validity and reliability were provided for in the following steps of data collection i.e. observations and interviews. According to (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007) these authors suggest that the reliability in qualitative research can be addressed in many ways, one of it being the stability of observations. They further argue, that the stability of observation looks at whether the researcher would have made the same observations and interpretations of these if they had been observed at a different place or in a different time. In my study this can have some element of truth to it since the observation process was underpinned by an observation schedule which is about "Zones and roles of teacher leadership" borrowed from Grant (2008) and an observation schedule borrowed from Lambert and Harris (2003).

With regards to the individual interviews careful consideration was given to achieve greater validity because they were not taped recorded and I made sure that I transcribed every detail to the best of my ability because I did not want lose important data. The participants were also given enough time to express their views and opinions on several issues without being influenced. To achieve validity I made sure that I minimised any amounts of bias and did not impose my expectations and opinions on the participants. To further try and ensure that my

study was trustworthy, I piloted some of my instruments that I used to collect data, for example the questionnaire and observation schedule. In an attempt to reduce researcher bias and subjectivity, I adopted a multi-method approach for data collection. As mentioned earlier, my data collection techniques include survey questionnaires, individual interviews, observations, documents, focus group interviews and observations. By adopting a multi-method approach, I was able to achieve a rich description of how teachers understood professionalism within the school context.

There are other mechanisms that I used to enhance trustworthiness of my study. One of them was seeking information from different sources. In this study I also viewed professional development policies, circulars and also documents on the unions on professional development. By choosing more than one method in the study the trustworthiness of the data collected increased (Cohen Manion & Morrison, 2007). According to Searle, *et*. *al.* (2004) triangulation also aids in increasing the internal validity of the study since the richness and complexity of human behaviour is better understood from more than one standpoint, therefore it is important that I get information from different methods within the same school and different people. This was important in this study because in a case study approach one would not be able to replicate the study due to different contexts and factors and one may not generalise beyond the study. Therefore it is important for data to be accurate and reliable in order to attempt in understanding a case. Data captured must be dependable according to Henning (2004) and this required a number of checks and is achieved through triangulation.

3.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Firstly, the case study as methodology that was used in my research was chosen although I was fully aware of its challenges and limitations. For Anderson and Arsenhault (1998) these authors argue that it lacks reliability and therefore other researchers could come to different conclusions (p.159). According to Merriam (1998) the limitation of a case study, one has to be careful about is, the danger of distortion, since it is not easy to cross-check information in all cases. For Lindegger (1999) the author suggests that "there could be problems with the validity of information, causal links are difficult to test, and generalisations cannot be made from single case studies" (p. 256). I tried to be as honest as possible in my findings and allowed the data to speak for itself. I was always aware of my positionality as a researcher and did not use my power as a researcher to distort facts and remained neutral throughout my study.

Secondly, I believe participants may not have been honest enough about what was really happening in their institution for fear of being exposed or victimised even though confidentiality was guaranteed. I also believe because of my positionality of me being the researcher in my own school participants were afraid that I would somehow remember what they said in the interviews and did not want their inner thoughts and feelings about the school revealed in the future. Nevertheless, I constantly tried to assure them that their anonymity would be guaranteed and tried at all times to create and sustain trust between them and me. My own personal observer bias could have overshadowed my judgement because as a researcher researching my own school I could have deliberately selected what I wanted to observe for fear of bringing my school into disrepute.

Thirdly, because this study was confined to one school only, no external generalisation can be made on this basis but only with reference to the case itself. According to Nisbet and Watt (1974) as cited in Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) it is difficult to generalise from a small sample which is often unrepresented. For example in this case the aim was not to generalise as I cannot claim that this is how teacher leadership and professionalism is understood in other schools. Moreover, the factors that hinder or enhance teacher leadership and professionalism is context bound and what happens in one school could not be happening in other schools.

Lastly, one of my limitations was not being able to use a tape recorder during my individual interviews as I felt that I could have achieved more rich descriptive data if I used a tape recorder because I would have had direct eye contact with my participants, instead on being focused on writing all the time. (Anderson, 2001, p. 238) is of the opinion that "careful recordings and processing of interview records can enhance and encourage participation validation".

3.10 SUMMARY

In summary, this chapter has provided a detailed description of the methodology followed in carrying out the study, and I have employed various data collection methods and techniques to bring out a detailed and thick description of a case study of five teachers and their understanding and practises of teacher leadership and professionalism in their school. The findings of this study cannot be generalised owing to the uniqueness of the school and context. Sufficient data about teacher leadership and professionalism were collected for the

purpose of analysis and interpretation. In the next chapter I present and discuss the findings of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

41. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the major themes and findings, which were drawn from the different data collection techniques such as questionnaires, observations, individual interviews, focus group interviews and document analysis as outlined in the previous chapter. In presenting my findings, I use direct excerpts from the data of the five teacher leaders in this case study in order to illustrate the emerging themes and categories. I therefore merge the data analysis with the discussion of findings. The data revealed from this chapter aims to provide answers to the following key research questions:

- How is professionalism understood by teachers?
- What are the factors that promote/inhibit teacher leadership and professionalism in their school?

In this chapter I present data to provide a profile of the five teacher leaders in the study. I then move on to discuss the understanding of professionalism by the five teacher leaders in this study. Lastly, followed by a discussion on the context of the school in relation to teacher leadership and professionalism, in order to ascertain whether it hindered or enhanced their professional development in this study

In this chapter I use the following key pseudonyms to indicate the source of the evidence that were assimilated during the research process.

Individual interviews (II).

Focus Group Interviews (FGI)

Observation O

Survey Questionnaire (Q)

Teacher leader TL1 - Rose

Teacher leader TL2 - Buttercup

Teacher leader TL3 - Snapdragon

Teacher leader TL4 - Orchid

Teacher leader TL5 - Sunflower

Researcher   R

Documents: D

4.2 PROFILES OF FIVE TEACHER LEADERS IN THE STUDY

In this section I present my five teacher leaders by discussing their personal attributes as well as their character traits highlighting their uniqueness in this study.

4.2.1: Teacher leader 1: Rose

Rose is a 37 year old female with a degree in Education. She has 15 years of teaching experience. In her introduction of background history she indicated that her "*father was a teacher and that she liked the idea of being a teacher one day, always wanted to be a librarian but was inspired to become* a *teacher'* (II, p. 1). Rose is committed to teaching and is very compassionate towards her learner's which was evident in my observation. Rose bought T shirts and shirts for the learner during the school concert (O, 07/07/11). When she was asked why does she always buy clothes for the learners? Her response was that "*the learners are poor and cannot afford to buy it on their own so I do not mind buying it for them*" (O, 8/07/11). Her commitment towards her learners is reinforced in Leithwood and Jantzi's (1997) argument where these authors indicate that being committed to one's school, profession and welfare to the students is one of the frequently identified character traits of a teacher leader. Roses' commitment to the welfare of the learner is in line with one of the seven roles of a teacher and this one being 'pastoral care' which Rose is passionate about.

At the time of research, Rose was also studying towards a Bachelor of Honours Degree in Leadership and Management. When she was asked if she considers herself to be a teacher leader? She highlighted that "*Yes, I consider myself to be a teacher leader, I am more privileged because I understand the* term *teacher leader more clearly because of my studying. I am involved in leadership duties such as doing the assembly roster, planning assemblies and being in charge of the IQMS* " (Integrated Quality Management Systems record) (II, p. 1).Rose demonstrates a sense of dedication to her profession because when asked about what is her personal view on teachers given incentives to perform leadership duties in school, her response was as follows:

" I think that if you are a teacher you know what comes with the job and you do not have to be given incentives to do anything. To me incentives implies doing something only because of the incentives. I therefore disagree because I feel they are only doing it for the gain that they will get and not for the true spirit of performing any duty" (II, p. 1).

Rose previously taught at a (FET) college Further Education and Training college before moving to her present school. She has majored in English. Teaching English is her strong point which was evident in some of the learners in her school who represented the school in numerous speech contests and have done fairly well considering the fact that English is not their first language.

Learners did not find it difficult to approach Rose when they had personal problems they were at ease with her because she was a kind and caring person. My observation of Rose was that although she is kind towards her learners she is also very strict with discipline issues in the classroom (O, 12/5/11). Recently Rose was struggling to instil a culture of learning amongst her learners because of the poor attendance of some teachers. When asked how she was coping when classes are combined she had this to say:

"With so many teachers absent I can hardly cope, learners are behaving very badly and disrupt my classes. Some of them are rude and arrogant. Sometimes I feel so helpless and just want to cry*, some people just do not have a conscience. Where is their obligation to be at school?"* (O, 10/8/11).

However, her sentiments for teaching did not change and she is still caring and kind towards her learners despite her challenges. My observation of Rose and the way she conducted herself with her learners made them feel respected and loved and she also adds value to their lives (O,13/08/11,).

Rose is a humorous person who is always laughing and friendly towards her colleagues and other staff members. My observation of Rose also shows that she is not only caring and kind towards the learners but also runs errands for the school. Upon being asked to deliver things to other schools or purchase something or give a teacher or student a lift to another school she is ever so willing and she even gives colleagues a lift home if they do not have transport (O, 09/07/11). These are some of the fine attributes that Rose possessed.

4.2.2: Teacher Leader 2: The Buttercup

Buttercup is a 45 year old female who has been teaching for about 20 years. She has an honours degree in Education. When asked why she chose teaching as a carrier, she responded by saying: *"To spite my father because he wanted me to become a pharmacist"* (II, p. 1). She later went on to say *" I like the joy of interacting with the children and also to be given the opportunity to educate the future generation, also to place more emphasis on education and felt that I needed to make a contribution"* (II, p. 1). Buttercup worked collaboratively with other teachers in the school. She believed that for effective teaching and learning to take place all members of staff must work as a team. She displays strong leadership qualities and classroom related skills. Whenever any teacher had a problem with a learner they referred badly behaved learners to Buttercup because she had an assertive and strict way of disciplining the learners (O,10/10/11). My on- going observation of Buttercup was that she commands respect from the learners and no learner in the school would dare try to disrespect her.

Buttercup encourages staff members to participate in the activities of the school. This is exemplified in her response, when asked what her opinion was on teachers given incentives to perform leadership duties in school?

"I believe given incentives has it's pros and cons. The advantages are that teachers will be more willing to participate in leadership duties despite the position they hold. They will also acquire the necessary skills by performing these roles. Time-off would be a form of positive reinforcement and this would also make the educator accountable" (II, p. 1).

Buttercup therefore believes that if teachers are given incentives they will be motivated to be involved in activities of the school especially when teachers complain of the lack of time to engage in leadership duties. This is in line with Harris and Lambert (2003) who argue that teacher leaders can still remain optimistic in the face of adversity and they need not be in a formal position in the school if they are to generate development, change and improvement. My observation of Buttercup's approach was that being part of management does not make her any different to normal level one teacher's because she enjoys the support of level one teacher's. She is always laughing and talking on a friendly basis with all staff members (O, 10/10/11).

Buttercup is a dedicated and motivated teacher who has an excellent record of attending school regularly. She does things to benefit the learners as well as the staff. My observation of Buttercup during library lessons were that she always instilled the importance of reading and what the value of reading has on a person (O, 10/9/11). Because Buttercup is such a strict disciplinarian, the learners in her class make sure that they do their homework and all their projects because they do not like to be detained. However, she does not get the support of the parents of the learners which has been the main source of failure with parents not being involved in their children's work and their welfare. When she calls for parents concerning their work or discipline parents would not attend. When asked why parents do not come to school when requested too her response was *"parents just use our school as a dumping ground for their children because they are not involved in their lives. We have to be their nannies, mothers, teachers, social workers etc."* (II p.2).

Buttercup gets irritated with some of the parents when they suggest that she hit their children when they misbehave because she knows that corporal punishment is not allowed and against our policies. The data shows that Buttercup adheres to school policies diligently especially if it is going to benefit the learner. Leithwood and Jantzi (1997) believe that communication and problem solving skills were important in their study of character traits of teacher leaders. These skills were evident in Buttercup despite the challenges she had to face because she believes that there are many ways to solve a problem and open communication is one of them. Buttercup also mentioned this in her interview *" A leader is someone who is a role model, and being a leader myself, I have to distinguish what is right and what is wrong other wise I would send the wrong signal to the learners"* (II. P. 1).

4.2.3: Teacher leader 3: The Snapdragon

Snapdragon is a 48 year old female and she has twenty years of teaching experience. She has a diploma in education. When asked why she chose teaching as a profession? Her response was "*Well, during the apartheid era it was 'thee' profession. I had no choice at that time because in those days the only thing for a black person was to become a policeman, nurse or teacher, there were no other opportunities*" (II, p. 1). Snapdragon takes a lot of pride in her learning environment and is very up to date on professional matters and creates a stimulating atmosphere in her classroom. School improvement, according to Coleman (2003) is "associated with what is going on in an individual institution and relies on the professional experience of its teachers to identify a focus for improvement of that institution". This is also

in line with the views of Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) who believe that teacher leaders must possess the required knowledge and skills for planned improvement. From my observation I have noticed that Snapdragon is well geared with department policies because at staff meetings she seemed to know all the policies on professional and curriculum related matters (O, 5/9/11).

Snapdragon was portrayed however as a rebel because she is daring and breaks boundaries if she does not get the attention she deserves. When asked if she considers herself to be a teacher leader she had this to say:

 "*Yes, I consider myself to be a teacher leader because in my previous school I used to do a lot of leadership duties like taking charge if the principal is not there, and you were free to do whatever you liked no one will tell you what to do, you do it because you are happy to do things for the school. Not in this school I would not even call it a school I would rather say this place you are bullied into doing things. In this place you are not allowed to lead*" (II, p. 1).

 Snapdragon is not afraid to take risks and displays the role of a risk taker. During my observation of Snapdragon I have noticed her walk out of staff meetings if it exceeds time unnecessarily. When asked why she does that? She would say " *because it just wastes the teachers time. It is some sort of punishment for the teachers for the principal to use his power to oppress the teachers and what nonsense this is when there is no rising time*" (O, 10/05/110). For Lieberman, Saxl and Miles (1988), the characteristics of a teacher leader includes taking risks. Her leadership was about taking calculated risks. Let me explain what I mean by the last comment, with an example. Snapdragon attended numerous workshops with out the knowledge of the principal or (SMT) Senior Management Team, and was clearly told not to. She disregarded the principals' instructions and authority. She said:

 "*I needed to empower myself and the learner because in this school teachers are not encouraged to attend workshops and are also denied the opportunity of going to workshops to gain the necessary skills and knowledge.*"(II, p.1). From the data it could suggest that the reason Snapdragon was rebellious and took calculated risks is, because she wanted to make her thinking and actions visible and known to management.

Snapdragon is also involved in union matters and informs the staff promptly on matters relating to union issues. When she was asked what she thinks about teachers given incentives

to perform leadership duties? This was her response *"I believe that this is long overdue. We are doing something we are not even supposed to do for, example we are always busy with admin work and cannot pay attention to the more important things. We should be given overtime if we work for more than 7 hours, according to the labour Relations Act that is overtime. Here we are always working extra hours because of the poor management by the principal who has no leadership skills"* (II, p. 1).

From the data it could be argued that Snapdragon believes that teachers should be given incentives for leadership duties because teachers are not only teaching the learners but are also doing administrative work which should be done by the clerks in the office. She also suggested that if teachers work for more than 7 hours then that is over time. The National Education Policy Act of (1996) clearly stipulates the minimum number of hours per day which teachers should teach for. The data shows that because of the poor leadership by the principal. Teachers do not want to engage in leadership activities because most of the time they are being forced to engage in activities after their teaching time. Therefore Snapdragon believes if incentives are offered teachers will be more willing to get involved in leadership activities at the school. She then commented: *"The principal would not make us work extra hours because he would be afraid of us getting any incentives and then he would make sure the clerks do their work"* (II, p. 1).

4.2.4: Teacher Leader 4: The Orchid

Orchid is a 52 year old female who is married with three children. She has been teaching for over 30 years. When she was asked why she chose teaching as a profession? Her response was that *"because of my love for children. I have been in admin for many years but my only satisfaction came when I started teaching because this is where my passion is. I am very passionate about children especially working with underprivileged children. I am blessed and therefore I want to give back to the less fortunate that is why I chose this school"* (II, p. 1). When Orchid came into the school she had to go and teach in a classroom that was not conducive for little learners. The atmosphere was cold and unfriendly for our young learners. She spent many hours after school and even on weekends trying to create a stimulating and learner centred environment (O, 09/03/11). My observation of Orchid was that she is a very resourceful teacher for example, making her own booklets for her children, always cooking nutritious meals for the learners, painting her classroom with her own money and sewing outfits for the learners for their graduations and concerts all this at her own expense (O, 1st

quarter 2011). Orchid portrayed strong leadership skills in her class and was always in control and managed her class effectively (O, 12/7/11). The data therefore revealed that Orchid possessed current knowledge and information about teaching and learning. She also communicated effectively with staff members in the school. She also portrayed skills such as "self-motivation, communication, problem solving, decision making, committed and dedicated' (O, 1st quarter 2011). Some of these skills can be referred to by Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999) as 'procedural skills" because it refers to the Knowledge one has in order to carry out leadership duties. These skills were noticed in Orchid because she was not afraid to tackle any situation in the school even if it mean't demanding to see the principal if it affected her teaching and learning (O,10/07/2011). This can be exemplified from this response by Orchid when she was asked whether she sees herself as a teacher leader? She responded:

 " *Yes, I consider myself to be a teacher leader because I do not wait for someone to tell me to take charge I always do what I must especially if it is to benefit the learner or school. You do know me very well and I am not lying when I say that I take charge no matter whose toes I am tramping, I make sure I get the job done. I initiated fund-raises managed my own graduations and sports and many more you know I am not lying you witnessed many of it, so, yes, I consider myself to be a strong teacher leader if that is what it means" (II, p. 1).*

For Orchid being a teacher leader does not mean one has to occupy a particular position in the hierarchy. Instead she believed that leaders must develop the institution through their leadership practice which would improve teaching and learning and lead the school to becoming a 'learning organization" (Senge, 1990).

4.2.5: Teacher Leader 5: The Sunflower

Sunflower is a 52 year old female teaching for over 30 years. When she was asked why she chose teaching as a profession? "*She said that I did not choose teaching as a profession. I wanted to become a journalist and because I came from a poor background I had no fees to pay, the reason I was forced to take up teaching because it was offering a bursary to study*" (II, p. 1). My observation of Sunflower was that she is always busy with administration work. In staff meetings she was always taking down minutes. Very often she would send a learner with some administration work for the teachers to do. It is either filling in learner attendance statistics, sending for register statistics, race statistics or nutrition statistics. This is how

Sunflower earned the name the administrator (my name) (O, 1st,2nd,3rd quarter 2011).When Sunflower was asked if she considers herself to be a teacher leader? Her response was:

"Yes, I consider myself to be a teacher leader. As management I perform numerous management and leadership duties. When the principal is not at school I am always acting in charge. I in fact run so many duties in this school and most of the time many are not even my job to do. I am constantly busy plus I also have a form class and it is very tiring, I hardly have any free time to do other things" (II, p. 1*).*

The data from the study reflected that Sunflower was a very busy teacher who worked very hard in the school making sure that all the administration work is up to date and ready for the department, teachers and management. She worked according to the rules of the school and Department of Education without questioning.

My observation of Sunflower was that she attends school regularly and is always prompt at school (O, 1st,2nd,3rd quarter 2011). When Sunflower was asked what is her personal view on teachers given incentives to perform leadership duties in school? This was her response:

" People have been given incentives by the Department of Education where they are classified as Senior teacher, Master teacher and they also earn more than a HOD, so in my opinion if they are getting the wage then they must also do the job. The PPN is another problem. It demotivates us because of the PPN there are few human resources and we still carry the load of the absent teachers. Maybe incentives should be given for teachers like me because I work really hard and the lazy ones are the ones who get the incentives to motivate them. That is unfair" (II, p. 2).

This comment made by Sunflower is in line with Smylie (1995) in which the author states that incentives must be given to the most able and talented teachers because it would enhance the performances of practising teachers. In the next section I move on to demonstrate an understanding of professionalism by the five teacher leaders in this study.

4.3: UNDERSTANDING PROFESSIONALISM

In this section I discuss and describe how the five teacher leaders understood professionalism. The participants provided the reader with the background information to understand the concept of professionalism and what it means to be a professional.

4.3.1: Rose's: Understanding of professionalism

When Rose was asked what does it mean to be professional? This was her response " I *believe it is how teachers behave and the way teachers carry out their day to day work* (II, p. 1) During the individual interview she stated:

"that professionalism means the training of a person because it is for the moulding of our young learners. If you are not properly trained how are you *going to impart knowledge into our learners. In the teaching profession teachers spend many years training for it and at the end of that training they should know what they are doing in the classroom. Therefore teaching is a profession, because you cannot go and stand in front of the class and just teach when you do not know anything yourself, you must be equipped with the necessary knowledge"* (II, p. 1).

For her the understanding of professionalism is in line with one of Hoyle's (1982) description of a profession in which the author states that members of a profession should master the basic knowledge, information, skills and theories that constitutes the professions knowledge base.

Rose believed that the way teachers behave in a school context is very important for modelling good behaviour and professionalism, and this can provide professional growth by making a difference through their actions. This was exemplified by remarks reflected in her individual interview. When asked how does your union help you to develop professionally? She responded:

"when the union is having meetings during teaching and learning times I do not know what to do, on the one hand I want to go and hear what the union is saying and on the other hand I do not want to leave my learners unattended and alone. Therefore I now joined a union that does not use the learner's time. In fact, the previous union did nothing to develop me professionally only to call me a 'gundaan' (rat) if I do not go on strike" (II, p. 2).

This quotation indicated that her thinking is in line with Fullan (1995) when he states that in order to continue professional development teachers must be enthusiastic about their work and the students they teach, self confidant and clear about their purposes.

During my observation of Rose in the classroom, around the school and in staff meetings, I observed her working collaboratively with others. I also noticed that she is a competent

teacher in the classroom and she can transfer those classroom skills to her work with her peers (observation notes 1ˢᵗ quarter 2011). In addition, the data from the individual interview endorsed my own understanding of professionalism when she said that *"teachers are responsible for the moulding of our young learners and therefore they are trained to impart the appropriate skills in our learners "* (II, p. 1). This statement also reinforces the message that our president Jacob Zuma told to his party members The African national Congress (ANC) in October (2010) " teachers must be in school, in class, on time, teaching for at least seven hours a day".

4.3.2: Buttercup's: Understanding of Professionalism

When Buttercup was asked what does it mean to be professional? This, was her response she understood professionalism to be:

 "Bound by specific codes of ethics which in this regard is registered by (SACE), South African Council for Educators. Teachers must behave in a certain manner and be trained for a specific time. They must also have the necessary skills, knowledge and methodology if they want to impart information to learners" (II, p. 1).

This is in line with Radomski's (1986) discussion on professionalism when the author explains that members of a profession should be encouraged to help shape or clarify the professional mission. . Therefore Buttercup believes that all members of a profession must be able to identify with educational issues and be able to define its purpose, goals and learning outcomes for the learners. This was exemplified in her response to this question when asked how does she use her power as a professional to transform her school into a socially just space for teaching and learning? This was her response:

  "As a member of management I ensure that all teachers are treated fairly. I operate on an open door policy where everyone has an opportunity to discuss issues freely. There is no discrimination and I make sure that there is no discrimination at all levels whether it is the staff or learners. Everyone is given equal opportunities. I promote diversity and a multicultural school. I also believe that to be a *professional the most important issue is your moral behaviour and ethical practice and the way you behave in public increases the status of this profession, especially amongst the parents."* (II, p.1).

The latter part therefore has relevance to what Hoyle (1982) explains about ethical practice when the author states that the employee should be very mindful of the people it employs to

work with our young children. During my observation of Buttercup with regards to professionalism I believe she perceives herself to be a leader who takes professional matters seriously. She keeps abreast with professional matters by referring to policies that deal with professionalism. At staff meetings she makes   it known about some of the attitudes and behaviour of some of the teachers and also on their classroom management (O, 24/08 11). According to my observation of Buttercup (O, 27/ 01 /11) she has now joined a new union and when asked how does her union help her to develop professionally? This was her response *"my new union hold professional workshops, members of this union assists with professional matters and union adheres to a strict code of conduct, so professionally one cannot go out of hand. Does not intimidate me and respect, my views and opinions"* (II, p. 1)

Buttercup also believed to understand professionalism you have to develop a range of skills. The following quotation attests to this: "*Through my experience of being part of management I have gained many skills, eg. Managing student's behaviour, gaining knowledge about the type of workers employed in the school, how to manage the curriculum, moderating assessments, attending workshops, helping teachers with appropriate methods to suit the class with regards to teaching and learning, and lastly being a positive role model*". This is in line with Zimpher (1988) where the author emphasizes the importance of having the capacity to solve problems. "While members of a profession need to be able to cope with the uncertainty and ambiguity, they must also be adept at knowing theories from their profession's knowledge base to deal effectively with day to day problems" (p. 54).

4.3.3: Snapdragon's: Understanding of Professionalism

Data revealed that Snapdragon has her own way of dealing with situations which included working individually or against the rules and regulations of the school and department of education. When asked what does she think about her understanding of professionalism? This was her remark "*You have to be trained to be a professional, you cannot take someone from behind the door and put them in the classroom. Also how you act in the school?*" (II, p 1). My observation of Snapdragon was that she was always very dedicated to her professional obligations to her union but did not show the same commitment to some of her school commitments (O, 7/7/11). Every year Snapdragon would not attend a single function of the school for example the school concerts. This could be largely due to the fact that she wanted the principal to know how she felt about certain matters that pertain to her. Also my on-going observation of Snapdragon was that she did not attend school regularly. I believe this could

be her way to be noticed (O 1st, 2nd,3rd quarter, 2011). In contrast to the behaviour of Snapdragon Pounder (2006) believes that the professional characteristics of teacher leaders include supporting pupils, exhibiting self confidence, fairness, respecting others, setting targets and stretching performances, as well as holding people accountable for their own learning and actions. Some of these characteristics are not reflected in Snapdragon therefore I labelled her as the rebel it is either her way or no way.

When Snapdragon was asked how does she use her power as a professional to transform her school? This was her response:

"In this school *you have no powers so how can I transform my school in anyway. In this school the only thing is to fight with the SMT. In my other school I exercised my power to transform my school so as an educator I do have powers to transform, but not in this particular school. In this school the principal is the only one with all the power and by the way he does nothing for this school. That is why it is the way it is. I feel sorry for all the learners and the teachers here, in fact everyone who comes here to work" (II, p. 2).*

To me this data indicated that there was no culture of collaboration and the staff were not working freely and were being oppressed by another. As a result teachers were unable to take up professional leadership roles. This is in contrast as to how Grant (2006) views teacher leaders in which she states that teachers must work with other practitioners in team teaching and participate in decision- making without fear. Snapdragon suggested that to understand professional matters better both teachers and management must understand their job description more and continue to improve learner performance, especially the principal according to Snapdragon who lacks professionalism (II. P. 1).

4.3.4: Orchid's: Understanding of Professionalism

When Orchid was asked what was her understanding of professionalism? This was her response:

" *I would suggest to be a professional your behaviour is very important and to behave in a certain manner you must behave as a professional in school and out of school. Teaching was once a noble profession I only hope it comes back to that. To me teaching is still a noble profession and today no way would someone thank you for what you are doing, for one to be in the teaching profession you have to have passion and commitment"* (II, p. 1*).*

During my observation of Orchid I noticed that she was hard working and passionate about her learners, caring about their welfare and making home visits to ensure the information she received about her learners were true (O, 20/9/11). Orchid believes that to be a professional you have to be a good leader and a role model for others to follow and lead by example (II, p. 1). This is in line with Mooney (1994) cited in Katzenmeyer and Moller, that professional teacher leaders are" hardworking, involved with innovations, motivating to students from a variety of abilities and available to other teachers" (2001, p. 8). Orchid exemplifies all these qualities.

When Orchid was asked this question: How can you use your power as a professional to transform your school into a socially just space for teaching and learning? This was her response:

" *When I first came into this school I managed to get parents visiting the classrooms which is not a norm in this school. I brought in a partnership between teachers and parents and the child. There is now more contact between parents and school rather than children taking notes home. Parents feel much more welcome than previously. I also managed to get the principal into my classroom to listen to the pupils and boost their ego. I am also in charge of the social committee club and I also make sure that all the staff came to the staff functions unless they have a very valid reason. In the past teachers were not encouraged to collaborate together, but now that I am here teachers are working together and going out to staff functions. My concern and it also limits my efforts is the principal does not want to direct any conversation with regards to transforming the school and making it a better place. For example, maintenance etc. the mere fact is that all things must go via the HOD. You cannot make a good judgement or decision on your own and by the time it reaches him most of the information is distorted and he will never make room for you and is always busy to see you. I requested for a social to take place on a Wednesday as part of professional development, before it can go higher, the principal did not agree*"(II,p. 1).

This remark really emphasized that Orchid understood professionalism to be leadership beyond the classroom as an extended professional - like trying to bring people together, having a vision for the school and engaging the community at large. Orchid's character traits are similar to how one principal in Crowther, et., al's., study preferred and allowed the teachers to be in the school and this is how the principal reported " I regard the teachers here as guardians of the culture and they take responsibility for many procedures that fills the

school's vision. This is so because the school's vision states that together we achieve creation of life -long learning, an enriched community with flexible pathways to the future (2002, p. 15). Evidence from the data suggested that Orchid's context was different and it did not support a culture of working together. My observation of Orchid was that she did not belong to any union but commented that *"the unions did help her in the past when she had problems. I am not happy when the union uses the learner's time to go and strike"* (II, p.2).

4.3.5: Sunflower's: Understanding of Professionalism

When Sunflower was asked how does she understand professionalism? This was her response:

"People must be adequately trained, if you failed the practical aspect in the past you could not become a teacher. Understanding professionalism also means having morals and values. At one stage teaching was a real profession but now unfortunately and the crisis situation that teaching is in now I would say it is like any other job. It is because of the kind of people we are getting into this profession. The practical emphasis is very important with the theory aspect and it should still be practised today with a well appointed lecturer.(II. P. 1)

When Sunflower was asked what does she mean by practical emphasis? Her response was:

"The teachers we are getting nowadays are useless in the class. They do not know how to apply themselves in the classroom." It is unbelievable in the foundation phase what kind of learners we are teaching today, they have no morals and values, it is now the teacher's problem to teach morals and values and to rectify children's behaviour. It was never like this. In the past children knew their place in the school. Today in this profession you cannot discipline a child because you would be taken up for human violations if you try to rectify that child's behaviour" (II, p. 1).

Sunflower's understanding of professionalism is in line Hoyle (1981) where the author states that, "systematic training must exist to ensure that members of a profession learn the knowledge base and techniques to the profession, both before they begin work and throughout their involvement in the profession. A variety of instructional formats can be used for training, such as internships, fieldwork, in-service training, workshops, professional literature and conferences" (Hoyle, p. 21).

When Sunflower was asked how can she use her power as a professional to transform her school into a socially just space for teaching and learning? This was her response:

"*autocratic head- always undermining your ability and input or ideas. Sometimes you may have magnificent ideas but you are closed down so how am I expected to use my power to transform my school. I must admit that I am still a transformer because most of the time I am the one who gets the sponsors for the learners to get uniforms, jerseys, shoes, and sometimes meals sponsored for the learners at least here I use my powers. Basically in our school it is the principal's way or no way. You can call anybody the union, the department etc, to no avail. Limited power management has to follow the leader. You lose interest in activities in the school no co-operation. Principal is not a democratic leader is someone who dictates. No co-operation by both the learners and the teachers*" (II, p. 2).

The data indicated that there was a need to build capacity among teachers so that they can gain self-confidence to act as leaders in their own school. Sunflower's comment is in line with Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) who believe that the success or failure of teacher leadership and professionalism within a school can be also be influenced by factors of an interpersonal nature, for example relationships with other teachers and management. The data revealed that Sunflower felt limited and restricted in using her powers as a professional, although being part of management because it was always the principal's way or no way. From the data provided, it is clear that Sunflower understood professionalism to be professional development that was required by both the teachers and the principal so that they would be able to understand their job more and continuously improve their own performance and as well as learner performance. When Sunflower was asked how does her union help her to develop professionally? This was her response *" unions are empowered to facilitate, and they also empower others by facilitating workshops and 6providing correspondence but now they are getting hungry for power and are not working in the people's interest anymore*" (II, p. 2). Having presented the profile of each teacher leader and having discussed their understanding of professionalism, I will now move on to discuss what were some of the themes that emerged in terms of their understanding of professionalism.

4.4 THEMES THAT EMANATED FROM THIS STUDY IN UNDERSTANDING PROFESSIONALISM

4.4.1 In this section the themes such as training, skills and knowledge, methodology, role models parental involvement, unions, ethics of caring and love and moral values by teachers stood out as attributes to be professional by the five teacher leaders in this study.

4.4.1.1 Training

From across the data it emerged that teacher leaders viewed to be appropriately trained was the most important factor in determining professionalism. Survey results also indicated that 100% of the teachers agreed that teaching is a profession that requires skill and appropriate training. As Snapdragon put it very clearly by stating that " *you cannot take someone from behind the door and just put them to teach in front of the class you have to have the appropriate training for it*" (II, p. 1) . This sentiment was echoed by all the teacher leaders in the study which was evident from the data in their individual interviews. This kind of thinking is in line with Hoyle (1982, p. 22) in which the author states that "although knowledge gained through experience is important this recipe knowledge is insufficient to meet the professional demands and one has to draw on a body of systematic knowledge. Therefore to develop these specific skills requires a lengthy period of higher education. This period of education and training also involves the process of socialization into professional values. In other words lengthy training, responsibility and client – centredness are necessarily rewarded by high prestige and a high level of remuneration which depicts a professional.

4.4.1.2 Skills and Knowledge

A profession is an occupation which performs a crucial social function. Therefore the exercise of this function requires a considerable degree of skill. From across the data it emerged that skills and knowledge played a crucial part in imparting knowledge to our learners. This was exemplified by the remark made by Buttercup *"one must have the right skills and knowledge to impart to our learner in order for our learners to be successful"*. (II, p. 1). This statement was also mentioned by Rose and Sunflower (II, p.1). When asked why skills and knowledge is very important. This was the response of Sunflower *" Teacher's are coming into the system and do not know anything. The department just sends anybody to the school. Schools have no control of who is employed in the school. When there is a vacancy anybody is just sent and we have to just put up with their inefficiency"* (FG. p. 1)   Radomski

(1986) believes that members of a profession should master the basic knowledge, information, skills, and theories that constitute the profession's knowledge base. On the other hand Hoyle (1982) believes that if teacher's acquire and improve their knowledge and skill that is required for effective teaching and learning it would benefit the learner. This is in line with the thinking of most of the teacher leaders with regards to professionals having the appropriate skills and knowledge. Survey results showed that 100% of the teachers agreed that teachers are professional if they promoted the ongoing development of the teaching profession.

4.4.1.3 Approaches to Teaching

Buttercup believes that your methods and approach to teaching is important when understanding professionalism. This was exemplified in her comment when interviewed *" I work on an open door policy I include all staff members in decision making. I do not discriminate whether it is teacher or learner. I treat everyone fairly and I am a democratic le*ader *and I am also well clued up on curriculum matters and policy development* (II.p. 1). This is in line with Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) who state that "teacher leaders thrive in professional learning communities that exhibit these attributes for example, supportive, shared values and vision, collective learning, supportive practices and shared personal practice. Sunflower was very vocal in her interview about the practical approach to teaching. She stated that practical knowledge must include new strategies and as well as how to apply them in the classroom is vital to understanding professionalism. This was her response *"Today the teacher's come into the classroom and they do not know how to teach what strategies to use and they have no technique to teach some of them are useless"*. Hoyle (1982) believes that some credential should be used to assess each individual with regards to work performance. Then to license or credential those who perform competently according to criteria developed by the profession.

4.4.1.4: Role Models

From across the data all teacher leaders revealed the way one behaves and acts in the school is very important in understanding professionalism for example Sunflower made this comment "some of the teachers do not know how to behave in the school and their dressing is inappropriate for a professional, further more the language they use to communicate to the learners is not in line with how a teacher should behave (O p.1). For Rose morals and values is a must to be professional. This was her response. " *Some teachers have no morals and*

*values because they do not value their learners that is why they are absent so often where is their moral obligation to be at school.?"(*II, p. 1*). During the interview with Buttercup she said *"One must be a positive role model in the school so that our learners can emulate from*" (II, p. 1). With regards to the statement about teacher leaders being poor role models Radomski (1986) believes that each profession should have penalties like suspension, or terminology of one's right to practice. It should be levied against members of a profession who are incompetent or who fail to act in accordance with the standards of ethical practice. This is also in line with The South African Council for Educators (SACE) which is responsible for enforcing a code of conduct for teachers. Evidence from the survey also indicated that the majority of teachers agreed that teachers are regarded as professionals, if they portrayed manners that are respectful to the values, customs and norms of the community.

4.4.1.5: Parental Involvement

From across the data the five teacher leaders believed that there must be more parental involvement with regards to the professional development of teaching and learning. This study uncovered that on a number of occasions all the teacher leaders in this study had experiences where parents showed no interest in their children's work or welfare. Some of the teacher leaders believed that in understanding professionalism it must also include the involvement of parents. According to the SACE which serves as a guideline for the professional development of teachers, it requires that both teachers and parents should work together side by side on professional related matters concerning teaching and learning. Furthermore the study uncovered that the entire staff was concerned about the lack of parental support. The study revealed that lack of parental involvement adversely affected any form of leadership and professional development initiatives.

4.4.1.6: Care Giving

The study also uncovered to be professional you must also be caring. Sunflower believes to understand professionalism one must have a caring and kind heart. Orchid believes a professional must be passionate and committed to their job. This was exemplified in the comment made by Sunflower *" I am always getting sponsors for jersey, shoes, uniforms and blankets for our learners"* (II, p. 1). Rose believes a professional must have compassion (O, 11/07/ 2011). It was evident from the data that most of the teacher leaders understand professionalism to be also associated with love and caring. Orchid*'s response "I always make*

home visits to ensure that my learners are living properly" (II, p. 1). This is also in line with Zeichner and Liston (1996) who suggest that: "teachers cannot restrict their attention to classroom alone, leaving the larger setting and purpose of schooling to be determined by others. They must take active responsibility for the goals to which they are committed, and for the social settings in which these goals may prosper " (p. 11).

1.4.4.7: Unions and professionalism

From across the data it revealed that unions did play a role with regards to teachers professional development. Orchid commented that although she did not belong to a union the union did help her when she needed help (II, p.1). Snapdragon and Sunflower commented that the unions provide workshops to develop their professional knowledge and keeps them abreast with information by correspondence. They also help them with personal problems that hinder their professional development for example low salaries etc. (FG, p.2).This thinking is in line with Kerchner and Caufman (1993, p. 19) as cited in Govender (1993) the author explains that "professional unionism is called upon to balance teacher's legitimate self-interest with the larger interests of teaching as an occupation and education as an institution". Survey results showed that 67% of teachers agreed that their unions did help them to develop professionally. According to my observations many teachers felt that they were forced to join unions because the employee is not prepared to listen to their grievances (O, 1st,2nd,3rd quarter, 2011) although they were not very happy on some of the tactics the unions use in obtaining their goals.

The next section highlights some of the common themes shared by the five teacher leaders in the case study.

4.5: COMMOM THEMES

From across the data sets it emerged that the teachers displayed common qualities towards their understanding of professionalism. The data also revealed that some of the qualities shared by these teacher leaders about their understanding of professionalism were that to be professional you have to have some sort of academic training. Also how you behaved in the school and out of school was very important requisite to be a professional. Morals and values was also an important attribute towards their understanding of professionalism. Some teachers also believed that the unions also played an important part in professional development. Furthermore the five teacher leaders believed to be professional one must have

the necessary skills to impart into our learners especially if it is for the shaping and moulding of the learners. In addition, despite some of the challenges that they had to experience, they still remained professional in the school towards their learners and other staff members. The five teacher leaders were also very hard working and engaged in purposeful teaching. They planned their work and kept up to date on professional and curriculum matters. In the following section I focus on what were some of the barriers and obstacles that prevented the five teacher leaders from performing their professional duties in this case study.

4.6 BARRIERS TO TEACHER LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONALISM

This section provides answers to the second question of this case study research, where it looks at the factors that hindered and prevented teacher leadership and professionalism from being implemented by the five teacher leaders.

4.61 Autocratic Principal

One of the factors that contributed to teachers not being involved in teacher leadership and professional duties in the school was the poor leadership of the principal. At least four of the five teacher leaders felt that the principal was a barrier to them not being actively involved in professional leadership duties. Evidence from the data revealed in this case study indicated that the principal restricted some of the teachers from engaging in teacher leadership and professional duties because he is too autocratic and self centred. When Orchid was asked how can she use her power as a professional to transform her school into a socially just place for teaching and learning? "This was her response:

" *Every Wednesday there are professional development workshops for teachers all the other schools their teachers attend these workshops and network. I am the only one that cannot attend these workshops because the principal is not happy about me attending these workshops he feels it is unnecessary."* (O, 4/05/11).

As Beare and Caldwell would emphasize, the key role of an effective institution is its outstanding leadership, so the "development of potential leaders must be given high priority" (1989, p. 99). It is evident from the data that the principal is hampering teachers from leading this comment exemplifies this when Sunflower was asked what professional leadership duties does she perform at her school? "*Autocratic head always undermining your abilities input or ideas* " (*II p. 2*). *Another comment read*" *It is only the principal's way or no way he is the only one who makes all the decisions in this school* "(FG, p. 2). Snapdragon *commented that*"

in this school the principal is the one with all the power he would not even make time to meet you or discuss any issues with you, he always has no time, according to the principal the SMT is the only effective and hard working people in this school".(FG, p. *2).* Rose shares similar comments as the other teacher leaders "*management is also restricting teachers because management does not empower you. it is either their way or no way too much admin work for us to do"* (II, p. 2). As much as Grant (2006, p. 513) states that in keeping with the notions of distributive leadership, teachers need to be encouraged to find their voice, take up their potential as change agents to produce a liberating culture in their schools, teachers may not be able to do that if they lack the capacity to lead in certain areas.

4.6.2 Poor attendance by some teachers.

The importance of teacher professionalism with regards to teacher absenteeism was highlighted in my study. From across the data poor teacher attendance was another feature that teachers felt hindered their professional development and was a barrier to teaching and learning. For example Rose commented "*that she sometimes feels so helpless in the classroom, especially when the classes are combined most of the time because some of the teachers stay away so often, the children are so rude and misbehave I just want to cry in the class. I feel so helpless, where is their conscience and obligation to be at school?"* (O, 8/10.11). Sunflower *"commented that she does not get any frees and is also serving relief for the teachers that stay away so often and this is also causes her to be stressed as well" (O, 3/5/11).* Orchid *added "that how come the principal does not handle this matter when these teachers stay away so often, and would not address them individually but would waste all the other teacher's time who come to school regularly only to address and discuss this in a staff meeting for all teacher"* (O, 7/9/ 11*).* Orchid *commented " I can't believe that our parents do nothing when these teachers stay away so often, I don't know why they are not interested in their children's welfare*" (O, 11/10/11). It is evident from the data these teacher leaders are struggling with teachers staying away and coming late to school. This lack of commitment to engage in professional duties therefore has a negative impact on the expected professional life of the teacher and the learner in the school environment.

Many newspaper articles as stated in the previous chapters also report on the abuse of leave taking and teacher absenteeism by some teachers especially in the public schools. This is similar to the school in this case study which is a barrier to these teacher leaders with regards to their professional development. Therefore it is vital as Hoyle (1981, p. 22) suggests that

each professional should develop and uphold guidelines for moral behaviour and ethical practice. I believe this is similar to (SACE) which serves as guidelines for how the teachers within the South African context should behave. It distinctly says that values lie at the heart of professionalism.

4.6.3: Lack of parental support

In fact, for any form of leadership to be effective all parties concerned must offer unconditional support to each other. The school does not work in a vacuum but is affected by the environment in which it functions. The five teacher leaders also felt that another barrier to their professional development was the lack of parental involvement in the learners work and welfare. Therefore this study uncovered that many of the teacher leaders were dissatisfied with the lack of support from the parent component of the school. Buttercup being part of management made this comment when questioned by other educators why don't you get parents to help with relief when teachers stay away so often? "*We cannot get parents to come to a budget meeting, or a governing body meeting , a parents meeting and most all they do not come to see their own children's work so how am I going to get them to come and serve relief*" (O, /10/8/11).

This attitude by the parents does not benefit the learner or the teacher in a professional learning environment, especially where parents do not take the initiative in their children's school work and welfare. The South African Council For Educators (SACE) (D, 5/5/11) clearly stipulates that parents are partners in education and it is not the sole responsibility of the teacher to educate the child, but legally it is also the sole responsibility of the parent to educate the child. This was a comment made by Rose " *I cannot understand why parents do not speak up when their child's is not being taught for so long and they do not even come to school to find out why, even if teachers are absent for the whole term, the parents attitude is unbelievable* . (O, 12/08 11).

The quotation above further illustrates the stress that teachers have to face throughout the day with badly mannered and physically violent learners in the school. Under the South African constitution parents have a legal duty to protect their children from harm and are obliged to send their children to school. From the data in this case some of the parents are not taking the

responsibility for their child's education seriously. This comment was made by Orchid when a learner threw a bottle into her classroom and became violent towards her.*" In this school the principal would not even assist teachers with badly behaved learners the mostly female teachers have to do everything by themselves, and the parents of those learners would not even come to school to address their children's discipline issues. There is a no win situation in this school"* (O, 11/10/11). Furthermore this comment was echoed by the entire staff about the lack of parental support. Snapdrago*n commented "that maybe if the principal formed a better relationship with the community they would be supportive. They do not feel welcome in the school therefore they do not care about anything "* (O, 11/10/11).

4.6.4: Interference by unions to professional development

When teachers were asked does the union help them develop professionally? Most of the teachers from across the data were not very happy about the methods that unions use with regards to their professional development. Rose made this comment about the unions interfering in her teaching and learning during contact time with the learners. " *I have now joined a new union because my old union does not respect the teacher or the learners. They have very violent and intimidating ways of settling problems. I have now joined a union that behaves more professional"* Buttercup commented that "*her new union that she has now joined does not pressure her to go on strikes and she has more freedom of choice now* (II, p. 1). Sunflower *commented that she now noticed the unions are now hungry for power and jumping on the band wagon and it is not working for the people. That is why I am pissed off because our government is not worth it, going off and fighting for someone else to get a position. I have lost faith in the unions"* (II, p. 2). This comment is in line with Stokes (2010) where the author accused the South African Democratic Teacher's Union (SADTU) of bringing the teaching profession into disrepute. " The decrease in professionalism in teaching is a direct result of this union's meddling, and by now it should be patently obvious that SADTU'S thinking is dominated by the rights of teachers rather than a responsibility to the pupils ". (2010, p. 13).

The study revealed that the teacher leaders are working under very trying conditions and at the same time doing their best to be professional at all times. Most of the teachers are unhappy with the lack of parental support in their school, the lack of support from the principal, teacher absenteeism and meddling by the unions.. This therefore serves to confirm that there was a major problem in this case study within the various structures that needed to

be attended to promptly. In the next section I would look at strategies to develop teacher leadership and professionalism in this case study.

4.7 STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP TEACHER LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONALISM

This section also provides answers to the second question of this case study research, where it looks at the factors that enhanced teacher leadership and professionalism. I identify three important factors that can contribute to teachers engaging in teacher leadership and professional related matters in their school, such as shared decision making, collaborative learning environment and teacher professional development opportunities.

4.7.1 Shared decision-making

As much as conditions for teacher leaders to take on leadership roles can be created, they also need to be developed on leadership and professional related matters and should be given more time and support to demonstrate these leadership skills. The response from teachers throughout the school through the survey questionnaire (Q, 1st quarter, 2011) revealed that there were benefits for teachers to lead and develop professionally. Many teachers felt that if they were made to feel special and valued at their school and also included in all decision making of the school then they in turn would be happy and eager to work in their school. This view is supported by Singh (2007) who argues that principals should create an organizational culture and infrastructure with leadership opportunities for everyone, including all members of the SMT (Senior Management Team) as well as post level one teacher's. As Snapdragon commented that *"the principal must develop a good relationship with teachers and parents in order to create a pleasant and stimulating school environment"* (F G ,p.2).

It could be argued that school leaders can provide opportunities for teachers to participate in decision-making and school development by: distributing the responsibility and power for leadership widely throughout the school, sharing decision-making powers, taking staff opinion to account, providing autonomy to teachers and creating opportunities for staff development, (Leithwood, Tomlinson and Genge, 1996, pp. 811-812). Orchid commented "*if only the principal can make time to see when I need to see him on urgent matters*" (II,p.2). According to Hodgkinson (1991, pp. 62-63) the following provides the very environment in which a leader has real opportunity to develop a vision:

" The opportunity to discover, clarify and defend the ends of education, to motivate towards those ends, the opportunity to discover means and invent processes…… and the opportunity to create and establish morally grounded evaluation and legitimate it for all participants in the great co-operative educational project"

The author further suggests that the highest form of leadership contains some element of charismatic commitment or enthusiasm with added functions of vision and mystique. Therefore a principal with his unique personality can be able to direct his workforce into healthy educational practices although the perceptions about his leadership and management practices were poor. A principal's ability to motivate and offer support seems to supersede all the negative qualities perceived by teachers. The teachers in this study felt that if all teachers were included in decision making and treated fairly then the school would be much more effective and running smoothly. Snapdragon *responded "when teachers are valued and respected for who they are in the school you want to do things for the school, it makes you to feel part of the school not like someone who is just coming here to work, and then to just go home at the end of the day it is something you enjoy doing "*(FG, p. 2). Many of the teacher leaders felt to be involved in shared decision – making at the school would give them a sense of empowerment and ownership of the school (Q, 1st quarter 2011).

4.7.2 A Collaborative Environment

In order for any institution to be successful, collaboration is a key among all stakeholders especially in schools it develops teacher's personal and professional growth (Harris, 2004). In my study many teachers felt that there was an urgent need to collaborate with each other often. Sunflower commented *that she needs to get more support from both the teachers and learners when it comes to dealing with school related matters* (II.p.2). I do agree that in the present day of teaching teachers are no longer working in isolation and their seems to be a shift in culture, where teachers are now working together with other teachers and also with management. Orchid commented "*that all staff must work together that is why when there is a staff function I make sure that everyone attends unless they have a very valid reason for not attending"* (II, p. 2).

Buttercup commented *" that there was a sense of collegiality in the school because she had no problems with her teachers, especially when it came to school related matters and personal matters the staff feel very free to talk to me and are not afraid to approach me on*

any issue" (O, 10/10/11). This is in line with Grant's (2006) view of teacher leadership where all teachers must work freely and be involved with all the activities within and beyond the school without fear or victimisation. According to my observation many of the teachers got on very well with each other and collaborated with each other regularly (O, on-going 2011). This culture of staff working together was a positive reflection for some teachers working together and it created a spirit of 'ubuntu'. Teachers working together and sharing their ideas on curriculum related matters and policy development for example, assessments, preps, sports and presenting assemblies created opportunities for them to lead in their school. Grant, (2006) views this sharing of activities to be at the heart of distributed leadership model because of its inclusive approach to leadership and its promotion of capacity building. Snapdragon commented that "*some people in the school wanted to divide the staff because they prefer when the staff are divided, they would be able to achieve their vindictive objective but when the staff are united, they do not like it that is why teachers are always given extra unnecessary duties in the afternoon because this is a strategy for the staff not to collaborate, you know the saying united we stand and divided we fall*"(O, 12/5/11).

4.7.3 Professional Development Opportunities

The teacher leaders in my case study believed that they were not being developed enough professionally. Orchid commented *"that she would like to attend more workshops because she would like to be up to date on curriculum and professional matters that relates to her field of work* (O, 11/5/11). Although Orchid hardly went to workshops she designed her own learning activities and made her own teaching resources. She also kept abreast with information from other teachers in other schools. This was supported by Rose *"I believe we do not attend enough workshops and we need to know the latest development in our learning areas. I attended a workshop for English and I found it to be very interesting"* (O,12/5/11) .

Snapdragon attended professional development workshops for the unions because she was regularly informed about these workshops by circulars and messages left on her cell phone. Snapdragon commented "*if only she was informed about other school related workshops timeously she could have also attended those workshops, but unfortunately our school does not seem to get circulars relating to professional development workshops. You only hear about the workshop from fellow colleagues after it is over*" (O, 12/5/11). For Harris and Lambert (2003) these authors suggest that to generate and sustain teacher leadership and professionalism. There must be opportunities for continuous professional development that

focus not just on the development of teachers skill and knowledge but aspects specific to their leadership role, such as leading groups and workshops, collaborative work, mentoring, teaching adults and action research are crucial (2003, p. 45).

Most of the teacher leaders suggested that workshops should be provided for everyone not just for the (SMT) Senior Management Team because leadership must not be associated with position, but opportunities must be created for everyone. It was exemplified by this comment made by Snapdragon:

" *the ordinary level I teachers are not even informed if there is a workshop pertaining to their learning area. I don't think it is fair when the HOD attends for us because we are teaching that learning area and this disempowers us as teachers in this school because we want to know what is happening with the new changes and development, look at the CAPS workshops not one we attended yet other schools have already attended workshops*". (O, 11/10/11).

From the data it could be suggested that both management and ordinary level I teachers should attend workshops together so that they would be able to know and understand each other better. The shift to a distributed leadership is supported by many education policy documents for example, the Norms and Standards For Educators (2000) and the report of the Task Team (2000) also discusses moving towards to this style of leadership and developing teacher leadership in schools. Some principals and those in formal leadership positions may find it challenging to let go of their power, to distribute their power, to trust other teachers, and to provide support and so forth. I concur with Grant that "principals need to be supported as they learn to delegate authority and teachers need to be supported as they take up their leadership role" (2006, p.)

Many of the teacher leaders believe that unions do have a role to play, but they must believe in the expanded role of the teacher and not in centralised control and rules, to address issues of professionalism Govender (1996). Teacher unions should therefore avoid the tendency to standardise and bureaucratise by making all schools do the same things and having all teachers paid the same for qualifications. According to Kercher and Koppich (1993), union representatives must be trusted by their members and they must be politically strong and secure because they care about the individual teacher's problems. These authors also believe that teacher unions should move beyond anger and avoid the traditional antagonism between employer and worker and start moving towards collaborative approaches to solving problems.

4.8 Conclusion

What this study attempted to do was to explore how teachers understood professionalism in a primary school in Pietermaritzburg. It also wanted to find out the possible factors that either enhanced or hindered teacher leadership and professionalism. On the understanding of professionalism, participants in my study felt that to be a professional you must have some sort of formal training. How you behaved in the school was also very important when understanding professionalism. The teachers in this study also believed to be a professional you must have the appropriate skills and knowledge to impart into the learners especially if it was going to mould and shape them for the future. They also believed that the unions have an important role to play with regards to teacher professionalism, but sometimes their approaches are not appropriate.

I believe that both my research questions were answered. From the data I was able to see some of the barriers to teacher leadership and professionalism. The lack of parental support, teacher absenteeism, lack of support by the principal and some of the strategies used by the unions in dealing with teacher professionalism was not appropriate were the main barriers to teacher leadership and professionalism. Finally, the strategies used to develop teacher leadership and professionalism was identified as shared decision-making, working in a collaborative culture and creating opportunities for professional development.

The final chapter focuses on the recommendations emanating from my findings

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to present the conclusions of the entire study. Firstly, I present the summary of the key findings what were discussed in Chapter Four. I reflect on the group research project as it was introduced in Chapter One. I also reflect on myself working individually in this research project. I then discuss a few recommendations on what can be done to promote the development of teacher leadership and professionalism in the schooling context. I then conclude by suggesting a few further research questions on the topic of teacher leadership and professionalism that emanated from my research.

5.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The aim of conducting this research was to seek answers to the questions of how teachers' understand professionalism in an urban primary school in Pietermaritzburg. I also wanted to find out about the factors that either inhibit or enhance teacher leadership and professionalism specifically in the case study school. Looking at the way the study was conducted for example, the research design, methods of collecting data and data analysis I believe that that aims of the research was achieved to a certain extent. For example, in terms of answering my first research question ie, Do you think teaching is a profession?

5.2.1 Understanding Professionalism

This was answered firstly, by looking at the five teacher leaders' understanding of the concept 'professionalism'. What emerged from the data was that the five teacher leaders had similar understanding of the concept 'professionalism.' All the teacher leaders in this study said to be a professional one must have some sort of lengthy training as Snapdragon emphasized that you cannot take someone from behind the door and put them to teach our young children you must have the necessary training. Rose also believed that to be professional you must have the appropriate training because if a teacher knows nothing how is the teacher going to teach children the correct skills and knowledge, Rose and Orchid believed that one must be knowledgeable about the curriculum and content that one has to present to learners. All five teacher leaders believed that skills and knowledge also played an

important role with regards to their understanding professionalism. As Buttercup suggested that to be professional one must have the correct skills, knowledge and methodology the same sentiments was echoed by Orchid, Rose and Sunflower. Sunflower was very vocal about the practical aspect of teaching and believed to be a professional one must be competent in the classroom as well as out of the classroom. From across the data the five teacher leaders believed that the involvement of parents is important when understanding professionalism. They believed that the parent component had a crucial role to play with regards to running a successful and thriving school. The data showed that the five teacher leaders also believed that to understand professionalism the way one behaves in and out of the school is extremely important. Buttercup commented that teachers must be positive role models in the school for our learners to emulate from. In understanding professionalism the Sunflower, Snapdragon and Orchid believed that the unions played an important role with regards to their professional development. Buttercup and Sunflower believed to understand professionalism the correct approaches and methods to teaching is vital. As Sunflower commented that these days the department just sends anybody to fill in vacant positions they do not screen them and we end up with incompetent people who do not have a clue what to do in the classroom. I now move to answer my second research question viz. 'What factors enhance or hinder teacher leadership and professionalism in their school?

5.2.2 Factors that acted as barriers to teacher leadership and professionalism

While it may appear from the literature that teacher leadership can be advantageous to both the individual teacher and their school, there are a number of barriers to be overcome in order for schools to operate effectively Muijs and Harris (2003, p. 442). In the case study school the data revealed that teacher leaders were leading to a certain extent. Like Rose said she was in charge of the IQMS and did the assembly roster, but in most cases it was very restricted. Barriers to teacher leadership and professionalism were the autocratic attitude of the school principal who still believed in the traditional hierarchical structure of running the school. There was a perception among teacher leaders in the school that a hierarchy existed at the school that impeded freedom of expression. Four of the five teacher leaders said that they did not feel free to express themselves in staff meetings or to make decisions on school related matters because it is only the principal's way or no way. The School Management Team was identified as a barrier, as Snapdragon mentioned too much unnecessary administration work. Furthermore the lack of involvement by the parents that hinders teachers in performing their professional duties effectively because this vital component is missing from the school.

Teacher absenteeism is also another barrier that all the teacher leaders in the study felt hampered their professional development. Teachers felt tired, stressed, overworked when other teachers stayed away so often because this really impacted negatively on them when they had to carry the absent teachers work load and had extra learners in their classroom. Many of the teacher leaders also felt that the strategies used by unions also tarnished their image as professionals because of the abuse of the learners contact time during the strike and during teaching and learning time. Notwithstanding the fact that there were barriers the data also revealed factors that can promote teacher leadership and professionalism. I now discuss those enhancing factors in the next section which also answers the second research question.

5.2.3 Factors that promote teacher leadership and professionalism

This research question was answered by looking at the conditions that can enhance teacher leadership and professionalism in the case study school as well as in all schools. Four factors were identified Firstly, the teachers in the school felt that if they were given the opportunity to be involved in shared decision making of the school, then they would feel welcomed and feel that they are part of the school. They also suggested that this would result in motivated teachers who would like to take ownership of the school. These teacher leaders also suggested that if management support level one teachers on professional initiates this can encourage more people to take on leadership roles.

Secondly, from across the data it revealed that if all stakeholders worked together then this would create a conducive climate for teacher leadership and professionalism to thrive in this culture of collaboration. The learners must also be co-operative as well as the teachers. Sunflower commented that they must all show commitment to the welfare of the schooling environment. Thirdly, professional development initiatives must be encouraged. As much as conditions for level one teachers' to take on leadership roles can be created, these teacher leaders argued that level one teachers need to be developed on leadership and professional development initiatives. They also need to be given more time and support to demonstrate their leadership skills. As Orchid suggested both management and level one teacher's must go on professional development workshops together and this would strengthen their working relationship and bring in a sense of collegiality amongst them. Fourthly, from across the data the teacher leaders believed that the unions have an important role to play in their professional development, but they need to work on strategies that do not bring the teaching profession into disrepute.

52.4 Reflections on the study as a group research project

Being part of this group research project worked positively for me to some extent. In the beginning I had my doubts about being involved in a group project because I always felt some students were favoured more because they knew how to market themselves well. I did feel like I was losing my identity in the group because sometimes my views would be over shadowed by the more dominating students.

However, once the whole process was discussed and set into motion all my concerns and fears were attended to, I then started to ease up and I became more positive. I enjoyed sitting with the group and brainstorming together with the supervisor in trying to get a title for our research question. It was time saving by working in a group because we all put our heads together in the compilation of the data collection methods that we used,

The challenges that I encountered in working as a group was that sometimes I would feel the pressure build up especially if everyone in the group was ahead of me, as to me working individually by myself. At some point I felt that I was falling behind compared to my group members because they had already started their individual interview and I had not even started due to problems encountered in the first term because teachers were always busy with administration work. Another challenge working as a group was that I could not get the necessary literature from the library because it was always out because someone else in the group was using it. This also meant that there were times where group conformity was very important, but other times it limited individuality and creativity.

Despite all the challenges that I encountered in a group project, I felt that the positive benefits far outweighed the negative. For, example I could phone someone when I needed clarity on something. I believe that the group project worked well for me and the group because all eight participants managed to complete our work on time despite some of our hectic schedules. The participants were very helpful and it built my self-esteem in the end. I felt confidant towards the end of the study. Therefore, I strongly recommend that if anyone is interested in a group project research, they should go ahead with it, because there is more to be gained than lost. In the next section I talk about my reflections on my study working by myself.

52.5 Reflections on my study working by myself

Working by myself gave me a sense of achievement because I felt that I took ownership for my own work. There was this sense of satisfaction because I was not competing against anyone but myself. It did have its moments of frustration especially when I had to do drafts upon drafts until the supervisor was satisfied. There were times when I was so tired I just felt like pulling all my hair out. My heartfelt thanks goes to Irene my supervisor for her patience, dedication, timeous feedback and the commitment she showed in me during my mentoring. She transferred her positive energies into me when I felt that I was now fighting a losing battle. Irene was always that ray of sunshine in my life during those trying moments, always phoning me to make sure I was on track and made time to meet me despite the odd hours and in inclement weather. Towards the end I started to believe in myself and gained confidence and with the support of Irene I felt that I was making some progress. I believe that when you are working by yourself the supervisor that is assigned to you plays an important role in your success or failure. Despite my challenges and reading volumes of work by myself I encourage other students to work independently because it builds your self-esteem and self confidence.

5.2.6 Recommendations for practice

This section discusses a few recommendations on what can be done to promote the development of teacher leadership and professionalism in my school

In the case study school teachers need to build on their self-esteem and confidence first before that they can take their school forward. They need to be heard and they must find their voice in the school before they start engaging in professional leadership roles. The teacher leaders need to speak up and refer to policies which encouraged teachers to have a voice in the school and promoted teacher leadership in schools. Policies of the Department of Education are user friendly and promote the concept of teacher leadership and professionalism in schools. The challenge in my school is the gap between policy and practice. I also believe that many teachers in the school are afraid to tackle issues that pertain to them because for fear of being victimised. According to Wasley (1991) the result of collective bargaining process in the USA rendered all teachers equal status. Further, the author argues that teachers cannot see each other any other way because there is a history of

equality within the profession. Similarly, in the South African context and from a professional point of view, teachers should feel that there is no need to be in a formal position to be involved in important decision making.

I recommend that the principal should play a vital role in unifying the teachers and other staff members in the school. The principal should get together with the staff and interact with them during staff functions. This would help develop a close bond between the principal and his staff. The principal does tend to display leadership qualities of a charismatic leader therefore he does have the capability of bringing the staff together.

I recommend that principals develop a good working relationship with the surrounding communities because without the support of the community there would be no culture of collaboration amongst parents and the school. This will have a negative effect with regards to teaching and learning. Principals and staff members in the school should make parents to feel welcome and make them to feel part of the school. It must never be forgotten that parents are partners in education. I recommend that management must inform teachers timeously on professional development initiatives especially with regards to circulars and workshops.

With regards to teacher absenteeism that is impacting negatively on the professional life of teachers. It could be suggested that management call the teachers concerned and discuss the ramification this is having on the learner and the entire staff. Also try and communicate with these teachers to find out what is the reason behind this frequent poor attendance. I also recommend that management work on an open door policy and display care when dealing with sensitive issues so that some teachers can gain their trust and open up to them when problems arise. I recommend that management must deal with problems the moment it occurs and not with it later on. I also believe that dialogue between the principal and his staff is crucial and therefore principals must make themselves available when teachers need to engage in dialogue with them.

Unions have an important role to play in schools but not at the expense of the learner. I recommend the unions use time after school to engage in union activities. Unions can also change some of their strategies when dealing with issues of the teachers and their professional development. Unions must engage in dialogue with all stakeholders when a situation arises especially during strikes they must make sure that the learners are not robbed of quality teaching and learning time. Unions must also devise strategies to protect the image of teachers because teachers are regarded as professionals. According to Hoyle (1982) a

professional is a person who trained for a number of years and the image they portray in society is equally important. The teacher leaders in this study were not happy about the behaviour and attitude of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) during the strike action and believed that some of their members behaved very unprofessional and unethical.

5.3 FURTHER RESEARCH

My engagement in this research study allowed me the opportunity to identify a few gaps regarding teacher leadership and professionalism in schools. These gaps can be addressed through the following suggestions which can form part of future research.

_ It would be important to get the parent perspective on their involvement on how they help to transform their schools into professional places for teaching and learning. In this case study school the teacher leaders argued that a lack of parental support is hampering their professional development initiatives because parents show no interest in their children's welfare.

_ Document Analysis would be a good way of looking at policies that develop teacher leadership and professionalism in schools. Policies can be looked at to see if schools are implementing what policies are saying or are schools implementing their own policy with regards to teacher leadership and professionalism. It is also a good way to see if teachers are living up to the standard as policy would have expected them to be.

_It would be nice to get the principals view on teacher leadership and professionalism because principals are always looked at as a barrier to teacher leadership and professionalism in many schools. It will help to ascertain whether the teacher's expectations are too high or some of the comments teachers make are valid.

_ Lastly, More needs to be learnt on the role of the union with regards to teacher leadership and professionalism. Union leaders must be interviewed on what they think professionalism is all about and describe some of their views on how schools can be run as a professional place for teaching and learning.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The manner in which teachers lead as professionals plays a vital role in the way teachers understand professionalism in the school context. Hoyle also believes that to be a

professional one need to have ethical behaviour, responsibility, autonomy and high status (Hoyle, 1986, p. 80). This definition of professionalism was similar to the five teacher leaders who suggested that professionals needed to have morals and values and the way one behaves in and out of school is very important. In fact, it is the most important ingredient that holds the school together with regards to teaching and learning and how the learners perform in a school. Fullan has similar ideas about professionalism and explains that by engaging regularly in continuous professional development is a very important commitment to learn and also regarded as essential if professionals at all levels at any organization are willing to remain up to date in their knowledge, enthusiastic about their work, self confident and clear about their purpose (Fullan, 1995, p. 265).

However, teacher leadership must be nurtured to bear fruit in the schooling environment. The principal must take a leading role in developing teacher leadership and professionalism in the school by supporting teachers' professional initiatives and efforts. Teachers must work in a collaborative environment in order for teacher leadership to flourish. Therefore when teacher's engage in leadership roles especially within a distributed framing it empowers teachers to realize their professional worth while still maintaining the centrality of their teaching roles Katzenmeyer and Moller, (2001) Parents must get more involved in the school environment and transform our schools into professional places for teaching and learning. The South African Code of Ethics (SACE) clearly states that parents are partners in education. Unions have a role to play with regards to teaching and learning but they must refrain from bringing the teaching profession into disrepute.

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APPENDIX ONE

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

- ❖ Use a black or blue ink pen. Please do not use pencil.

- ❖ In the interest of confidentiality, you are not required to supply your name on the questionnaire.

- ❖ Please respond to each of the following items by placing a cross, which reflects your opinion and experiences on the role of teacher leadership and professionalism in your school.

- ❖ Thank you for taking the time to assist in this research project.

APPENDIX TWO

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Purpose and Focus of the Observation:

We wish to learn more about teacher leadership and its link to professionalism and unionisation as it is experienced in our schools by recording our observations in the template provided and by reflecting how this phenomenon is " … socially constructed in terms of power , communication lines , discourse and language" (Nieuvenhuis, 2007, p. 84).

Guiding questions:

Core Question: How can teachers lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of teaching and learning?

Subsidiary Questions:

1. How is professionalism understood by teachers and how does this professionalism contribute to transforming schools into socially just spaces of teaching and learning?

2. Do teachers readily embrace their change agent role and what incentives are used in schools to encourage teachers to operate as leaders and professionals?

3. How do teacher unions enhance or inhibit the development of teacher leadership and professionalism in schools?

Situations to be observed during the 8 week observation cycle:

1. staff briefing every two weeks (4 briefing observations in the 8 week cycle)

2. A trans- sect (walk around the school)

3. 1 staff meeting (minimum)

4. 1 staff development session

5. Grade/phase/learning area/subject meeting (minimum of 2)

Key focus points to bear in mind during observation process:

1. We are aiming to see if teachers are engaged in any forms of teacher leadership either formally and informally. Grant's (2008) teacher leadership model (Appendix Five) will be used to assist in this regard.

   We wish to observe how teachers carry themselves as professionals in their interactions with their colleagues (levels of collegiality amongst post level one Teachers and in relation to SMT members). Criteria, developed from the SACE policy and code of ethics documents, will be developed to assist in this observation process.

2. We wish to observe how teachers conduct themselves in relation to their learners.

3. Is the teacher's leadership derived from the formal position they hold or from other factors (such as age, experience, expertise, skills. etc.)?

4. Is the leadership of teachers in the school contributing to a socially just environment (are they fair, inclusive, empowering and transformative)?

5. Are teacher leaders taking up their agency role? (willingness to innovate and change)

6. Observe the teacher's role as union members.

7. Observe how union membership and influence impacts on teachers and their leadership in the school. Can teachers engage in dialogue about union matters and actively apply this to their ability to lead? How does this engagement impact on the school?

APPENDIX THREE

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Do you thing teaching is a profession? Explain.

2. Why did you choose teaching as a career?

3. Do you consider yourself a teacher leader? Why do you hold this view? Please talk about some of the leadership opportunities you have had/have not had. [follow] Were these leadership roles self-initiated or SMT initiated?

4. What is your personal view on teachers being offered incentives (financial or other) to enact leadership in schools? [follow up] Advantages/disadvantages?

5. How does your union help you to develop professionally?

6. Are there situations where you experience a clash between your professional and your union identities? Talk a little about this. How do you balance the possible tensions that may arise?

7. How can you use your power as a professional to transform your school into a socially just space for teaching and learning?

APPENDIX FOUR
FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What do you understand 'professionalism' to mean?
2. Would you consider your school to be a professional place of teaching and learning? Why do you say so?
3. Does the culture of your school encourage teachers to introduce and lead new initiatives? Explain.
4. Should teachers at your school be rewarded for taking on leadership roles? Why? /Why not? If so, in what forms?
5. Do you believe that the teacher unions provide adequate information and support to help teachers develop professionally?
6. How did the teacher strike action towards the end of 2010 affect your school? In you response, please share some of the tensions that you as a staff experienced as a consequence of the various union affiliations and how this impacted on the various notions of professionalism.
7. How can you, as members of the teaching staff, use your power as professionals to transform your school into a more socially just place of teaching and learning?

Appendix Five: Zones and Roles Model of Teacher Leadership

(Grant, 2008)
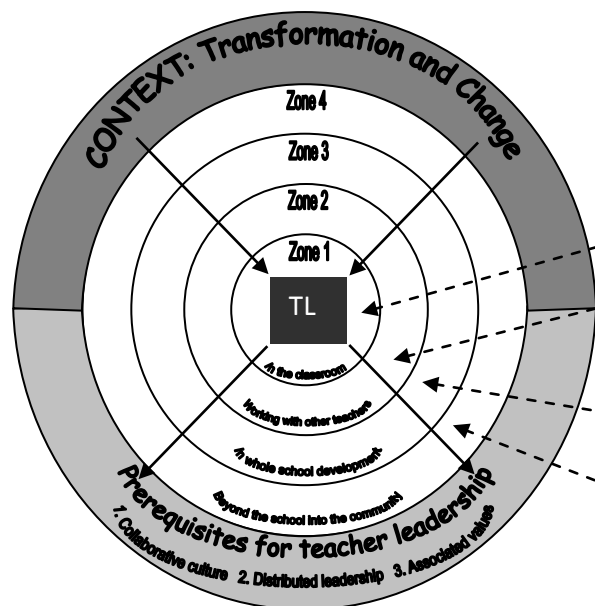
TEACHER LEADERSHIP

First level of analysis: Four Zones	Second level of analysis: Six Roles
One	**One**: Continuing to teach and improve one's own teaching
In the classroom	
Two	**Two**: Providing curriculum development knowledge
Working with other teachers and learners outside the classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities	**Three**: Leading in-service education and assisting other teachers
	Four: Participating in performance evaluation of teachers
Three	**Five**: Organising and leading peer reviews of school practice
Outside the classroom in whole school development	**Six**: Participating in school level decision-making
Four	**Two**: Providing curriculum development knowledge
Between neighbouring schools in the community	**Three**: Leading in-service education and assisting other teachers

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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Ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

26 November 2010

Dr. C (Callie) Grant (24502)
School of Education and Development

Dear Dr. Grant

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/1356/010
PROJECT TITLE: Leaders as professionals: what does this mean for teachers?

EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process:

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Dr. I Muzvidziwa
cc. Neil Avery
cc. Pete Jugmohan
cc. Mr. N Memela
cc. B. Ed Honours and Masters Students
cc. Management and Policy (ELMP) Students

Founding Campuses: ▬ Edgewood   ▬ Howard College   ▬ Medical School   ▬ Pietermaritzburg   ▬ Westville

Appendix Seven

Faculty of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Private Bag X01
Scottsville
3209
The Principal
…………………………………..
………………………………….
………………………………….

Dear …………………………….

I am currently a Master of Education Student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am presently engaged in a group research project which aims to explore teacher's perception of professionalism. Also to investigate leadership roles that teachers are engaging in, as well as factors which promote or hinder teacher leadership and professionalism. In this regard I have identified your school as a successful school which exhibits strong leadership at various levels within the institution. I would very much like to conduct research into teacher leadership as it relates to issues of professionalism in your school, and work particularly with five teacher leaders who are willing to work closely with me to extend the boundaries of our knowledge on this concept.

Please note that this is not an evaluation of performance or competence of your teachers and by no means is it a commission of inquiry! The identities of all who participate in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I undertake to uphold the autonomy of all participants and they will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves. In this regard, participants will be asked to complete a consent form. Furthermore, in the interests of the participants, feedback will be given to them during and at the end of the project.

My supervisor is Dr Callie Grant, she can be contacted on 033-2606185 at the Faculty of Education, Room 42A, Pietermaritzburg Campus (School of Education and Development) or on her cell, 0844003347.

Please feel free to contact her at any time should you have any queries or questions you would like answered.

Yours sincerely

CHAMAIN PILLAY

APPENDIX Eight

Faculty of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Private Bag X01
Scottsville
3209
The Educator

Dear …………………………….

I am currently a Masters student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am presently engaged in a group research project which aims to explore teacher's perception of professionalism. Also to investigate leadership roles that teachers are engaging in, as well as factors which promote or hinder teacher leadership and professionalism. In this regard I have identified your school as a successful school which exhibits strong leadership at various levels within the institution. I would very much like to conduct research into teacher leadership as it relates to issues of professionalism in your school, and work particularly with five teacher leaders who are willing to work closely with me to extend the boundaries of our knowledge on this concept.

Please note that this is not an evaluation of performance or competence of your teachers and by no means is it a commission of inquiry! The identities of all who participate in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I undertake to uphold the autonomy of all participants and they will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves. In this regard, participants will be asked to complete a consent form. Furthermore, in the interests of the participants, feedback will be given to them during and at the end of the project.

My supervisor is Dr Callie Grant and she can be contacted on 033-2606185 at the Faculty of Education, Room 42A, Pietermaritzburg Campus (School of Education and Development) or on her cell, 0844003347. Please feel free to contact her at any time should you have any queries or questions you would like answered.

Yours sincerely

CHAMAIN PILLAY

………………..DETACH AND RETURN…………….

<u>Declaration</u>

I …………………………………………………. (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project. I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that I reserve the right to withdraw from this project at any time.

Signature of participant   Date

 ………………………………………………….   ………………..

APPENDIX Nine

Faculty of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Private Bag X01
Scottsville
3209
Letter of Invitation

Dear …………………………….

I am sending this invitation to you as a teacher who might be interested in participating in a research project about teacher leadership and its relation to professionalism in schools. My name is Callie Grant and I am currently a lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am presently leading a group research project which aims to explore teacher leadership as it relates to issues of professionalism in schools. Teacher leadership is an emerging field of research in South Africa and I believe that teacher leadership has a powerful role to play in transforming the teaching and learning in our schools. In this regard I have identified your school as a successful school which exhibits strong leadership at various levels within the institution. I would very much like to conduct research into teacher leadership as it relates to issues of professionalism in your school, and work closely with you, particularly, to extend the boundaries of our knowledge on this concept.

The research project is framed by the following broad research question:

How can teachers lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of teaching and learning?

Subsidiary Questions
1. How is professionalism understood by teachers?
2. What are the factors that promote / inhibit teacher leadership and professionalism in schools?

I am seeking five teachers from your school who:
- Are interested in making a contribution to this research.
- See themselves as teacher leaders.
- Are interested in developing teacher leadership opportunities in schools.

Please note that this is not an evaluation of performance or competence of you as a teacher. Your identity will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I undertake to uphold your autonomy and you will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves. In this regard, you will be asked to complete a consent form. Furthermore, feedback will be given to you during and at the end of the project.

As project leader, I can be contacted on 033-2606185 at the Faculty of Education, Room 42A, Pietermaritzburg Campus (School of Education and Development) or on my cell, 0844003347. Please feel free to contact me at any time should you have any queries or questions you would like answered.

Yours sincerely

Dr Callie Grant
Project Leader

Appendix Ten

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE
Please place a CROSS(X) in the appropriate box for each of the items below.

A: Biographical Information

1 Gender:

Male		Female	

2 Race:

African		Coloured		Indian		White	

3 Age:

Below 20		21-30		31-40		41-50		51 +	

4 Your formal qualification:

M3 and below		M3-M4		M5 and above	

5 Nature of employment:

Permanent		Temporary			SGB	

6 Years of teaching experience:

0-5 years		6-10 years		11-15 years		16 years +	

7 Member of a union:

Yes		No	

8 If yes, which union do you belong to:

SADTU		NAPTOSA		NATU		SAOU	

B: School Information:

9 Learner enrolment:

1-299		300-599		600+	

10 School type: _____

Primary		Seconda ry		Combin ed	

11 Funding status:

Section 20		Section 21		Private	

12 Annual School Fees:

R0		R1- R499		R500- R999		R100 0- R149 9		R15 00 +	

13 Number of teachers, including management, in your school:

1-9		10-19		20-29		30- 39		40+	

C
: **Teacher Leadership and Professionalism Survey**
Instructions: Place a CROSS (X) in the column that most closely describes your opinion on the role of leadership in your school.
Scale: 4=strongly agree, 3=agree, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree

	I believe:	4	3	2	1
14	That teaching is a profession.				
15	All teachers should take on a leadership role in their school.				
16	All teachers should be able to bring about change.				
17	My school promotes discussions on HIV and AIDS.				
18	That teachers are professional if they work well with others (collegial).				
19	That teachers are professional if they are punctual.				
20	That teachers are professional if they promote the image of the profession.				
21	The majority of teachers in my school take up leadership roles.				
22	That only people in formal positions of authority should lead.				
2	That teachers are professional if they are loyal to their school.				

3					
24	That teachers are professional if they respect the dignity and beliefs of learners.				
26	That unions develop teachers professionally.				
27	That teachers are professional if they refrain from any form of improper contact with learners.				
28	That teachers are professional if they refrain from undermining the status and authority of their colleagues.				
29	The majority of teachers in my school are part of the important decision-making processes.				
30	Teachers are encouraged to take initiative in my school.				
31	That teachers are professional if they respect the choices of their colleagues.				
32	That teachers are professional if they promote the ongoing development of the teaching profession.				
33	That unions develop leadership in teachers.				
34	My school has a professional ethos.				
35	That teachers are professional if they refrain from discussing confidential matters with unauthorized persons.				
36	That teachers are professional if they promote gender equality and recognize the opposite gender as equal.				
37	My union's influence clashes with my professional values.				
38	That teachers are professional if they have a manner that is respectful to the values, customs and norms of the community.				
39	That teachers are professional if they use appropriate language and behaviour in their interaction with colleagues.				
40	That men are better able to lead than women.				
41	Teachers should be supported when taking on leadership roles.				
42	That teachers who lead should be remunerated (paid).				
43	That teachers should receive non-financial recognition for leadership.				

D   Open-ended questions:
    Please write a response to the questions in the space provided below
4   To lead our school better, we need to:

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5   Any comments:

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Appendix Eleven

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE				
Date and Time	**Situation**	**Participants**	**Action Observed**	**Reflections**