

BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

A CASE STUDY OF FIVE TEACHER LEADERS IN A DEEP
RURAL INDEPENDENT HIGH SCHOOL IN KWAZULU-NATAL.

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DECLARATION

I, **NDLAMLENZE LINDIWE**, declare that the work presented is my own. Any references to work by other people have been acknowledged.

Signed: -----

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

Signed: Supervisor -----

Date ----- **December 2011**

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, teaching is increasingly becoming a complex task which demands the highest degree of professional practice. Teachers are viewed as agents of change in today's society and without them; the future of the country is stillborn (Harris and Muijs, 2005). However, a number of strike actions by teachers that have been reported in the media, have caused the attractiveness of teaching as a profession to fade and this is causing the public and important stakeholders to doubt the status of teaching as a profession. Teachers have been considered as political activists and union leaders and this has overshadowed them as professionals and as such has undermined their agency role as leaders. Furthermore, this is causing the teaching profession to lose its status as a calling and a prestigious profession in which they commit themselves to the teaching of learners. Teachers are now viewed as workers who are more focused on their rights, better working conditions and salaries and this they pursue sometimes at the expense of learners. It is therefore a challenge to the teacher unions to change their focus and help teachers to fulfil their primary responsibility which is teaching and learning in order to restore the professional status of teaching.

Furthermore, the traditional top-down approach leadership style that exists in most schools makes it even more challenging for teachers to exercise their leadership roles in schools in order to lead them into becoming professional places of work. However, amidst all the despair and loss of hope, Harris and Muijs (2002, p.11) call for the 'new order' of leadership which is premised upon the view of "leadership that is distributed and empowers those closest to the classroom to undertake leadership tasks and actions".

Aspects of interpretivist educational research inform my study because it does not seek to get the 'truth' but tries to understand people's views and experiences in their own natural settings (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2006). I have used this paradigm because I work from the premise that people define their actions by providing different interpretations of the situations they find themselves in. I agree with Maree (2007) who asserts that qualitative research approaches are only concerned with understanding the process and the social and cultural context which underlies various behavioural patterns and is mostly concerned with exploring the 'why' questions of research. Furthermore, Cohen *et al* (2006) also advocate that qualitative research typically studies people or systems by interacting with and observing the participants in their natural environments and focusing on their meanings and interpretations. The emphasis is on the quality and depth of

information and not on the scope or breadth of the information provided as in quantitative research.

Case study methodology was used to frame the investigation of the research questions. The study took place in a rural independent high school in KwaZulu – Natal. Qualitative data was collected from the five primary participants, through the use of individual interviews, focus group interviews as well as observations. Data was analysed using thematic content analysis and discourse analysis.

The findings revealed that teachers understand professionalism as formal qualifications, and that skills and expertise in education are necessary to qualify as a professional. Furthermore, a long period of time is necessary in order to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge expected. When it comes to leadership, it was clear that teachers still associate leadership with a position and formal appointment by a legitimate body in order to be accepted as a leader is necessary.

Barriers to teacher leadership and professionalism that were identified were: impact of teacher unions, incentives for role acceptance and school culture. Factors that can enhance teacher professionalism are: collaboration, leadership opportunity given to teachers and a shared understanding between the School Management Team and teachers.

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the research topic and the research problem underlying this study.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In view of the far-reaching changes taking place in South African education since 1994, it has been clear that no one person can manage to deal with and achieve success by leading on their own. One of the major area that has 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 turn, the focus of the public has been on the teachers and the role that they play in promoting effective teaching and learning for all learners. Furthermore, teachers' professional identity has emerged as an important area of concern. In light of the industrial strike actions that teachers have undertaken in recent years, the teaching profession is once again in dispute. The public opinion of teachers has deteriorated and teachers are viewed as unprofessional people who only consider their needs above the needs of learners. In addition, various teacher unions demand different levels of loyalty and support from their members and therefore teachers find themselves in a dilemma of finding a balance between their professional identity and their union identity.

The traditional view of leadership is that it is the sole responsibility of the principal as a leader. This is because the principal is accountable to the external education authorities. The principal is at the apex of the school pyramid. According to Coleman (2005a, p. 252), "the principal attempts the challenges and complexities of leadership alone" and is seen as the hero who stands at the top of the complex pyramid of power. The implication of this is that the principal acts as the sole decision-maker without consulting with other members of the staff. On the contrary, leadership in South Africa, in the democratic era, requires leaders who are able to work in a democratic and

participative manner. The implication of this statement is that the principal, as a leader, can no longer exercise leadership alone at the apex of the school, but needs to distribute authority to all the members of the organisation. Therefore today leadership is seen as decentralised and distributed in every part of the organisation so that those on the periphery who are first to spot challenges can act on them instantly (Gronn, 2000).

Contrary to the traditional view of leadership, Ash and Persall (2000) emphasise the need for new strategies, new processes, and new mindsets - a new paradigm of leadership. Similarly, Gronn (2000) suggests an alternative view to traditional notions of leadership. His argument is that traditional ways of thinking about leadership should be replaced with the view that leadership is something that takes on a distributed form. A distributed perspective on leadership is about shifting the focus from those who are in formal management positions to concentrate also on those who lead informally. This means that one will be able to consider the leadership practices that occur daily through informal interaction and collaboration (Harris and Muijs, 2005). My argument is that even though these teachers are not in formal management positions and then if they have the expertise on certain issues they must be allowed to lead. This is where leadership rests “on immediate expertise rather than position and is exercised through *ad hoc*, rather than formally constituted groups which may have to exist a long time” (Bennett *et al*, 2003, p.5).

Furthermore, principals as people who are in formal management positions should be willing to devolve their power to others so that the “fixed leader-follower dualism is abandoned in favour of the possibility of multiple, emergent leadership” (Gronn, 2000, p.325). In terms of leading, it means that those who are in formal positions i.e. the members of the School Management Team (SMT) can alternate with those who are in informal positions, depending on who has the expertise to manage a particular matter. If this were to happen, this would reflect a situation which shows that leadership need not be something that is done to followers, but followers in interaction with leaders and the situation that they find themselves in, can contribute to defining leadership practice (Spillane, 2006).

Linked to the notion of leadership is the concept of the teacher as a professional who constantly evaluates his or her practice instead of passively carrying out orders from the management. Therefore, this study argued that, in order for teachers to lead their schools into becoming

professional places of teaching and learning, there is a need for a distributed form of leadership that brings in the idea that varieties of expertise are distributed across the many, and not the few. In an attempt to describe distributed leadership, Harris and Muijs (2005) advocate that distributed leadership is about giving teachers the opportunity to lead and take responsibility for areas of change of most importance to the school. Similarly, Spillane (2004) advocates that the focus of distributed leadership is on how school leaders promote and sustain conditions for successful schooling in interactions with others rather than on what structures and programmes are necessary for success.

Therefore, distributed leadership theory which allows power to be dispersed across all members is an important factor in education leadership which intends to give teachers their autonomy by allowing them to take on their leadership role. In agreement with this idea, Gunter (2005, p.57) advocates that distributed leadership in action implies “multiple sources of guidance and direction, which engages many people in leadership activity and raises questions that encompass how meaning is developed, how experiences are understood and how we work for change”. Therefore, my interest is in a teacher identity that recognises distributed leadership as a socially just and educationally uplifting leadership practice in which the teacher is an agent of change within and beyond the classroom and who espouses a view of teacher professionalism.

Looking back to more than a decade of transformation, it would have been expected for South African schools to have been transformed into forces of change and opportunity. However, on the contrary most of our schools are characterised by a state of neglect, a culture of striking teachers, violence and a state of apathy on the part of the school management teams and post level one teachers (Kroukamp, 2008). In defining professional ethics, SACE refers to the code of conduct or ethical code, which serves as a guideline on how to behave as a professional. The integration of these ethics into the purpose, mission and goals of the organisation is of vital importance, as ethics forms an integral part of how the organisation defines itself and how things are done within a specific organisation. Likewise there is a general agreement that professional autonomy, professional accountability, ethical conduct and knowledge are central to the notion of professionalism. According to Kroukamp (2008), the establishment of the South African Council of Educators (SACE) by the post-apartheid government signalled recognition of teachers as

autonomous professionals who are able to decide on the nature of their work. SACE has three main responsibilities; the professional development of teachers, the registration of teachers and the regulation of teachers through the enforcement of a code of conduct. However, Kroukamp (2008) argues that SACE appears to have focussed more on the latter two activities as opposed to the professional development role which ought to be its main priority. Because of this limitation, it is difficult to define teaching as a 'profession'.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The studies that have been conducted in South Africa show that teacher leadership is a relatively new concept both at the level of practice and at the level of research. Furthermore, very little research has been done on teacher leadership and professionalism in the South African context. Therefore, my decision for undertaking this study was prompted by the fact that I view teaching as a well respected profession and I believe that leadership is not only by position or appointment, but all teachers have an ability to lead whether appointed formally into position or self initiated. Hence this study aimed to contribute to the scholarship of teacher leadership and professionalism and also gain an insight on how teachers understand professionalism. My aim was to discover how teachers are leading in their schools as professionals and what some of the challenges or obstacles are that they face in light of this profession taking a knock in the eye of the public due to several teacher strikes that have been reported in the media. I also wanted to determine whether teachers are afforded opportunities to lead, not only in their respective classrooms but also within the whole school and in the community surrounding the school. In addition, I wanted to discover the role teachers play in promoting effective teaching and learning in schools.

The study, therefore, argues that teachers have been considered as political activists and union leaders, but overshadowed as professionals, and that the diminished professional role of teachers has undermined their agency and ability to practise their critical leadership role. The study, hence, suggests that teacher unions and networks have to extend their roles beyond protecting teachers' rights but to also work on enabling 'ordinary' teachers to internalise the twin ethos of professionalism and social justice activism.

1.4 RESEARCH 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?
2. What are the factors which enhance/ inhibit teacher leadership and professionalism in schools?

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research study works on the premise that leadership is about distribution of responsibilities and sharing of ideas with others and working in a culture of collaboration in order to achieve desired outcomes in a school. Therefore, I have aligned myself with the work of Gronn (2000) and Gunter (2005) who works from a distributed perspective within the field of education. According to Gronn (2002, p. 318), a distributed view of tasks and activities implies the existence of a new form of division of labour where all the work is shared among all members of a group. Furthermore, Gronn (2002) argues that the perspective of leadership must be grounded in a theory of action which requires us to rethink current organisational practices. The idea of distributed leadership, according to Gronn (2002), stands directly in opposition to the traditional ways of thinking about leadership such as that leadership is equated with headship and status is attached to it.

Furthermore, Gunter (2005) contends that distribution is not just about the technical aspects but about authority, responsibility and legitimacy, hence it is dependent on power. According to Gunter (2005) distributed leadership is characterised as authorised, dispersed and democratic. Firstly, authorised distributed leadership is where “tasks are distributed by the principal to others in a hierarchical system of relations where the principal has positional authority. Secondly, dispersed distributed leadership refers to a process where much of the workings in an organisation take place within the formal workings of a hierarchy” (Grant 2008, p.87). In addition, Harris (2004) reveals in

her studies that “there is no way to perform complex tasks without widely distributing the responsibility for leadership among roles in an organisation” (p.14). This resonates with Grant’s (2008) model of understanding teacher leadership in South Africa. Thirdly, according to Gunter (2005), democratic distributed leadership is similar to dispersed distributed leadership in that both have the potential for concerted action. This according to Grant (2008) involves teachers working collaboratively with all stakeholders, a concept that is shared by Darling- Hammond, Bullmaster and Cobb (1995).

1.6 CONCEPTUALISING A GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT

This study was conceptualized as part of a group research project. The group consisted of 8 students studying towards a Master of Education degree in Education Leadership, Management and Policy. Each group member was to conduct research in his/her own respective school. The idea of researching our own school emanated from the group because we find it easier and more convenient to collect data from where you spend most of your day. Each researcher focused on five Teacher Leaders (three post-level one educators and two school management team members). We decided as a group to include teachers from the school management team so that we can hear their views on how they understand leadership and professionalism and also to find out what are their experiences of factors that hindered or enhanced teacher professionalism in schools.

This means that as a group we developed and worked with the same data collection tools and the same research questions. However, each group member worked at different schools and therefore we each had five teacher leaders from different contexts. We then collected data over a seven month period, from October 2010 to April 2011. The collection of data and the discussion of findings as well as the actual writing of the dissertation were done individually. This resulted in a unique study with participants from unique contexts.

I.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research employed a qualitative approach using a case study method. The case was the group of five teacher leaders and each of the five teacher leaders were the embedded unit of analysis within the case. Based on my own personal epistemological stance that there are multiple truths, that people have multiple realities that are socially constructed, and that their behaviour can only be clearly understood in the light of their contexts, I found the qualitative-interpretive design appealing for a number of reasons. These include, among others, its ultimate goal of deepening our understanding of complex phenomena instead of making simplistic predictions or quantified measurements; it is the studying of respondents in their natural settings, and its ability to provide rich descriptions and explanations from the perspective of the respondents (Maree, 2007). The emphasis within the interpretive research paradigm is on experience and interpretation. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), qualitative research as an approach is concerned with understanding the processes and the social and cultural contexts which underlie various behavioural patterns. He further stresses that it is mostly concerned with understanding the “why” and “how” questions. And most importantly people are studied in their own environment in their natural settings.

A case study was appropriate for this study which seeks to explore the experiences and understanding of teachers about the kind of leadership prevailing in their school because it has an ability to present in-depth, intensive, rich and lively thick description. According to Cohen (2000, p.182), case studies aim to portray what it is like to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up reality and ‘thick description’ of participants’ lived experiences of thoughts about and feelings for a situation. Similarly, Yin (2003, p.13) also advocates that case studies investigate phenomenon within its real-life context thereby presenting and representing reality.

Discourse analysis and content analysis was used to analyse the data. Maree (2007) states that discourse analysis focuses on the meaning of the spoken and the written word, and the reason why it is the way it is. This is most relevant because most of the data which I will collect will be mainly textual. Secondly content analysis refers to the analysis of sources such as books, brochures, written documents, transcripts etc (Maree, 2007). Furthermore, he stresses that it is useful when

working with journals, closed questions on surveys, interviews or focus groups. Content analysis fits well in my research because I will be analysing data from surveys, field notes and interviews. Thematic content analysis will help me to look at the data from different angles with a view to identifying keys in the text that will help me to understand and interpret the raw data. As a qualitative researcher, my aim was not to measure but to interpret and make sense of what is in the data.

1.8 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Initially, questionnaires were used as a method of data collection. The questionnaires were distributed to the entire staff in the school so as to obtain a general idea of the understanding of teachers about leadership and professionalism. Thereafter, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with the five teacher leaders. This was a good data collection tool for finding out what a participant thinks in terms of her attitudes and beliefs. For this reason I used it as one of my data collection tools to find out from these five teacher leaders how they understand leadership and teacher professionalism and what factors hindered or enhanced teacher professionalism in the case study school.

Thereafter, a focus group interview was conducted. This was because focus group interviews allowed the participants the freedom to raise issues that are important to them, rather than merely responding to a set of predetermined questions. Furthermore, participants feel safer and more secure if they are with their peers, as was the case in my study. Teacher leaders were more relaxed and jogged each other's memories and thoughts (Maree, 2007), reminding each other of certain events that had happened at school. However, the focus group interview has its own limitations as a data collection tool. Individuals may suppress or modify their true feelings when in the presence of others (Cohen, 2007). Moreover, Maree (2007, p.147) warns against "dominant individuals who may monopolize the interview or invisibly threaten the other by their presence, reduction in time devoted to each individual and the person who is afraid to speak". He further states that individuals may be inhibited when in a group where participants not only know one another, but also have to work alongside each other. However, in a focus group interview, a further limitation is that there is less researcher control, unlike in one-to-one interviews. For this reason, individual interviews were built into the research design as well.

The other data collection method that was used is the observation schedule. The aim of observing the school was that I needed to develop a contextual account of the school by observing the culture and ethos of the school. Even though I have been in the school for the past eight years, as a researcher, I needed to observe the school in the context of my study and research questions, and not as a teacher. I needed to look at things with a critical eye and question some of the assumptions which had become part of my everyday life at work. In addition to the school observation, the five teacher leaders were also be observed in a range of different contexts.

1.9 THE LAYOUGHT OF THE DISSERTATION

The outline of the dissertation is as follows:

Chapter 1 outlines the background of the study, rationale and context of the study. Before one can obtain a clear picture of how teachers understand professionalism, one must come to an understanding of leadership and what kind of teachers are teacher leaders. *Chapter Two* outlines the literature review on leadership and teacher leadership. Furthermore the literature review describes distributed leadership as a vehicle to undertake teacher leadership. This chapter also outlines professionalism and the role played by teacher unions to ensure teacher professionalism. It also examines the factors that hinder or support teacher professionalism in schools. *Chapter 3* outlines the discussion of the methods and methodology employed in this research study, it also explores the ethical issues and as well as the limitations of the study. *Chapter 4* presents findings. The final chapter, *Chapter 5*, presents the discussion of findings.

1.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the background to the study, research rationale, research aim and key questions, the theoretical framework and the structure of the dissertation. Leadership is not positional and anybody in the institution can take on a leadership role whenever there is a need to. The following chapter provides an in-depth review of leadership and professionalism and also discusses distributed leadership as a theoretical framework on which this study is aligned.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of a review of literature on education leadership and professionalism. According to Harris and Muir (2005), effective leadership is the key factor in bringing about high standards of pupils' achievement and school improvement. They go on further to say that the best leaders put pupils' learning at the centre of their leadership activities. This literature review therefore will argue that the primary purpose of education leadership is to constantly improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Therefore, teachers need to understand that their role is to ensure that schools are kept as professional places of work. The study further argues that there is no one person who can perform all the leadership duties in a school and thus schools must include all teachers in leadership activities and adopt a distributed form of leadership to ensure that teachers make the schools professional places of teaching and learning. Furthermore, the study will use distributed leadership as a framework. The study argues that it is about time that teachers become leaders in their own capacity and stop being just followers who take orders from the authority. Lastly, the chapter will outline the role that teacher unions play in promoting or inhibiting teacher professionalism.

I have organised the main argument raised by different scholars in relation to leadership and professionalism into the following broad sections: leadership, the concept of a teacher leader, professionalism, the relationship between professionalism and teaching, theoretical framework of distributed leadership, factors enhancing teacher professionalism and the conclusion. I have selected these sections because they are relevant to my study as it attempts to answer my research questions.

2.2 DEFINING THE TEACHER

In this study, I work on the premise that a teacher is anybody teaching in the school regardless of management position or status. According to Harris and Muijs (2005), the name 'teacher' is deliberately intended to encapsulate all staff engaged in supporting the teaching and learning process, including non-teaching and support staff.

2.3 DEFINING LEADERSHIP

The term leadership is understood differently by teachers in schools. Most of the time leadership is associated with position and status is attached to it (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). Therefore, it is proper in this study to first determine how leadership is defined by various authors.

Leadership has been widely discussed and studied in many areas and with a varying focus; but it still remains as an elusive and hazy concept (Doh, 2003; Rosenbach, 2003). Looking at the concept of school leadership specifically, various authors have provided different definitions of the term. Echoing similar sentiments, Spillane (2006, p.10) argues that the term leadership has been defined in numerous ways, and among those ways, many perspectives on leadership have focused on "group, process, personality and its effects". Bass (1990, p.12), on the other hand, defines leadership as the "interaction between two or more members of a group that often involve a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the expectation of the members". Furthermore, Harris and Muijs (2005) define leadership as providing vision, direction, and support towards a different and preferred state. In the same vein, Spillane (2006) argues that leadership is not something that is done to followers, but followers in interaction with the leaders and situations contribute to defining leadership practice. What emerges from all these definitions is that effective leadership is inherently about challenging the status quo in order to bring about desired change. Furthermore, as the above definitions suggest, this desired change cannot be brought about by an individual person, but instead it involves an array of individuals with various skills and expertise. Therefore, this study argues that leadership is a process and not a position and hence teachers need

to be involved in leadership activities of the school because they have a vital role to play in bringing about professionalism in schools.

Taking the notion of leadership further, West-Burnham (1992), argues that leadership concerns mission, vision, values, strategy, creating direction and transformation of the organisation. In a related sense, Coleman (2005, p.2) describes leadership as frequently regarded as a “person with visionary flair to motivate and enthuse people regardless of his /her lack of managerial, planning or administrative skills”. Similarly, Thurlow (2003) describes leadership as concerned with personal initiative and new activities, and may take on symbolic and inspirational roles. In other words a leader is someone who has a passion for the organization and his/her aim is to make sure that the vision and mission of the institution are lived. And as advocated by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), this could be done by anyone in the organization because they believe that everybody has the potential to lead whether formally or informally.

2.3.1 Formal leadership

Contrary to the above definitions of leadership, other literature on leadership has revealed that most of leadership in schools has been focused on a singular view where one is regarded as the ‘heroic’ leader. This refers to an individual, a sole leader, usually the principal, and it is also hierarchically focused (Wilkinson, 2007). This individual is viewed as a superhero that has the necessary skills and competencies to bring about the desired change to the institution. This person is formally appointed after a series of interviews and is therefore regarded as a solution to the problems of the school because of his or her knowledge and skills. All of this reinforces the message that leadership is primarily a singular rather than a collective activity. This individualistic view of leadership dominates the field of school leadership. (Gronn, 2000, p.219) describes this kind of leadership as an “as naive realism or belief in the power of one”. It is based on the assumption that performance by an individual, team, or school depends on the leadership of an individual with skills to find the right path and encourage others to take it (Yulk, 1999). This is further perpetuated by the idea that Matriculation results in schools are used as a yardstick to measure the success of a school and therefore principals find themselves under pressure to perform. However, I argue in this study that there is no one institution that can be successful

without working together in collaboration with the individuals who make up the institution because even the success of any school is as a result of different individuals working together.

Similar sentiments are shared by Grant (2006), writing in a South African context, that leadership was historically understood as headship, position, status and authority was attached to the meaning. Principals were always at the apex and the rest of the teachers were followers and important decisions concerning school management were decided upon by the principal and his or her school management team. However, she says, recent research indicates that everybody is now ready for change and leadership should now be undertaken by all teachers in the school, regardless of position. Hence, this requires schools to transform themselves from organizations which were historically hierarchically structured, to what Senge (1990) calls learning organizations. Therefore, teachers need to shift from a follower role, and operate as teacher leaders taking up leadership roles both formally and informally (Harris and Spillane, 2008). Hence in this study, I argue that if schooling is about improving teaching and learning, then teachers are to be involved in leadership activities of the schools because their actions affect the professional status of the school.

2.3.2 Problems associated with formal leadership

There are a number of problems which are associated with the heroic view of leadership. The first problem is that school leadership is equated to the principal of the school and his or her great skills and expertise (Spillane, 2006). This poses a problem because the principal alone cannot bring about the desired change in the institution. Other leaders (who are usually put at the periphery) such as post level one teachers, administrators and other professionals, are sometimes not mentioned. It is only the principal who receives all the praise, glory and recognition, yet the other role players just mentioned, also play an important role towards the success of the school. This fixation with a heroic leader continues despite evidence generated on school research, which reveals that a school principal does not have the monopoly on school leadership (Spillane, 2006).

Furthermore, Harris and Spillane (2008) maintain that in the increasingly complex world of education, the work of leadership will require “diverse types of expertise and forms of leadership flexible enough to meet changing challenges and new demands” (*ibid*, p.31). This does not mean that a principal is no longer important but that the "dawning realisation that roughly two-decades

long pre-occupation with visionary champion is flawed" (Gronn, 2000, p. 33). A principal may have a good vision for the school, and be geared to work towards achieving it, but if it is not properly communicated to all concerned, it will just become his vision alone. In addition, most accounts of school leadership pay little attention to the practice of leadership (Spillane 2006). This is because they dwell mostly on people's roles, structures, functions and routines. Spillane (2006) argues that they focus on the "what" rather than the "how" of leadership. His main argument is that while knowing what leaders do is important, however, knowing how they do it is also essential in understanding the practice of leadership. Therefore, this study works on the premise that how teachers lead in their schools plays an important role in setting the tone of professionalism in the process of teaching and learning. Hence, this leads to a new form of leadership which focuses on a collective form of leadership rather than an individualistic view of leadership.

2.3.3 Informal leadership

McLennan and Thurlow (2003) advocate three ways of thinking about how a person-centred education can be reconstructed in South Africa. Firstly, they suggest that there is a need to maximise decentralisation and devolution of power among the school communities. Secondly, they argue that there needs to be a move away from the notion that order can be maintained in schools if the principal's position of power and authority is maintained. Lastly, they suggest an emphasis on collaboration and participation by all members of staff. My argument therefore, is that a move to involve teachers as leaders in their own capacity in schools is critical for the development of leadership if the transformation of schooling system in South Africa has to be sustained.

2.4 DEFINING THE TEACHER LEADER

Today's teachers live in a society and work in a profession where demands are continually changing and expanding. In order for them to prepare learners to be successful in their communities, teachers must be willing to learn continuously, expand their own abilities and assume their leadership roles (Ash and Persal, 2000). Therefore, this study argues that principals as leaders in their schools need to create an environment that supports collaboration among teachers, provide time for teachers to develop themselves professionally, recognise and reward, and celebrate the concept of the teacher as a leader.

According to Crowther *et al* (2002), Teacher leaders have certain characteristics such as determination, optimism and commitment. They are also known for their strong inter-personal skills, the ability to work with others, a strong focus and the ability to cope with the demands of teaching. There is evidence that these teachers are passionate about what they do, persevere and “have a demonstrable impact on student’s self-esteem and achievement” (Crowther *et al.*, 2002 p.15). These leaders learn to share ideas, take the lead in times of crisis and are able to work independently of any formal authority figure. Research also shows that teacher leaders do not wait for leadership to be delegated to them but take on leadership roles on their own initiatives (Spillane, 2006). In a study conducted by Leithwood *et al.*, (2000) it is found that the most striking characteristics of teacher leaders were their commitment to their school and the profession, the holding of strong beliefs and being committed to their children at school.

Offering another view on teacher leaders, St. John from the Inverness Research Association, characterise teacher leaders as “those who have a specific or deep knowledge about teaching as a discipline, possess a positive, student-centred interpersonal style, is a classroom expert and holds an influence with colleagues” (1999 p.15). Whilst there are aspiring teachers who take up leadership roles to be promoted to higher positions, research undertaken by the Inverness Association shows that there are teachers “who did not connect leadership accomplishments to moving up the ladder however there were those who displayed mixed sentiments” (1999 p.15). Devaney and Sykes (1999) believe that teacher leaders need to display intuition, creativity, improvisation and expressiveness. The study also indicated that leadership does not only involve a person’s skill in being able to talk in front of a crowd, but involves those who are also good listeners and choose to lead in subtle supporting ways.

Many researchers and authors have contributed to the definition of the various types of teacher leaders and the role they play in the teacher-led school improvement paradigm. It is evident from literature that teacher leadership is not a formal role or set of tasks but Grant (2005) sees it as more a form of agency where teachers are empowered to initiate and lead development work that directly affects the quality of teaching and learning. In agreement with this notion, Coleman (2000) advocates that teacher leadership is solely concerned with the idea that all organisational members can lead and that leadership is a form of agency that can be distributed or shared. Taking the notion

of teacher leadership further, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) advocate that teacher leadership implies a form of leadership where teachers lead within and beyond their classrooms; where they associate themselves with and add to a community of leaders. Their enthusiasm, according to Harris (2004), influences others to move towards improved educational and classroom practice.

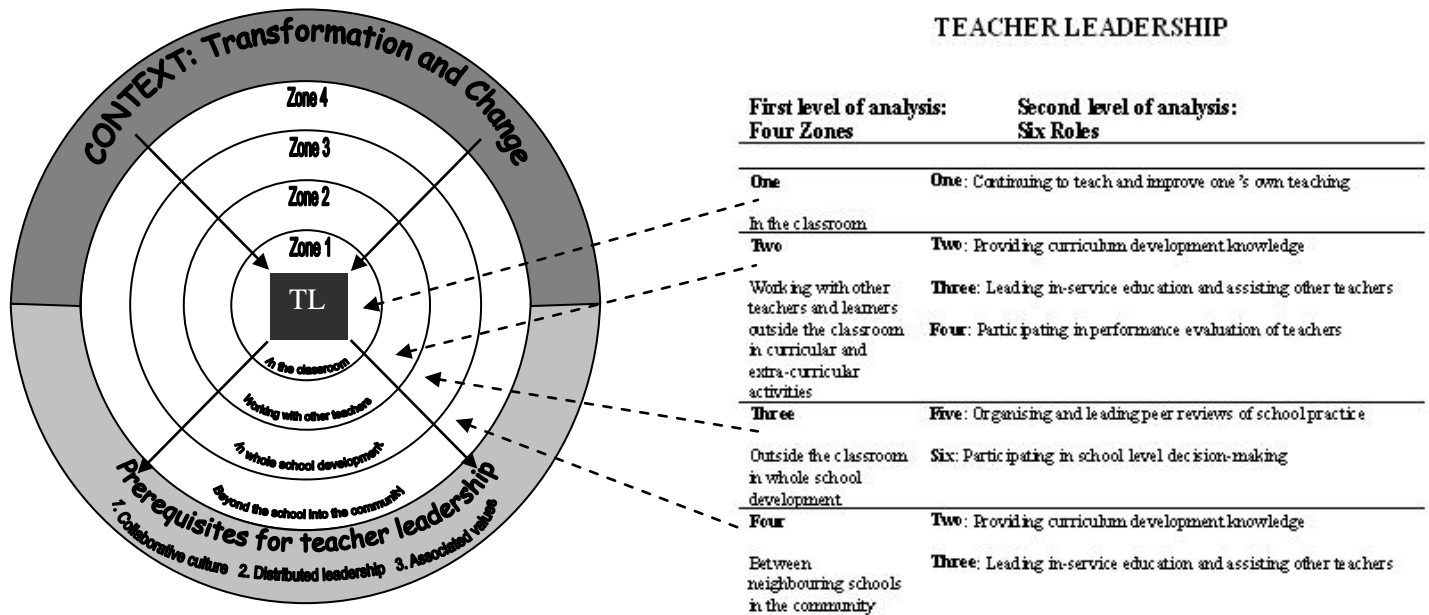
In contrast to the traditional view of leadership, teacher leadership is not only restricted to the classroom where the teacher spends most of his or her time. Instead, teacher leadership is characterised by a form of collective leadership in which teachers develop expertise by working collaboratively with other stakeholders outside the classroom. Furthermore, the practice of teacher leadership, according to Harris and Muijs (2003), is a shared and collective effort that establishes the expectations for all teachers to be leaders at various times. They go on further to assert that authority to lead is not located in one individual but is dispersed within the school, in between and among people. Therefore teacher leadership has no job description and boundaries like positional leadership but instead anybody can take up a leadership role whenever there is a need to lead.

Echoing similar sentiments, Grant (2005) refers to teacher leadership as teachers becoming aware of and taking up informal leadership roles both in the classroom and beyond. This, she argues, will require teachers to work collaboratively with all stakeholders towards a shared vision of their school within a culture of mutual respect and trust. She also suggests a shift from the taken-for-granted assumption that leadership is a male domain and challenges women teachers to challenge the status quo and move to a more distributed, shared and collective form of leadership. To explain how leadership is distributed in a school context, Grant (2008) uses her zone and role model in her research in four schools to analyse how teacher leadership is distributed. She advocates that teacher leadership exists within the classroom, between teachers working together, as part of whole school development and as extended beyond the school into the community. She is of the opinion that in order for teacher leadership to be effective, leadership should happen across the four zones.

Fig. 1: Zones and roles model

ZONES & ROLES MODEL OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

(Grant, 2008)



I concur with Grant (2008) when she says teacher leadership should be evident across the four zones in order for leadership to be effective. If teacher leadership is restricted within zone one and two in the classroom and among teachers planning together, then whole school development will not happen. The idea that School Management Teams (SMT) are the only leaders in the school has caused the SMT to claim that zone 3 where whole school planning, development and decision-making take place, belongs to them only. This has caused the exclusion of an important leadership contribution from teachers because the SMT feels threatened when ordinary teachers come up with valuable input. Some schools claim that they involve teachers in school decision making while they make them peripheral members of the committees who are excluded when important decisions are made. Therefore this could discourage teachers to develop themselves as professional leaders.

The literature has revealed that very little is known about teacher leadership in the South African context. The work on teacher leadership done by Grant (2005a) brought the idea of teacher leadership into the South African context. There is now a growing body of literature on teacher leadership in South Africa (Grant, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Rajagopaul, 2007; Singh, 2007, Khumalo; 2008). This study, therefore, aims to contribute to this scholarship, by working from the premise that teaching is a profession and therefore a distributed form of teacher leadership can be used as a vehicle to restore the professional status of teaching which is doubted by many due to the teacher strike activities that have been continuously taking place in the country.

Therefore, this new dynamic form of leadership urges teachers to assume their roles of leadership and take on more responsibility for school wide change (Muijs and Harris, 2003). In agreement with this notion, Mertens and Yarger (1998) advocate that teaching will be professionalised only when teachers become more involved in decision making that not only affects their classrooms but also their professional lives beyond the classroom. Therefore, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) are of the view that the principal responsibility for teachers is to transform schools into professional learning communities and this can be possible only if teachers are given the opportunity to assume their leadership roles, whether formal or informal.

2.5 PROFESSIONALISM

This research is concerned with ‘leaders as professionals’. It is therefore, appropriate at this stage to consider the terms ‘profession’, ‘professional’ and ‘professionalism’.

2.5.1 Defining a profession

Thus far, the literature has not provided a concise and inclusive definition of the word profession. There is, however a need for the definition as the basis for evaluating the behaviour characteristic of professionals. Furthermore, knowledge of the meaning of the word is important as it serves as

the basis of this study, and also to make clear the obligations required for teaching to sustain its responsibility to the society. A proposed definition from the Oxford Dictionary is:

Profession: an occupation whose core element is work based upon the mastery of complex body of knowledge and skills. It is a vocation in which knowledge of some department of science or learning or the practice of an art founded upon it is used in the service of others. Its members are governed by code of ethics and profess a commitment to competence, integrity and morality, altruism and the promotion of the public good within their domain.

In defining the term profession, Freidson (1994, p. 10) refers to it as “an occupation that controls its own work, organized by a special set of institutions sustained in part by a particular ideology of expertise and service”. While this seems a fairly coherent way of describing the term profession, Walker (1989, p.67) highlights that some writers have taken a different and in some cases a more sceptical perspective: that a profession is more of an “outcome of a strategy aimed at gaining monopoly control over work and exercising power over others”. The aim of this study therefore is to establish whether teaching as a discipline possesses the qualities and characteristics of a profession and if so, how are teachers demonstrating this professionalism as leaders in their schools?

Despite the fact that many writers have written on the subject of what constitutes a profession, there seems to be some consensus that a profession is characterized by its autonomy (Kercher, 1995). Sharing similar sentiments, Hodson and Sullivan cited in Gold and Bratton (2003, p.1) suggest “specialized knowledge, autonomy, authority and altruism” as possible prerequisites of a profession. Similarly, in an attempt to consolidate some of the previous writing, Locke (2005, p.25) suggests that professionalism consists of three conditions – “professional knowledge, autonomy and altruism”. This provides guidance in establishing whether an occupation is a profession or not. Looking at literature on professionalism, it is clear that it is the specialized knowledge which sets professions apart from other occupations (Gold and Bratton, 2003). However, recent teacher strike actions have resulted in a degree of public distrust of teachers as professionals and this has surfaced resulting in the public becoming increasingly likely to question and challenge the professional status and the expert knowledge of teachers.

McMillan (1993), writing on teaching as a profession points out that a teacher's professional status depends not on the training and certification but is dependent on the actual employment. This is evident when one observes that some schools can employ people without a teaching qualification and call them teachers. McMillan (1993) further alludes to the fact that unless a person is employed in a school or institution, his or her claim to the status of a teacher is doubted. But on the other hand, if someone is a doctor, his or her status is recognised regardless of whether he is practising or not. Therefore, this further raises the question of whether teaching should be regarded as a profession or not.

2.5.2 Defining a professional

The term professional can be used in the context, according to Gold and Bratton (2003) of judging an individual's behaviour at work as well as describing superior performance. Furthermore, Gold and Bratton (2003) maintain that the status of a professional is valued in society and is one to which many people aspire. Therefore, in this study, my interest is to find out from teachers whether they regard themselves as professionals and whether their teacher unions contribute in any way to their professional behaviour considering a number of strike actions that are reported in the country.

2.5.3 Defining professionalism

There seems to be varied opinions on the definition of the term professionalism. Freidson's (1994, p. 10) defines professionalism as "the ideology and special set of institutions". Professionalism therefore, according to Freidson, is concerned with the philosophy, beliefs and principles of the occupation or profession. He goes further to extend his views by talking about professionalism relating to the "control of work by professionals themselves rather than by consumers or the state" (Freidson, 1994, p. 32). This is still emphasising the importance of control and autonomy of those who are in a particular profession. On the other hand, Sachs (1997), suggest that professionalism is similar to using knowledge and skills for the purpose of reward – both social and economic. Interestingly enough, Heystek (2001) discusses how he came to the conclusion that professionalism was status related, apparently suggesting that the term had become distorted as a result of being used unscrupulously by people. He further alludes to the fact that a professional

status has to be earned. This study, hence, is interested in finding out whether teaching is a profession or not since teachers do not have full control of their work since the Department of Education still dictates what they are supposed to teach learners.

Taking the notion of professionalism further, Walker (1989, p. 65) asserts that being a professional entails “formal recognition of professional status by virtue of academic and/or professional qualifications based on knowledge acquisition and skills development, and/or acceptance by an accrediting body”. In addition to this, she further states that, being professional implies “a portfolio of behaviours, a demeanour, an attitude, and even a state of mind that shapes the way one approaches one’s work”(Ibid, 66). Therefore, this implies that merely possessing recognized professional qualifications does not necessarily mean that one satisfies the criteria of professionalism. In addition to the definition of professionalism as a set of behaviours, SACE Code of Conduct expects teachers to conduct themselves professionally by the possession of conventional attributes such as integrity, honesty, duty and respect for learners and others, and also effective communication, responsiveness to criticism and even punctuality and dress standards.

2.6 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROFESSIONALISM AND TEACHING

It has been evident from literature that several writers have contributed to the different definitions of professionalism. However, these seem to have a problem when associating teaching with the definition of professionalism. The strike actions that are constantly taking place in the country are even posing more doubt about teacher professionalism. The fact that learners are left unattended during this period of strike action poses more doubt about teaching as a profession. A similar view is expressed by Hoyle (1982) when he advocates that the professionalization of teaching is a paradox. In defining professionalism, he asserts that it is characterised by a body of knowledge, exclusiveness, lengthy training, practitioner autonomy and a code of professional ethics. However, the fact that teachers do not have any control over what is taught but instead they follow centrally prescribed guidelines, raises questions about professionalising teaching. Sharing similar sentiments, McMillan (1993) advocates that the main issue in teacher professionalization is the lack of autonomy within the profession. He further alludes to the fact that the state and district-imposed codes of professional conduct cannot be anything other than bureaucratic regulations.

In describing the notion of teacher professionalism in the South African context SACE maintains that professionalism include the idea of professional autonomy, knowledge and professional ethics. SACE views teacher autonomy as the key issue in motivating teachers compared to incentives. My interest therefore is to establish whether the autonomy given to teachers to make sound decisions, participate in leadership decisions in schools and a teacher identity that recognises distributed leadership serve as a vehicle for teacher professionalism.

Therefore, this study works on the premise that if teaching is a profession, then teachers will reflect the expected qualities of a professional and that will lead directly to improved teaching and learning. According to Heystek (2001), there have been many contradictory statements and disagreements about whether teaching is a profession. In an attempt to describe a profession, he advocates that a profession is characterised by high income, prestige and respect. However, The Educators Voice (2000) revealed that there are a low number of students enrolling in higher education institutions to qualify as teachers because of the complaints regarding low teachers' salary.

Furthermore, the employment of teachers in a bureaucracy and the association of teaching with two groups with low status in society, namely women and children, make it difficult for teaching to be recognised as a true profession by society. Another problem for teaching is the "lack of clear boundaries between professional and lay activities" (Kercher & Cauffman, 1995, p.108). In South Africa the emphasis on parental involvement in school activities may be the best indicator of the above-mentioned problem. The distinction between the areas of governance and management in schools with respect to the role of parents and the school governing bodies is not clear especially to parents who cannot read. A professional, like a lawyer, will not ask a layman to assist him/her with his professional activities. This grey area creates problems in defining teaching as a profession.

The main aim of teaching is to ensure that the culture of teaching and learning is enhanced in schools. To achieve this aim teachers play an important role because they are responsible for the one crucial part, namely teaching. The teachers' motivation to perform well and their professionalism in the delivery of a high level performance are important in this aspect. If teachers

are motivated with a positive spirit, this may result in enhancement of teaching in the classroom. Therefore, the professional attitude of teachers and the perspective of teaching as a profession can also play an important role in the enhancement of the Culture of Teaching and Learning (COLT) (Kercher, 1995). In these circumstances it is important to recognise the role that the teacher unions can play in the enhancement of COLT as well as in the professionalism and motivation of teachers.

2.7 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROFESSIONALISM AND UNIONISM

Unionism was incorporated into education with all its characteristics like industrial action, collective bargaining and lobbying. Although union membership was able to free teachers from the domination of local communities, especially in rural areas, it created problems for the professional development of the activities of teachers (Kercher & Cauffman, 1995). This statement indicates the tension between the role of a union to care for the interests of its members and the professional function of the teachers. Union activities add a moral issue to the professional activities of teachers. Hence this can cause a negative view of union activities because of the industrial action. To motivate for strike action the unions indicated that strikes will favour the learners, for example they go on a strike so as to get an improved teacher: pupil ratio (Maile, 1999). This emphasises the dual role of teacher unions and why it is difficult to characterise teaching as a true profession.

Literature on teacher unionism maintains that although union membership per se may not violate professional standards, unions have nonetheless been unsuccessful in organising professionals (Hoyle, 1982). This, he further advocates, is due to the fact that unions drew their strength from mining, manufacturing, railroad and construction workers and thus derived their blue-collar image. Therefore I argue that teacher unions focus more on economic goals and show little interest in professional problems. On a similar note, Kercher (1995) advocates that unionism and professionalism make uncomfortable bedfellows. This becomes evident when some teachers would feel that they need to carry on with their professional obligations while the unions instruct them to leave their professional places of work and go on strike. Hence this study focuses on a new form of leadership which can help teachers regain their professional status by getting involved in leadership activities of the school.

2.8 A NEW FORM OF LEADERSHIP

The concept of teacher leadership is powerful because it is premised upon the creation of the collegial norms in schools that contribute directly to school effectiveness, improvement and development (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). It is also powerful because it recognises that all teachers can be leaders and that their ability to lead has a significant influence upon the quality of relationships and teaching within the school. At its most profound, teacher leadership offers a 'new professionalism' based upon mutual trust, recognition, empowerment and support. And at its most practical it provides a way of teachers working together in order to improve the learning experience of young people.

2.8.1 Teacher leadership in South Africa

A study conducted by Khumalo (2008) in 19 schools in a township in KwaZulu -Natal, on teachers' perceptions and their experience of teacher leadership revealed that most of the teachers who were involved in committees were either selected or were delegated to by the authority. This means that there is a lot of work to be done in the South African context in order to make people aware of teacher leadership. There is this thinking amongst many people that you need to be appointed in a formal position in order to lead. Similarly, Grant (2006) also advocates that research in education has revealed that leadership has been dominated by a traditional view of leadership which separates school leaders from teachers. This was also confirmed by her research in four schools in KwaZulu –Natal where her findings revealed that leadership was still restricted to the individual classroom and was not a shared activity and many post level one teachers do not regard themselves as leaders since they are not appointed to formal positions. However, many school principals would claim that they distribute their power to other teachers whereas they dump all their unwanted responsibilities on them. Therefore in order for schools to become professional spaces of working for teachers, more work needs to be done to make teachers aware that they are professionals and they need to start behaving like professionals.

2.8.2 Teacher leadership as a move to a new dynamic form of leadership

There is a need to move away from a heroic view of leadership where one person becomes a hero because of his or her expertise. In emphasising the need to extend the notion of teacher leadership, Fullan (1995) suggests moving away from a narrow view of a single individual trying to make a

dent in a bureaucratic system towards a more complex perspective that involves multiple levels of leadership, all engaged in reshaping the culture of the school. There has to be a working together as a cohort rather than as individuals. He suggests that teachers can build a new collaborative culture. Such a culture would have the capacity to support the diverse leadership approaches and configurations necessary to 'recapture' a school. Without changing the mindset of people, it would be impossible for them to accept the change. Therefore changing organizational culture will help all stakeholders accept and embrace teacher leadership.

Sharing similar sentiments, Howey (1988, p.28) also suggests that in order to overcome problems plaguing schools, a new and dynamic form of leadership is necessary which he defines as “coalescing others to act when they otherwise might have not”. He argues that teacher leadership is a natural and necessary outgrowth of the increased demands for excellence being placed on schools. He further brings in the traditional methods of leadership where he advocates that teachers have to assume leadership positions that will enable them to model methods of teaching, coaching and mentoring their colleagues.

In a similar view, Barth (1988, p.40) asserts that “teachers harbour extraordinary leadership capabilities, and their leadership is a major untapped resource for improving schools”. He further alludes to the fact that by using energies of teacher leaders as agents of change, the reform of public education will be revived and stands a better chance of enhancing organizational efficiency. Involving other teachers in the schools means inviting more skills, more talent and more ideas that a specific individual, who is appointed to the position, might not have. Similarly, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) share a similar view when they suggest that in every teacher there is a sleeping giant of teacher leadership that is waiting to be awakened. In other words, everybody has the ability to lead if given the opportunity.

In agreement with this notion, Spillane (2006, p.6) emphasises that the success of the school will depend “in good measure on many others, who by virtue of their formal roles or informal responsibility, help lead important efforts”. Hence anybody in a school can be involved in leadership roles whether formally or informally. Gronn (2000, p.33) advocates that in an institution where teacher leadership prevails, there is no difference between leaders and followers; instead

“their relationship tends to blur”. In other words there is no hierarchy which divides leaders and followers but instead structures are horizontally organized and thus allow everybody an opportunity to take on a leadership role. Instead of principals being at the apex, Ash and Persall (2000) advocate that teachers should be viewed as leaders and principals as leaders of leaders. The relationship, they further argue, should be interactive and participative.

Teachers can be encouraged to take on their agency role by being given opportunities to lead, thus motivating them, to develop, be innovative and learn together. In a similar vein, Harris and Lambert (2003) advocate that teacher leaders are teachers that are experts in what they do and they spend most of their time in the classroom but take on leadership roles at times when development and innovation is required. They further explain that teacher leadership has as its core focus, improving learning and is a model of leadership premised on principles of professional collaboration, development and growth. Similarly, Boles and Troen (1994) characterise teacher leadership as a form of collective leadership in which teachers develop expertise by working collaboratively. Teachers learn from each other in the process when they work collaboratively. Since teacher leadership affords everybody the opportunity to lead, this implies that power needs to be shared and devolved. According to Harris and Muijs (2004), empirical studies on teacher leadership inherently point directly towards the notion of distributed leadership as a vehicle for teacher leadership.

2.9 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Linked to the notion of teacher leadership is the concept of the teacher as a professional who constantly evaluates his or her practice instead of passively carrying out orders from the management. Therefore, distributed leadership brings in the idea that varieties of expertise are distributed across the many, and not the few. In an attempt to describe distributed leadership, Harris and Muijs (2005) argue that distributed leadership is about giving teachers the opportunity to lead and take responsibility for areas of change which are of most importance to the school. Similarly, Spillane (2004) advocates that the focus of distributed leadership is on how school leaders promote and sustain conditions for successful schooling in interactions with others rather than on what structures and programmes are necessary for success. Therefore, the distributed

leadership theory which allows power to be dispersed across all members is an important factor in education leadership which intends to give teachers their autonomy by allowing them to take on their leadership role.

In other words, the essence of distributed leadership, according to Gronn (2000, p.331), is “the additional dynamic that occurs when people work together or the product of conjoint agency”. He further explains distributed leadership as more appropriately understood as “fluid and emergent, rather than a fixed phenomenon”. Therefore distributed leadership is not forced onto people and it has no formula or restrictions. Similarly, Bennet, Harvey, Wise and Woods (2003, p. 31) advocates that leadership is not located in the individual but is an “emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals” and through this dynamism people work together in such a way that they pool their initiative and expertise. He goes on to say that distributed leadership involves devolved leadership. In addition to this notion, Harris and Spillane (2008) present the view that distributed leadership involves interaction of multiple groups of individuals and there is social distribution leadership where the leadership function is stretched over a number of people. They go on further to say that it involves interdependency and a share of responsibility among leaders. This could be of importance when teachers and principals in schools work together and share responsibilities with the aim to create a professional space for teaching and learning.

Most schools will claim to have distributed leadership when they appoint people to take on particular responsibilities. However, Timperly (2007, p.396) gives a contradicting view by pointing out that “distributed leadership is not the same as dividing task responsibilities among individuals who perform defined and separate organizational roles, but rather it comprises dynamic interactions between multiple leaders and followers”. Sharing similar sentiments, Gronn (2000) suggests that in a distributed form of leadership, there is a different power relationship where there is no difference between leaders and followers instead their relationship tends to blur. Therefore, this kind of collaborative effort becomes “greater than the sum of its parts or individual efforts and thus moves from the heroic view kind of leadership (Spillane, 2006 p. 3).

In a distributed leadership environment everyone feels important and that there is something valuable that he or she can contribute. In extending the idea of distributed leadership, Harris (2004)

describes distributed leadership as a concept that concentrates on engaging expertise where it exists in the organisation rather than seeking this only through a formal position or role. She further argues that the distributed perspective focuses on how leadership practice is distributed among formal and informal leaders where they pool their expertise. Therefore, distributed leadership is focused upon teams rather than individuals and places a greater emphasis upon teacher, support staff and student as leaders (Harris, 2004).

A useful characterisation of distributed leadership is offered by Gunter (2005), where she suggests that distributed leadership is currently, in research being characterised variously as authorised, dispersed leadership and democratic. Authorised distributed leadership is where tasks are distributed from the principal to others in a hierarchical system of relations where the principal has positional authority. This type of leadership, she further explains, can also be termed ‘delegated leadership’ and is evident where there are teams, informal work groups, committees, and so on, operating within a hierarchical organisation. A concomitant of this is provided by Harris and Muijs (2003) when they advocate that teacher leadership roles cannot be imposed by management. Secondly, dispersed distributed leadership refers to a process where much of the workings of an organisation take place without the formal working of a hierarchy. This type of leadership promotes private interest of individuals through collective action. Thirdly, democratic leadership recognises the value of dissent as opposed to assuming political neutrality.

Another view of distributed leadership that invites everybody on board to become part of the leadership community is brought in by Spillane (2006, p.3) where he advocates that a “distributive perspective is about leadership practice which is the joint interaction of school leaders, the followers and aspects of their situation such as tools and routines”. Therefore leadership is not simply something that is done to followers, but followers in interaction with leaders and the situation contribute to defining leadership practice. He further alludes to the fact that distributed leadership means more than multiple individuals taking responsibility for leadership. Instead, there is a leader plus other leaders at work and the interaction between these leaders, followers and their situation is what is paramount. Therefore the emphasis for distributed leadership is not on an individual but instead the emphasis is on the relationship and interaction of people. Similarly, Harris and Spillane (2008) advocate that a distributed model of leadership focuses upon the

interactions rather than actions of those in formal and informal leadership roles. Contrary to authorised distributed leadership, Spillane (2006) goes on to explain that distributed leadership is emergent. Therefore this type of leadership is not just delegated, but it should be taken on by people on their own initiative.

In other words, distributed leadership concentrates on engaging expertise where it exists in the organisation rather than waiting for people to be appointed into formal positions (Harris and Muijs, 2005). They go on to say that distributed leadership offers the school ‘multiple’ sources of guidance and direction, following contours of expertise in an organisation, made coherent by a common culture. Therefore relationships are the most important characterisation of distributed leadership. In agreement with this, Gehrke (1988) advocates that there should be a kind of relationship between leaders and followers which is an authentic relationship where leaders treat others as valuable humans who have the ability to contribute to the community of leaders instead of as objects.

Research has shown that the engagement of teachers in processes of decision-making and school development allows for a deeper, shared understanding of leadership (Harris and Muijs, 2005). Similarly, Sergiovanni (2001) talks about the concept of leadership density and the benefits of more people being involved in the work of others, which in turn builds trust, initiates new ideas and assists with decision making. Hence, in such circumstances, a larger number of people in the organization have an input to the success of the school. Therefore, Harris and Muijs (2003) advocate that whatever definition of teacher leadership one chooses to adopt, it is evident that the emphasis is upon collective action, empowerment and shared agency which are reflected in the distributive theory.

2.9.1 Relationship between distributed leadership and teacher leadership

Distributed leadership, like teacher leadership abandons the singular view of leadership where leadership is about the relationship between the leader and the follower to a collective form of leadership where power to lead is devolved across the individuals. A distributed form of leadership

works on the premise that leadership is about using the expertise of individuals in an organisation without having to seek these through formal positions (Harris, 2004). Furthermore, Grant (2010) contends that teacher leadership cannot be viewed in isolation but instead it needs distributed leadership framing to give clarity on how and why teacher leaders do what they do and not only describe what they do.

2.9.2 Criticism of distributed leadership

However, Harris and Spillane (2008) acknowledge the fact that distributed leadership is not a blueprint but it can be used as a way of understanding leadership practice and exploring the possibilities of transforming organizations to achieve school improvement. It cannot be claimed that distributed leadership works in a linear smooth fashion because when one works with people there are a lot of factors involved because of group dynamics and this could result in distribution of power which may not work at all in some institutions. Furthermore, there is little agreement about the meaning of the term ‘distributed leadership’ and this lack of clarity presents a real danger that it will be used to mean any form of “devolved, shared or dispersed leadership practice” (Harris and Spillane, 2008, p.32). Timperly (2005, p.417) also warns that distributing leadership over many people can involve the risk which “may result in the greater distribution of incompetence”.

2.9.3 The benefits of a distributed form of leadership

According to Lieberman, Saxl and Miles (2000), several studies concluded that empowered teachers and distributed leadership impact on student performance as well as the teacher leader’s own professional learning. I concur with the idea that having teacher leaders on staff can lead to an improved work ethic and quality for both the school and learners. Teachers are the ones closest to the classroom and can implement changes that make a difference to learning and learners (Harris and Muijs, 2005). Different teacher leaders bring with them their expertise and creativity that can help improve on the vision of the school. The fact that principals are willing to relinquish their powers to the rest of the staff will give the teachers a sense of ownership and they would want to commit to the school. In agreement with this, Barth (1988) advocates that when the collective capabilities of teachers are brought together to deal with complex problems, to manage ambiguous tasks, and to develop new courses of action then their commitment to the profession increases.

In an attempt to improve school effectiveness and professionalism, Day and Harris (2003) advocate that there are four discernable dimensions of the role of teacher leadership. The first dimension, they suggest, concerns the role played by teachers when they translate the principles of school improvement into practice in the classroom. In other words, teachers are the ones who are at the ground level where implementation takes place. Therefore teacher leaders play a vital role in implementing those policies leading to school improvement. Secondly, it deals with participative leadership where teachers feel that they own a particular initiative. Being part of an initiative makes it easier for people to be sharing the responsibilities and be committed to the consequences of its success or failure. A third dimension is the role played by teachers as mediators drawing from their own experience and expertise as well as doing research. In teacher leadership, teachers work together collaboratively to share their ideas with others.

In extending the idea of collaboration in the school, Wenger (1998) brings in the notion of 'communities of practice' where teachers work collaboratively in a school community. He advocates that individuals derive their understanding of their work from the community of practice within which they carry it out. People who work together as a community share the same values and beliefs and thus they have a common goal (Bush, 2003). Finally relationships are formed when teachers work together in a collaborative manner. In this way, they also learn from each other.

Being a teacher leader also builds confidence in teachers and they feel they belong to the school community. In support of this notion, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001, p.32) advocate that when teachers lead, "they discover the potential to influence student learning through their own actions". Teacher leaders can provide a positive motivation to learners because while they model their leadership roles, they are also life-long learners who are constantly developing themselves. According to Harris (2004), a distributed form of teacher leadership is premised upon high levels of teacher involvement and encompasses a wide variety of expertise, skill and input. This will be of great benefit to school improvement. In addition to this notion, Bennet *et al* (2003) also advocate that the outcome or energy when people pool their expertise is greater than the sum of their individual actions. In agreement with this, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) are of the view

that research findings suggest that empowering teachers to take on leadership roles enhances their self-esteem and work satisfaction, which in turn leads to higher levels of performance due to higher motivation.

Motivated teachers do not feel exploited when they have to contribute to the school and perform duties that are beyond their call of duty. In a similar vein, Harris and Muijs (2005) argue that if schools are to become better at providing learning for students, then they must also become better at providing opportunities for teachers to innovate, develop and learn together. It is through shared goals and values that effective schools are generated. There is clearly a definite need to promote teacher leadership. In the same view, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) are of the opinion that the crucial key to educational change and school improvement is the teacher. They further advocate that by using the power of teacher leaders as agents for school change, the reform of public education will stand a better chance of building momentum. Therefore, there must be an emergence of a community of leaders that will take on leadership roles without being limited by the boundaries of hierarchical traditional leadership.

2.10 FACTORS THAT HINDER PROFESSIONALISM

The main problem with teachers as leaders and professionals is that they are also civil servants who function within the state bureaucracy and as Courts (1995) argues, teacher leaders and bureaucrats function in very different - often hostile ways. Furthermore, another argument against the professionalization of teachers is that unlike doctors and lawyers, teachers cannot select their own clients, control the standards of entry into their profession, or charge money for their services. Therefore, this section serves to highlight the problems teachers encounter as leaders in their attempt to maintain professionalism in what they do in schools.

According to Yonezwa et al (2011), one third of all new teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching. She further states that the reasons why many novice teachers leave the teaching profession range from pull factors such as more lucrative paying jobs on the outside to push factors such as frustration with the low status and harsh working conditions often found in many of the most challenging urban settings. According to Ingersoll & Smith (2003) cited in

Yonezwa et al (2011), experts on this issue, state that the problems are twofold: *attrition* from those leaving the teaching profession and *migration* from those moving to teaching jobs at other types of schools. Regardless of why teachers choose to leave, they do so at alarmingly high rates causing a substantial loss of talent and energy and a significant loss of resources, which schools and districts spend much on when beginning teacher training. This result in a revolving door effect of teachers with no teaching qualifications in schools serving some of our most challenging and low-income language learners and minority students and this undermines the teaching profession. Related to teacher retention, is the role played by teacher unions to ensure that professional teachers stay in the teaching profession and that the professional status of teaching is retained.

2.10.1. Unionism

Most of the teacher unions endeavour to foster both academic excellence and professionalism in schools. However, the professional ethics they wish to manifest in the teaching profession are let down by unprofessional actions by their members that lack knowledge about their vision. Presenting a similar view, Kerchner (1995) advocates that the main functions of teacher unions are to collectively set and enforce standards for teaching and to represent teachers' economic and work condition interests. But, teacher unions are operating within complex bureaucracies that have characterised public education. This has resulted in power, given to the unions to protect employees at the expense of the expectations of the employer.

The history of teacher trade unionism in South Africa dates back prior to the 1900s. A trade union is described by Woods (1999, p.7) as “an agency and a medium of power seeking to address the imbalance of power in the workplace”. Consequently, most unions are seen as concentrating more on collective bargaining and ignore problems of school operation and learner achievement (Kercher, 1995). Unionism was incorporated in education with all its characteristics like industrial action, collective bargaining and lobbying. Although unionism was able to free teachers from the domination of local communities, especially in rural areas, it created problems for the professional development of the activities of teachers (Kercher & Cauffman, 1995, p.111). This statement indicates the tension between the role of a union to care for the interests of its members and the professional function of the teachers. Union activities add a moral issue to the professional

activities of teachers. The public normally has a negative view of union activities because of industrial action.

2.10.2 Incentives

According to literature on professionalism, incentives play a vital role in enhancing professionalism. As pronounced by McGuigan (2011) in her research on professionalism, lower salaries for many positions in the teaching profession have caused job seekers to look for opportunities outside the profession and this has led to a shortage of qualified professionals. Research in teacher leadership in the South African context by Khumalo (1998) also revealed that one of the factors that hindered the enactment of leadership in schools is that teachers feel that they cannot take on leadership roles because they are not incentivised for them. Furthermore, Darling-Hammond (2003, p. 65) identifies four major factors that play a role in teacher attrition: “salaries, working conditions, preparation, and mentoring support in the early years”. Therefore, it is clear that incentives encourage teachers to put extra efforts in their teaching profession.

2.11 CONCLUSION

This literature review has attempted to describe how teachers can lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of work. The literature has defined leadership and professionalism as described by various authors. Furthermore, the literature review has outlined teacher leadership within the distributed framework as an alternative form of leadership that can be employed by schools in order to restore professionalism. Lastly the literature review has outlined factors that hinder and factors that promote professionalism in schools.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two reviewed literature on leadership and professionalism, formal and informal leadership, distributed form of leadership as a vehicle to professionalism in schools and factors that hinder professionalism in schools. In chapter three I intend to discuss the methodology used to gather relevant data that will enable me to answer the research questions.

The merits and demerits of choosing qualitative data are highlighted, as well as the rationale for using the sampling method chosen. The reason for the choice of participants involved in the data collection process will also be outlined. The rationale behind the use of questionnaires, interviews, observations, and document analysis as data collecting methods will also be explored.

To remind the reader, the core question in this study is: How can teachers lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of teaching and learning? And the Subsidiary Questions are:

1. How is professionalism understood by teachers?
2. What are the factors which enhance/ inhibit teacher leadership and professionalism in schools?

The broad focus of the study was to gain an insight into how teachers understand professionalism. Furthermore, the study aimed to discover how teachers are leading in their schools as professionals to ensure that schools are professional places of work, and what are some of the challenges or obstacles that they face in the light of this profession taking a knock in the eye from the public due to teacher strikes that are reported in the media. The researcher also wanted to determine whether

teachers are afforded opportunities to lead not only in their respective classrooms but also within the whole school and in the community surrounding the school. In addition, the researcher wanted to discover the role played by teacher unions in promoting effective teaching and learning. Therefore, the methodology used as well as the research methods were chosen in such a way to allow the researcher to answer the research questions.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study has employed a qualitative approach as a research design method. A qualitative approach has the highest potential to generate data about teachers' understanding of leadership and professionalism. As put across by Neumann (1977, p.328), "qualitative data are empirical and involve documenting real events, recording what people say (using words, gestures, and tone), observing specific behaviours, written documents or examining visual images". Furthermore, Smit (2005, p. 5) asserts that "qualitative methodologies, such as observations and interviews are important in research to explore day to day interactions in the classroom and how teachers construct their own social settings". He goes on further to say "Qualitative research is naturalistic, it is research based on a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena of interest". Moreover, research is carried out in real-life situations where people are observed in their own contexts.

Aspects of interpretive educational research informed this study since it aimed to understand how teachers understand leadership and professionalism and also to find out whether there are some factors that restrict professionalism in schools. Based on my own personal epistemological stance that there are multiple truths, that people have multiple realities that are socially constructed, and that their behaviour can only be clearly understood in the light of their contexts, I found the qualitative-interpretive design appealing for a number of reasons. These include, among others, its ultimate goal of deepening our understanding of complex phenomena instead of making simplistic predictions or quantified measurements; it's studying of respondents in their natural settings, and its ability to provide rich descriptions and explanations from the perspective of the respondents (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

Furthermore, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p.22) state that the “central endeavour in the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subject of human experience”. According to Neuman (2000, p.71), the interpretive approach is the “systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through direct and detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social world”.

3.3 METHODOLOGY

In this section I discuss the different types of methods that I used in this study and their importance in helping me to answer the research questions. I also discuss how the primary participants were sampled.

3.3.1 Methodological approach

My research employed a case study method to frame the investigation of the research questions. Defining the case itself initially, presented a number of challenges and the dichotomy was to establish whether the *school* or the *teacher leaders* themselves were the case of inquiry. Anderson *et al* (1998, p.153), state that “one difficulty in case study research is actually defining the case...in any case study, the researcher should have a clear vision of what the case is and what the unit of analysis will be examined”. For the purpose of my research, the case was the school where the research took place and the units of analysis were the five teacher leaders. As put across by Yin (1993, p. 13), a case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. The phenomenon being studied in this case is leadership and professionalism. In this regard it suffices to add that, although scholars in the discipline of education have researched the phenomenon of teacher leadership in South Africa, it still remains largely under-researched (Grant, 2008). Whilst previous studies were predominantly studies of teacher leadership and distributed leadership, I have undertaken to conduct a deeper, more interpretive qualitative study on the concept of leadership and professionalism.

Furthermore, Yin (1994, p. 13) defines case study research as:

“The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than the data points, ... and relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulation fashion, ...benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis”.

Therefore, in case study research, contextual conditions are of paramount importance.

Furthermore, Case studies are usually qualitative in nature (Mouton, 2004) and allow for large amounts of data. The advantage of this is that large amounts of data allow 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). Furthermore, Cohen *et al* (2007, p. 258) believe that “the significance, rather than frequency, is a hallmark of case studies, offering the researcher an insight into the real dynamics of situations and people”.

Case study invokes within the researcher an academic responsibility to practice *reflexivity*, and in so doing, creates the platform for the researcher to develop his/her skills in accurately representing his findings. The main purpose behind such a postulate is that the recipients and other scholars, perhaps even the respondents themselves can at a later stage, re-experience’ their contribution to the study. This is referred to by Stakes (2005, p. 450) as the ability “to describe the case in sufficient descriptive narrative so that readers can experience these happenings *vicariously*...”

Furthermore, Stakes (2000, p.436), argues that “a case study is both a process of inquiry about the case and the product of that inquiry”. He goes on further to argue that the case is a complex entity operating within a number of contexts, which include but is not limited to physical, economic, ethical and aesthetic complexities . Therefore, this implies that the case is situational and is influenced by the events that add to the complexity of the case. According to Cohen *et al* (2007), case studies attempt to portray what it is like to be in a particular situation, to catch the close up reality and ‘thick description’ of participants’ lived experiences and of thoughts about and feelings of the situation. This implies that in a case study there is no need for the researcher to interpret events and situations, but instead they speak for themselves.

As will be described in more detail later, I administered a survey questionnaire in order to gain a general understanding of the whole staff on leadership and professionalism and I also used a

school observation schedule to gain an initial generic insight of the 'case', in this instance, the school. More detailed methods such as individual interviews, focus group interviews, observations as well as document analysis in practice were employed in the attempt to gain a rich, descriptive interpretation of the units of analysis.

3.3.2 Limitations of the case study

The case study offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon and act to advance the field's knowledge base on the trend (Cohen, 2007). However, although case study research when done correctly may produce rich, thick descriptions and analysis of a phenomenon, time and financial resources could limit the depth of the research. In this particular study, it would have been inaccurate to claim that a few hours observing the teacher leaders in the school, and interviewing teacher leaders in forty five minutes each has produced the most desirable research data. Guba and Lincoln (1981, p.377) state that "case studies can oversimplify or exaggerate a situation, leading the reader to erroneous conclusions about the actual state of affairs".

Qualitative case studies are also limited by the sensitivity and integrity of the researcher. The researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, and this could lead to a degree of data 'contamination'. This is as a result of the highly subjective nature of case study research, as well as the inexperience and 'independence' of a novice researcher like myself. A further weakness of case study lies in the analysis of the data wherein the researcher could be "so select from among available data that virtually anything he wished could be illustrated" (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 378). Even though an attempt was made to verify the information given by respondents by giving them the transcripts to ensure what was transcribed is what they meant, one cannot be too sure whether the original meaning is still there because a person might decide to change his/her mind.

Further limitations involve the issues of reliability, validity and generalisability. Hamel (1993, p.23) observes that "the case study has basically been faulted for its lack of representativeness and its lack of rigour in the collection, construction and analysis of the empirical materials that give rise to the study. This lack of rigor is linked to the problem of bias introduced by the subjectivity of the researcher".

3.4 THE CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

3.4.1 Gaining access to the research site

The research was undertaken in a rural independent high school in KwaZulu-Natal. The school was founded by Roman Catholic Missionaries and has been run by Holy Family Sisters. It has a complement of 16 teachers. The Catholic Dioceses is the owner of the school and the Board of Governors are the employers at the school. All teachers are paid by the Board of Governors. The school has a population of 660 learners of which a quarter of them are orphans and they are subsidized by the school. The high rate of unemployment, as well as the poorly educated parent community, appears not to have deterred the school from being highly successful, both academically and in extra-curricular matters. This is evidenced in the pride of the school clearly demonstrated in the display of innumerable trophies and shields, certificates and general sponsorship acknowledgments in the foyer within the administration block.

What was striking about the school is that it had no sports facilities except for a poorly maintained playground. However, the school buildings and the flooring in the classrooms are very well maintained and the learners are required to take off their shoes before they enter the classrooms. Even though the school is situated in a rural area, the school grounds are well paved. There is a minimal learner dropout of less than 1% per annum, largely due to the availability of sound educational practice, a strong Catholic ethos and reasonable school fees of R400 per annum. The school adopts a contemporary business-like approach to its teaching, with careful attention paid to time-on-task, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and a high degree of collegiality amongst the staff members.

Gaining access to the school was not difficult because I teach in the school. However, coming as a researcher brings in a different feeling to the people. The principal of the school asked me several times about the fact that I was not going to use the information gained during the research to disadvantage the school. He was also worried about the teaching time that could be lost during observations and interviews. However, the principal showed interest in the study and was hoping that after the study, I would come and show him the findings. He was also very helpful in distributing the questionnaires to the teachers during the staff meeting.

A letter from the University that was asked permission to conduct the study in this school was given to the principal. He asked for some time to read it carefully but thereafter he had no problem with the study taking place in the school.

3.4.2 Sampling the participants

The sampling of the school as well as the respondents for my project was informed by the purposive preference to qualitative research. According to Cohen *et al*, (2007, p.114), “researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typically or possession of the particular characteristics being sought”. I chose the purposive sampling method because I wanted to include a school, as well as teacher leaders, who were willing and able to participate in the research study. Choosing this independent high school was convenient for me because I also teach at the school and that would minimise costs of travelling and also having to ask permission to leave school. The school is also well known for its good matriculation results and good discipline. This has made the school a perfect sample in line with the observation schedules of 2011 M. Ed. students (Appendix 2). This purposive school sample then was in line with the recommendation by Stakes (2005) in that the researcher should choose that case from which she/he could learn the most.

Working in my school had an advantage in that I know the school very well and that made it easier for me to observe on my own without having to rely heavily on the claims of the participants. The second step of the sampling phase involved the careful selection of five teacher leaders as participants in my study. As a researcher within a larger group of eight, the number of respondents was a pre-determined feature of the entire group project, and I was therefore limited to sampling three post level one teachers and two SMT members. This was not a difficult task but the problem was my position as a researcher. Some of the participants felt that they had to give me the “correct answers” and feared that they did not have adequate leadership knowledge. Therefore I had to constantly assure them that I was not looking for the “correct answers” but instead I was looking for their honest opinions based on what they believed in.

3.5 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Basically, five data collection methods are anticipated at this stage, namely, questionnaires, individual interviews, focus group interviews, observations and document analysis.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaire that was used in the study was created by the 2011 M.Ed (ELMP) group. The aim of the questionnaire was to elicit mainly biographical data from each participant as well as some details about the school itself. The second section was comprised of closed, multiple choice questions and the final section consisted of open-ended questions. According to Bailey (1994), the structured, closed questions permit for quick coding, are direct to the point and more focused than open-ended questions. Where rich and free accounts of responses were sought, open-ended questions were used. Furthermore, the open-ended questions were used to triangulate the data provided by both the individual and focus group interviews.

The questionnaires were given to the principal to distribute during a briefing session. The teachers were explained the purpose of the questionnaires and anonymity and confidentiality was guaranteed to the respondents. The questionnaires were not the primary source of data for my research, but instead it was used to verify statistically, the broad idea of how teachers understood leadership and professionalism as well as how they ensured that their schools are professional places of work. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences, (SPSS), was used to make various inferences from the data generated from questionnaires.

3.5.2 Interviews

The study has employed individual and focus group interviews as methods of data collection. Cohen (2006, p.351), contends that “the interview is a flexible tool for data collection enabling multi-sensory channels to be used “. He further suggests that “the order of the interview may be controlled while giving space for spontaneity and the interviewer can press not only for complete answers but also for responses about complex and deep issue”. Therefore, the use of interviews in

research marks a move away from seeing human subjects as simply manipulable and data as somehow external to individuals, and towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, often through conversations (Kvale, 1996).

As put across by Cohen (2006), interviews enable participants to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view. In these senses the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life, but it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable.

Three post level one teacher leaders and two SMT members were interviewed. The interviews were standardized open-ended interviews. The exact wording and sequence of the questions were determined in advance, and all interviewees were asked the same basic questions in the same order.

3.5.2.1 The strengths of standardised open-ended interviews

Cohen (2006) advocates that respondents answer the same questions, therefore increasing the comparability of responses, and are complete for each person on the topic addressed in the interview. It also reduces interviewer effects and bias when several interviewers are used, and permits decision makers to see and review the instrumentation used in the evaluation. It also facilitates organization and analysis of data.

The open-ended interviews have the great advantage of asking open-ended questions. Cohen (2006) also argues that open-ended questionnaires are flexible, they allow an interviewer to probe so that she or he may go into more depth if she chooses to, or to clear up any misunderstandings. Open-ended questions also enable the interviewer to test the limits of the respondent's knowledge, they encourage cooperation and help establish rapport, and therefore allows the interviewer to make an assessment of what the respondent really believes. While the individual interview is a good data collection tool, it also has its limitations. Power relations can influence the process of the interview (Dyer, 1995). Even though I was a post- level one teacher, their outlook on me may

have changed when I became the researcher. This could have influenced their responses where they may have given me what they thought I wanted to hear. Furthermore, Cohen (2006) is of the view that there is little flexibility in relating the interview to particular individuals and circumstances, since standardised wording or questions may constrain and limit naturalness and relevance of questions and answers.

3.5.3 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The focus group interview was intended to obtain the views of all the participants and allow them to debate their ideas. Maree (2007) asserts that focus group interview strategy is based on the assumption that group interaction will be productive in widening the range of responses, activating forgotten details of experience and releasing inhibitions that may otherwise discourage participants from disclosing information. He further adds that many researchers argue that focus group interviews produce data rich in detail that is difficult to achieve with other research methods, but it may happen that some participants experience a focus group as threatening and researchers should be attuned to this possibility and also observe the focus group process carefully.

As put across by Maree (2007), in focus group interviews, the participants are able to build on each other's ideas and comments to provide an in-depth view that is not attainable from individual interviews. Unexpected comments and new perspectives can be explored easily within the focus groups and can add value to the study. The combination of post level one teachers as well as members of the SMT in this research was ideal because as a researcher I was able to hear views from both perspectives and also see if the teachers are given the opportunity to lead in the schools so that they can contribute to making them professional places of work.

Cohen (2006, p. 351) asserts that "if the interviewer does his or her job well (establishes rapport, asks questions in an acceptable manner and if the respondent is sincere and well motivated), accurate data may be obtained". Therefore, this will be much to the advantage of the researcher who wishes to obtain accurate results. However there are some limitations in the use of focus group interviews as a data collecting tool. As put across by Maree (2007, p.91), "some of the

limitations reported in the literature are that the focus group samples are typically small and may not be representative”. He further alludes to the fact that that all participants must be able to congregate in the same place at the same time, which is particularly difficult if the potential participants live in geographically distant regions. In addition, the information collected may show bias through group processes such as domination of the discussions by the more outspoken individuals, and the difficulty of assessing the view points of less assertive participants

3.5.4 OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

From time to time, the participants were observed in order to ascertain how they execute leadership and how they ensure professionalism in their places of work. As advocated by Maree (2007, p.830), “observation is the systematic process of recording the behavioural pattern of participants, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them”. He further adds that “observation occurs as an everyday activity whereby one uses the senses (seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting) – but also our intuition to gather bits of data”. As a qualitative data gathering technique, observation is used to enable the researcher to gain a deeper insight and understanding of the phenomenon being observed.

Five teacher leaders were observed and general observations were also carried out on the day to day proceedings of the research. The researcher’s advocacy for observation as data collecting technique is supported by Cohen (2006) who contends that the distinctive feature of observation as a research process is that it offers an investigator the opportunity to gather “live data” from naturally occurring social situations. In this way, the researcher can look directly at what is taking place in reality rather than relying on second hand accounts.

Furthermore, Cohen (2006) concludes that, the use of immediate awareness, or direct cognition, as a principal mode of research has the potential to yield more valid or authentic data than would otherwise be the case with mediated or inferential methods, and this is observations’ unique strength. Another attraction in favour is that what people do may differ from what they say they do, and observation provides a reality check, and also enables a researcher to look afresh at

everyday behaviour that otherwise might be taken or go unnoticed (Cooper and Schindler, 2001). In addition, during the observation period, the researcher becomes an active observer collecting as much data as possible and this enables him or her to have first hand information.

However, there are some limitations to the use of an observation schedule as a data collecting tool. According to Maree (2007), the risk of using observations is that, by its very nature it is highly selective and subjective. Researchers seldom observe the whole of a situation but tend to focus on a specific event or object within the whole, thereby cutting them off from the whole. The researcher should therefore be conscious of his or her biases and design ways and means to deal with them. In addition, Adler and Adler (1994, p.378) assert that “traditionally, observation has been characterized as non-interventionist where researchers do not seek to manipulate the situation or subjects, nor do they deliberately create new provocations”.

Even though observation can be regarded as a very useful research tool, it also exacts its price: “it may take a very long time to catch the required behaviour or phenomenon” and this could be costly in time and effort and it is prone to difficulties of interpreting or inferring what the data mean (Cohen, 2006, p.412).

3.5.5 THE USE OF SCHOOL DOCUMENTS

In addition to the above mentioned research tools, the researcher looked at the school documents such as minutes of meetings, school policy, teacher development documents as well as other national documents on teacher development. These documents are very crucial in this research since they will provide evidence on how leadership is distributed in the school and also outline the role of the school in giving the teachers a platform to lead their schools into becoming professional places of work.

I requested from the principal of the school copies of minutes of staff meetings and management meetings from February 2011 to April 2011. These copies of staff meetings served as evidence of

the involvement of the five teacher leaders in leadership-related issues as well as their contribution to school decision-making. The minutes of the management meeting was used to gauge the level of distributed leadership in the school as well as the involvement of teachers in professional matters of the school.

Since this as independent school, I had access to the policies like that of teacher contracts. These enabled me to see whether teachers are allowed opportunities to give input to the whole management of the school. Included in the teacher contracts were also duties of the teachers. These enabled me to observe whether teachers are only restricted to lead within their respected classrooms or they are also allowed to lead beyond their classrooms.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

In this regard, before the research began, a consent form was given to the principal of the school as well as the participants. The purpose of the study was clearly explained to the participants and they were assured about confidentiality and anonymity through the use of pseudonyms. I had to ensure nonmaleficence of participants and assured them that those who were interested in the study could access the information by reading my dissertation. Moreover, I had to envisage that the participants may not have wanted to divulge certain information and certain unpleasant emotions may have been stirred up or invoked through revealing certain incidents. I therefore informed them they were at liberty not to answer certain questions (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). When signing the letters of consent I explained and clarified their rights and because of the sensitive nature of the research, I informed them that they had a right to withdraw from the study at any time. I also stressed that in order that my research is sound and valid, they needed to be open and honest at all times. Issues such as the ownership of knowledge, privacy and individual rights were explained to them (Hitchcock, 1995).

3.7 POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

The fact that the study was undertaken in the school where I teach, did point to the subjective nature of my research. I needed to be aware of the limitations of the study and tried to look at

innovative ways to make my research sound and justifiable. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) are of the opinion that the use of qualitative method implies that people's understanding of their world is not static but is something that is ever changing. Therefore, I engaged in more than one method of data collecting which enabled me to cross-check information and this was a good way of ensuring validity.

In view of the limitations of this research, it was important that my research be made, trustworthy, sound, and justifiable. Questionnaires were initially used to obtain the general understanding of the teachers' view of leadership. I enhanced the validity of my study by interviewing the participants and observing them as they undertook their leadership roles as well as engaging in document analysis. In this way thick, rich data were obtained and were used to cross-check information. The use of purposive sampling ensured that I choose my five participants carefully so that I could rely on the information obtained. Verifying information obtained during and after the interviews also ensured content and construct validity. This was made possible by ensuring that I returned the transcript to the participants after each interview for proof reading and ensuring that the correct information was captured (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Neuman (1997, p.426), data analysis is defined as "a search for patterns in data, recurrent behaviour, objects, or a body of knowledge". Once a pattern is identified, it is interpreted in terms of a social theory or the setting in which it occurred. Furthermore, data analysis also involves examining, sorting, categorizing, evaluating, synthesizing, and contemplating the coded data as well as reviewing the raw and recorded data.

3.8.1 Discourse analysis

Basically, discourse analysis and content analysis will be used in this study in order to analyse data. According to Maree (2007), discourse analysis focuses mainly on the meaning of the spoken and the written word, and the reason why it is the way it is. He further stresses that discourse analysis is thus concerned with studying and to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance,

inequality and bias, and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced and transformed within specific social, economic, political and historical contexts.

As Cohen (2006) explains, after data from the interview have been collected, the next stage involves analyzing them, often by some form of coding or scoring. With qualitative data, the data analysis here is almost inevitably interpretive, hence the data analysis is less a completely accurate representation as is the case in the numerical, positivist tradition, but more of a reflexive, reactive interaction between the researcher and the decontextualised data that are already interpretations of a social encounter.

3.8.2 Content analysis

Content analysis is a systematic approach to qualitative data analysis that defines and summarises message content (Neumann, 1997). This is also echoed by Maree (2007, p.102) who defines content analysis as “the analysis of such things as books, brochures, written documents, transcripts, new reports and visual media”. As a researcher I employed individual as well as focus group interviews as methods of data collection. I believe that content analysis is the ideal approach to analyse data. According to Niewenhuise (2007), content analysis is a process of looking at data from different angles with a view to identify keys in the text that will help to understand and interpret the raw data. Furthermore, he adds that content analysis is an inductive and iterative process where we look for similarities and differences in text that would corroborate or disconfirm theory. Therefore, in this research study in particular, a typical content analysis was analysing the school documents such as minutes of meetings, teacher development plans, SACE Code of Conduct, which are the crucial documents under the spot light.

The next chapter outlines the data presentation and discussion of findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The South African education system is faced with a myriad of complexities and challenges. Therefore, this makes it difficult for one leader to manage the whole school on his/her own. Similar to Harris and Spillane (2008), I argue in this chapter that in order for teachers to lead their schools into being professional places of work successfully, a distributed model of leadership, which focuses upon the interactions rather than actions of those in formal and informal leadership roles, must be employed. Furthermore, I agree with Grant (2006) who maintains that teacher leadership as a vehicle for distributed leadership should ideally run parallel to formal leadership, and for a school to be successful, teacher leadership should complement rather than compete with formal leadership. To concretize this, The Norms and Standards for Educators (2000), calls for greater participation of teachers through democracy and collegiality within schools. It requires teachers to take on seven roles, among them that of a Leader, Manager and Administrator. This study therefore calls for teacher unions to assist teachers in ensuring that their professional status is maintained by fulfilling their expected leadership roles.

The focus of this Chapter, therefore, is to analyse the data and pick out the major themes and findings that emerged. This unfolded through a process of interpretative data analysis and a summary of the data is presented. The data presented in this chapter was gathered during individual interviews, focus group interviews and during observations. In essence, the chapter aims to provide answers to the following questions:

- How is professionalism understood by teachers?
- What are the factors that hinder or enhance leadership and professionalism in schools?

4.2 THE POTRAIT OF THE SCHOOL

The school being researched is situated approximately forty five kilometres from the centre of the town, in the heart of a rural area. The school opened its doors 46 years ago with only missionaries and nuns as teachers. But now it has a complement of 38 teachers. It has a strong Catholic ethos with close ties to the Catholic Institute of Education (CIE), with foreign donors and religious professional support.

The Archdiocese of Durban is now the owner of the school and the Board of Governors is the employer in the school. All teachers are paid by the Board of Governors. However, due to lack of funds, the school is now in the process of being transformed into a public school on a private property. When one of the Teacher Leaders explained that, he mentioned that the teachers are very excited about the transformation because it is something that they have been fighting for since the 90's. However, the owners of the school were not eager to hand the school over even though the funds of the school were drying up because they feared that the Catholic ethos was going to be forgotten and the school could encounter problems of crime and drugs like that experienced in the surrounding public schools.

However, the teachers feel that they want to keep the ethos and the culture of the school because they feel very much part of the school since about half of the staff are past learners of the school who were sponsored by the church to further their studies. The school has a population of 660 learners of which a quarter are orphans and they are subsidized by the organisation in the church. The school's vision and mission is to provide quality education to the previously disadvantaged community. The high rate of unemployment, as well as the poorly educated parent community, appears not to have deterred the school from being highly successful, both academically and in extra-curricular matters. This is evidenced in the pride of the school, clearly demonstrated in the display of innumerable trophies and shields, certificates and general sponsorship acknowledgments in the foyer within the administration block.

It was also striking to find that such a good performing school had no sporting facilities except a poorly maintained playground. One of the Teacher Leaders mentioned that they feel bad that there

are no sports facilities in the school because this could also encourage learners to focus their energies on something useful and he feels that this could reduce the minimal pregnancy rate that is reported to zero. However, the school buildings and the flooring in the classrooms are very well maintained and the learners are required to take off their shoes before they enter the classrooms. Even though the school is in the rural area, the school grounds are well paved and one could see by learners taking off their shoes when they entered the classrooms that they show pride in their school.

The teachers in this school are very strict with time. Every morning they take turns to conduct assemblies. At assembly each teacher has a turn to motivate and encourage the learners for the whole week. One of the Teacher Leaders mentioned that even though they are a Catholic school, they do accommodate learners and teachers from different denominations. However, they ensure that they observe the entire Catholic ethos when it comes to all the celebrations of the church. Each class has a turn to go to the chapel every Friday and the priest, who is the chaplain of the school, leads these gatherings. The teachers believe that it is this culture that instils in the learners respect and dedication to their school work. .

4.3 THE PROFILE OF TEACHER LEADERS

In this section I profile each Teacher Leader in order to contextualise their professional backgrounds, personalities and hint briefly at some of their leadership roles undertaken within the school. In this chapter, I refer to my primary participants as Teacher Leader A (TLA), Teacher Leader B (TLB), Teacher Leader C (TLC), Teacher Leader D (TLD), and Teacher Leader E (TLE).

4.3.1 Teacher Leader A

At the time of the study, TLA was a post-level one educator; a male age 38 years and married with two children. Although he has an impeccable command of the English language, his first language is Shona. He has a limited knowledge of IsiZulu, which is the first additional language of the school. TLA is a formally trained teacher and has a Bachelor of Arts degree, a Bachelor of Education (Honours) degree, and is currently completing a Master of Education degree in Peace

Studies. He has fifteen years teaching experience in a high school. He can be described as highly principled and stands firm in his resolve, even if it meant he was alone on various matters.

He currently teaches grades 10 and 11 English, first additional language. He is an enthusiastic teacher and has a passion to further his studies. This was demonstrated by his willingness to participate in the study. TLA is very passionate about peace-making in the classroom and within the school as a whole. He strongly believes in negotiating and solving issues amicably.

When TLA was asked to describe himself and the attributes he has, he indicated that he enjoys pursuing his dream of academic excellence. He also enjoys working in a peaceful environment where there is respect for leadership as well as teachers and learners. He mentioned that “ *I consider myself a very lucky person to be able to be part of the teachers in this school. This school still has respectful and dedicated learners like back home in Zimbabwe where I use to teach*”.

He went further and mentioned that even though they are not happy as teachers about the fact that they do not earn as much as their colleagues who are in public schools, they are proud of themselves and the 100% achievement that their learners have achieved over the years. During teaching observations, TLA demonstrated that he understands the idea of distributed leadership. In his class there is a mixture of learners from the Science group and Commerce group. They move around to their respective lessons during the other subjects except for the Languages and Life Orientation.

To ensure fairness to both groups, TLA has got the class to select four class monitors, two from each stream. The four monitors are very active and constantly consult whenever they need guidance. During the lessons, TLA gets learners to pick an unknown word and say something about it. When asked, he said “ *I encourage them to read the dictionary so that they will be familiar with these words. It is good for them because one day they will have to leave the school and face the world on their own. It helps them to become competent*”.

During the staff meetings, TLA carries his notebook and jots down everything that is being said. When asked why, he said “*it is useful to take note of what is said because you will have somewhere to refer to in case you forget. But I also use these notes as documents for my studies*”. TLA lives in one of the school cottages with his family and he is always at school on time. This indicated the sign of the quality of professionalism in this teacher leader.

4.3.2 Teacher Leader B:

At the time of the study, TLB was a post- level one educator; a female 36 years old and married with two children. Her first language is Shona and she also has a good command of the English language. She has a limited knowledge of isiZulu. TLB is a formally trained educator with a Teachers’ Diploma in Education, Advanced Teacher Certificate and Bachelor of Education (Honours) degree. She has eight years teaching experience in a high school. She can be described as a dedicated educator and very vocal when it comes to fighting for social justice issues in the school. When she was asked to describe herself and her attributes, she said:

I consider myself a dedicated teacher because I love my job. I chose teaching because I love making a difference especially for an African child. However, what makes me unhappy in the school is the manner in which leaders are chosen. There are no criteria for appointment except that if the leaders feel that you will not challenge their leadership and not pose a threat, then you are given a position. Anyway all these positions are not remunerated; I guess that is also discouraging. I am happy that things are beginning to change and I believe that people with proper qualifications and skills will be appointed to positions when the school transforms.

She currently teaches Economic and Management Sciences from grade ten to twelve. TLB fully understands the Norms and Standards policy for Educators which expects teachers to be lifelong learners. She has a passion to further her studies and plans to study for a Bachelor of Commerce degree next year. She believes that one can be anything one aspires to be regardless of one’s background. She explained proudly:

We teach our learners to work hard and not be discouraged by their background. We are very proud of them because we have not heard that they drop out of the university. We produce learners that can compete with learners from affluent environments, although we

do not even have a proper laboratory, and this makes us really proud of ourselves. What is encouraging also is that we have REAP which is a Catholic scholarship from CIE, so most of our learners do make it to Universities.

During my observations in her lesson, TLB makes learners sit in groups and she walks around stopping at each group. She said “ *I am teaching them to be independent because they will not learn anything if you spoon feed them all the time.* TLB understands the policy of the National Curriculum Statement that expects teaching to be learner centred instead of teacher centred. She explained to learners that at the University they will be on their own and they must learn to discover new knowledge on their own while they are still at school.

During our interview session, she said “ *I will not be there to mother them. They also learn better when they hear some concepts from their peers because they get a chance to use IsiZulu because I do not speak IsiZulu*”.

TLB lives in the town with her family. They sometimes come late because they have to travel more than 90 km to school and back every day. She says she comes to school with one of her colleagues because the school is situated in a remote area where there is no proper transport available except organised transport for learners.

During our conversation, she said “*it is very difficult if you are from town. The taxi drivers sometimes leave you down the road to walk more than 5km to school when they rush to take other people to town and it is not safe around this community anymore. There are a lot of young people who are unemployed*”.

4.3.3 Teacher Leader C

At the time of the study, Teacher Leader C was a post –level one, male educator who had fifteen years teaching experience. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree and was thinking of obtaining a teaching qualification next year. TLC is a passionate member of a teachers’ union and holds an important position in the union. He is very active in the school and has a passion for leadership. He believes that leadership is about taking initiatives in the school and not waiting for any formal appointment to be involved in leadership. He also initiated an athletic club in the school which he is in charge of. TLC feels that he has contributed enough to the teaching profession and he now wants to move on with his life and pursue another career. He stresses that he did not become a teacher by choice but instead he was forced by circumstances as there was no other career for him during his time. He is very vocal when it comes to teachers’ rights and is not afraid to challenge school management during staff meetings. In my observations of a staff meeting concerning salary increment he said:

The employer must remember that as teachers we are selling our labour. Even though this is a church school, when we go to supermarkets they regard us as employees and there is no special charge for us when we buy food for our families. We are living in the same South Africa that has undergone recession and inflation like everybody else. Unlike the Nuns and the Priests, we have to pay for our houses and we have got families to support.

At the time of the study, TLC was a History and Geography teacher in grades 10 to 12. He is very passionate about History as a subject. During the time of the study, TLC and his grade 11 class were busy with preparations to perform for June 16 at the school assembly. During an interview he said:

As teachers we must not allow our learners forget where they come from because that is what shapes their future. I want them to know how other Africans struggled but made it in life. Most of our learners are orphans and they all come from a disadvantaged background as you see. But some of the former learners from this school are Doctors, Lawyers, teachers etc. So I want them to know that is nothing impossible. Most of us who work here as teachers started school here and now we are working here. So there is nothing impossible.

During my observation in his lesson, the learners in TLC's class are very quiet and attentive. They seemed very interested in what they are learning. He allows questions after every topic was introduced. His classroom looked as if it is the cleanest of all the classrooms in the school. What is different about this class is that it is the only classroom that consists of only 17 learners. This is the smallest number I have observed in the whole school. During our conversation he said: " *we still have a lot to do to promote the stream of Humanity. Most learners prefer Commerce or Science instead of History. So we have to explain to them that all subjects are equally valuable out there*".

4.3.4 Teacher Leader D

At the time of the study, Teacher Leader D was a post level one, female educator who acts as a deputy-principal of the school. Due to the nature of the school, no other positions are recognised other than that of the principal in terms of remuneration. She is a qualified teacher who holds a Teachers' Diploma in Education; the Advanced Teacher's Certificate and is currently studying for a B.Ed honours degree. She is one of the senior members of staff in the school because she has twenty years teaching experience in the same school. She is very passionate about the school because she says it reflects her own beliefs and values since the school belongs to the Archdiocese of Catholics and she is also Catholic.

TLD is a very dedicated teacher who currently teaches English first additional language in grades 8 and 9. She pointed out that she does not mind that she is not paid for her position because she understands that teaching is a vocation and the church does not have enough money. She feels that teachers who demand high salaries in the school are being unreasonable because every teacher who is employed by the school has explained to them about the conditions of employment and also the teacher's employment contract spells everything out clearly, that there are no benefits like those in the state schools. When explaining this she quoted the contract that every teacher signs when they are employed by the school that:

It is clear in the teachers' contract that unlike other schools, the school does not have benefits like Medical Aid or Housing and Pension. So when the teachers joined the school they knew very well what they were getting themselves into. But it is very surprising when they join the union and demand the same increment as other teachers in the public sector. I believe that teaching is a

calling and for you to become a teacher you have to be willing to sacrifice and think of the future of that poor child first before you go and embark on a strike.

4.3.5 Teacher Leader E

At the time of the study, Teacher Leader E was a post level one male educator who has five years teaching experience. TLE is a 27 year old teacher who holds a Bachelor of Education (FET) qualification. At the time of the study, he was single and had one child. He currently teaches Life Orientation to grades 11 and 12 and also Computer Applications Technology (CAT) to grades 10 to 12. TLD is the subject Head of Life Orientation and CAT. However, he pointed out that he was appointed to this position by the SMT and he is not happy because he does not get paid for it. During our conversation he said:

I and the other three of my colleagues who were appointed into positions of being Subject Heads, we decided to resign. We believe it is unfair to be given extra responsibilities without being paid for. Anyway these appointments create animosity among the staff because it is not clear what criterion is used to appoint people into positions. So it is better to resign than to be hated for something that you do not even get remuneration for.

During my observations, TLE was walking around in the computer laboratory giving instructions. The learners seemed familiar with the computers. During our conversation, TLE said:

“ some of these learners come with some knowledge of a computer. Most of them have a brother or a sister who owns a laptop, so they do not have difficult when it comes to using a computer. It is only the new concepts that they have to master and all of them start Computer Applications Technology from grade 10.”

However, he also mentioned that they are now having difficulty maintaining the computer laboratory because some learners only pay school fees at the end of the year and the school does not have money to pay the technician because the computers need to be serviced frequently.

4.4 UNDERSTANDING PROFESSIONALISM

In this section I am going to outline the responses to the questions gathered during individual and focus group interviews. I am going to speak to the three themes that emerged. The themes are: formal training, personal attributes and status of the profession.

4.4.1 Formal Training

In order to unearth the natural though spontaneous response from the five participants in my study, I began by exploring their understanding of professionalism first, followed by their experience of leadership in the school. In this case study, I found each teacher leader had described the concept, professionalism, largely according to their experiences in the school and the roles they played in the school.

From data gathered, it was evident that Teacher Leaders associate professionalism with formal training and qualifications. According to Heystek (2001), a professional person is characterised by someone undergoing a long period of training with the aim to acquire formal qualifications. Bott cited in Heystek (2001) sharing similar sentiments, is of the view that a profession is a vocation and a calling especially of a learned, scientific or artistic kind, and can also be described as a form of employment requiring some degree of learning . In a similar vein, Walker (2011) asserts that being a professional entails formal recognition of professional status by virtue of academic and/or professional qualifications based on knowledge acquisition and skills development, and/or acceptance by an accrediting body. Furthermore, he goes on to define a profession as “a skilled occupation, within an organised framework, having an accepted body of knowledge, needing structured training, requiring maintenance of skills, guided by a code of conduct” (p.16).

Similarly, four of the Teacher Leaders thought that teaching is a profession and one has to undergo at least three to four years of training in order to qualify.

TLA in particular supported this idea during the focus group interview by arguing that “*one cannot take a person from the street and give him or her responsibilities of a teacher*”. He went further to say that “*one has to undergo thorough training in order to obtain the necessary expertise of imparting knowledge to the learners*”.

This idea is also supported by literature where several writers inherently agree that professions have, at their heart, a specialist body of knowledge within an organised framework, needing structured training and guided by a code of conduct (Gold and Bratton; 2003, Locke; 2004; Harrison; 2006). TLA went further with this idea where he extended his views in the focus group interview where he stressed that professionalism means “*absolute adherence to the professional ethics in the teaching profession*’.

In a similar vein, in describing the notion of teacher professionalism, the South African Council of Educators (SACE) also maintains that professionalism includes the idea of professional autonomy, knowledge and professional ethics. TLA believes that the leadership of the school can play a vital role in promoting teacher professionalism by giving teachers an opportunity to share ideas. During observations in a staff meeting, TLA shared his view by saying “*as teachers, we need to instil discipline in our learners and that cannot happen if we cannot listen and respect each other and by working together co-operatively*”.

The teachers were recently coming back from a period of strike action that took two days because two of their colleagues had their working contracts terminated without notice and there was bitterness in the school between leadership and teachers.

When asked whether TLA considers his school a professional place of teaching and learning, he responded by saying that “*to a certain extent, yes because unlike other schools, our school is functional*”. He also stressed that in order for the school to be a professional place of teaching and learning, leadership plays a vital role. He mentioned that because of the nature of their school, their leadership structure has loop-holes in terms of skills and expertise because people are appointed not because of their abilities and this could jeopardize professionalism. He went further to say that:

When you look at our teachers’ contract each and every point stresses that all power to make decisions in the school is vested in the principal of the school. There is nowhere where you find other leaders like the Deputy-Principal or Heads of Department being mentioned. This is what makes teachers unhappy in the school because as you know this

kind of employment here is not secured. If you are unhappy you are told that you are welcome to leave, so nobody wants to lose their job.

On the contrary, Sachs (1997) asserts that leadership requires teachers to be skilled practitioners who can work collaboratively and independently.

Similarly, TLB and TLD also thought that teaching is a profession. In particular, TLB mentioned that “*you need to spend quite a number of years acquiring the skill, attitudes and values that you will need to use in the classroom*”. She went further to say that:

I feel that the Department of Education does not do justice to the teaching profession when it allows principals to pick up people soon after Matriculation and then give them the responsibilities of a teacher whereas they do not have the necessary knowledge and skills that are required. This definitely compromises the future of our learners because the so called teacher needs to familiarise him/herself with the work first before going to class. This means that the way he/she understands a concept is the way she/he is going to teach his/ her learners without verifying whether that is correct or not because there is no time for verification because of workload.

In support of this notion, Walker (2011) asserts that being a professional entails formal recognition of professional status by virtue of academic and/or professional qualifications based on knowledge acquisition and skills development, and/or acceptance by an accrediting body. It is clear from the responses from these Teacher Leaders and literature on professionalism that professionalism is inherently associated with qualifications, knowledge, skills and expertise.

Contrary to this, TLC thought that teaching is not a profession. He supported his views by explaining that in a rural school like theirs, they use their past learners as teachers since the school does not have enough money to pay professional teachers. He explains that the good results that make the school so popular are because of these teachers who never went for formal training. In support of this idea, McMillan (1993), writing on teaching profession, points out that a teachers’

professional status depends not on the training and certification but is dependent on the actual employment. However, TLC mentioned that at a later stage most of these teachers obtain their professional qualification through distance learning. However, it is inherently clear that, unlike other professions, the teaching profession can be practised without the academic or professional qualification.

When TLC was asked whether he considers the school a professional place, he replied by saying “*to a certain extent*”, however, he was not satisfied by the way people were appointed to leadership positions and also the rigid nature of management. He further alluded to the fact that when one person dominates leadership in the school, all valuable teachers’ views are ignored and the school ends up being managed by one man’s ideas. Sharing similar sentiments, Gold and Bratton (2003) are of the view that the teaching profession is not recognised and accorded the same respect as other professions because of the bureaucratic nature of leadership. Similarly, Bush (1995) advocates that the hierarchical nature of structural models in school organizations encourages impersonal relationships among staff.

4.4.2 Personal attributes

It was also evident from data gathered during the individual as well as focus group interviews that the Teacher Leaders regarded a professional person as a person who behaves and dresses in a certain way. Similarly, Walker (2001) asserts that being professional implies a portfolio of behaviours, a demeanour, an attitude, and even a state of mind that shapes the way one approaches one’s work. Furthermore, Hoyle (1980) is another education scholar who portrays professionalism as the quality of one’s practice. In other words, “the behaviours exhibited by a professional teacher are what identify a teacher’s professionalism” (p. 90). Similarly all five Teacher Leaders agree that in order for one to fit the description of a professional, one has to possess a formal qualification and behave in a certain way. TLA in particular is of the view that professionalism means “*adherence to the professional ethics*”. In extending this view further, TLD asserted that:

Professionalism is the high standard that is expected from a person who is well trained in a particular field of study. A professional person is a person with great skills and the ability,

a teacher who is competent, dedicated and caring, one who is able to fulfil various roles outlined in the norms and standards for educators.

TLB also extended this idea by pointing out that “*a professional person is a person who models the Code of Ethics as outlined by Norms and Standards for Educators*”. In a similar vein, TLD suggested that “*a professional person is the one who carries out his or her responsibilities as specified by the teacher contract*”. He went further to allude to the fact that good leadership is characterized by transparency and integrity and respect for fellow educators.

similarly, Gold and Bratton (2003) believe that the term ‘professional’ can be used in the context of judging an individual’s behaviour at work as well as describing superior performance.

In extending the notion of professionalism further, Walker (1989) is of the view that in addition to formal qualifications, teachers may be expected to conduct themselves professionally by the possession of conventional attributes such as integrity, honesty, duty and respect for others, but also effective communication, responsiveness to criticism and even punctuality and dress standard.

Similarly, TLB thought that professionalism means dressing properly and having a good relationship with your peers as well as the authorities. She stressed that “*professionalism involves dedication to one’s work and respecting your learners as your clients by honouring teaching periods and being punctual*”. Therefore, this implies that merely possessing recognized professional qualifications does not necessarily mean that one behaves professionally. In extending the notion of professional behaviour further, the SACE Code of Conduct expects teachers to conduct themselves professionally by displaying attributes such as integrity, honesty, duty and respect for learners and others, but also effective communication, responsiveness to criticism and even punctuality and dress code standards.

In extending this view, the SADTU Code of Conduct for teachers stipulates that:

“The teacher teaches in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice as to race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical characteristics”. It is inherently clear that merely possessing a qualification does not make one a professional, but instead the way one

conducts oneself plays a vital role in categorizing one as a professional. Therefore this raises the question that has caused a debate in the public- *whether teachers neglecting learners and going on a strike for a month are portraying a professional behaviour or not? (I-I).*

Furthermore, TLD continued by including the importance of school leadership in ensuring professionalism. He is of the view that *“being professional means leading in such a way that you respect other teachers as professionals and giving them an opportunity to voice their concerns”*(F-G).

TLC continued further and explained that the problem with the school is that the constitution and the teachers’ contract is written in such a way that all power to decide is vested in one person and this gives no room for other teachers to take up leadership roles. Similarly, Wilkinson (2007) states that, literature on leadership has revealed that most of leadership in schools has been focused on leadership as a singular view where one is regarded as the hero who has come to save the institution. This means that an individual who is a sole leader is the only person that is recognized as a leader, and it is also hierarchically focused. This individual is viewed as a superhero that has the necessary skills and competencies to bring about the desired change to the institution. However, Harris and Spillane (2008) urge teachers to shift from a follower role and operate now as teacher leaders taking up leadership roles both formally and informally.

4.4.3 Status of the profession

Some of the Teacher Leaders thought that professionalism is about status and people must regard teaching as a professional duty. Similarly, the SADTU Code of Conduct stipulates that a teacher must act in a manner that maintains the honour and dignity of the profession. During our interview session, in describing professionalism, TLA said: *“to me teaching is a noble profession that makes me accountable to the citizens of South Africa”*. He extended his views during our focus group interview to say *“we as teachers have a great responsibility to shape the future of our young children”*.

TLD extended this idea by saying that *“teaching is a calling and we must serve with honesty and dedication and not always be after money”*. TLC believes that teaching as a profession must be regarded with respect and people who have been called to the vocation must do their duties with honesty and dedication. During our focus group interviews, TLE extended the notion of professionalism by saying: *“our responsibility as teachers is to mould these young minds, as painful as it is, because we do not get paid as we would like, but the fact remains that these young minds look up to us as their mentors”*.

On the contrary to these ideas, TLC provided a shift in the status of teaching by saying that: *“Teaching is not a profession, it is just a job to support my family, however, we are knowledge workers, and as such we have a responsibility to both ourselves and to the public to become reflective practitioners”*.

Because of frustrations and challenges that are there in the teaching profession, TLC shifts the status of teaching from being regarded as high and respectful to being ‘just another job’. During my observations in a staff meeting, TLC strongly articulated the view that teachers, like all the other workers, must be paid fairly for their services since they are selling their labour to the employer.

According to Yonezwa et al (2011), one third of all new teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching. She further states that the reasons why many novice teachers leave the teaching profession range from pull factors such as more lucrative paying jobs on the outside to push factors such as frustration with the low status and harsh working conditions often found in many of the most challenging urban settings. Three of the Teacher Leaders stated that they did not choose teaching as a career. TLA who is very dedicated and passionate about children in particular said :

To be honest enough, I never chose teaching as a career. I actually wanted to be a lawyer but it all came as an error in my choice of programme when I applied at the University. I fought in order to change the choice but I actually failed. So I did not choose teaching as a

career, but fortunately I later once developed an interest to such an extent that I have always been feeling comfortable for all the years I have been a teacher.

However, he mentioned that although he has no regrets and had good experiences in teaching, he still feels that he needs to leave the profession and explore other disciplines.

During the interview session, TLB in particular, spoke strongly about teaching being a profession, she said

I believe that allowing people without a teaching qualification to teach compromises teaching as a profession because you do not find nurses and doctors being picked after Matriculation and being sent into hospitals. That is why I believe that the same should apply to the teaching profession and I believe that maybe if the government needs to put more remuneration into the teaching profession so that they do invite people with proper qualifications with relevant skills that are required for the particular school. There is this belief that most of the people that we find going into the teaching profession now are those that have not been accommodated in certain sectors of the economy and just find their way to the teaching profession and that I believe compromises the status of a profession.

When asked whether he chose teaching as a career, TLD answered *“I didn’t really choose teaching as a career. But I did it to support my family. Most of us ended up in this qualification because it was a kind of a career that was available at that time and was easier to access than other disciplines. Teaching is not an attractive job nowadays because of money as well as children that are now using drugs and misbehave”*.

Walker (2011), writing on professionalism of English Teachers puts forth the view that professional providers have an ethical, perhaps even a legal duty to act in the best interest of their clients. This is extending the idea that professionals have a professional responsibility and duty to the people they are offering the service to. It is also clear that some teacher leaders think this status is due to the fact that they have been called to do the teaching job but others, like TLC think that that teaching is just selling your skills to the employer and you deserve a salary for that. On the contrary, Walker (2011) is of the view that professional associations commonly represent the

interests of members and may be responsible for monitoring professional standards according to regulations promulgated by the association or a statutory body.

4.5 FACTORS THAT HINDER PROFESSIONALISM

4.5.1 Teacher unions

Taking the notion of professionalism further, Kerchner (1995) advocates that the main functions of teacher unions are to collectively set and enforce standards for teaching and to represent teachers' economic and work condition interests. But, teacher unions are operating within complex bureaucracies that have characterised public education. This has resulted in power, to protect employees, given to unions to be more powerful at preventing things from happening than in getting things done. When asked whether their union develops them professionally, four of the Teacher Leaders were of the view that they have not benefitted professionally from the union ever since they joined. In particular TLA said:

I have never learnt to be developed professionally since I joined this union. Instead members of the union recruited more members within the school and staged a three day strike that tore the administration and members of staff's relations wide apart. Teacher salaries were docked and up to now nothing has been refunded. This has caused a serious division that take ages to mend.

When TLA was asked how the teachers' strike action, that took place towards the end of 2010, affected their school, he said:

Since we are not part of the public schools, the public teacher strike did not affect us that much, but in our school we had our own problems with our leadership and teachers who were part of SADTU recruited more members within the school and staged a three day strike that tore the administration and members of staff's relations wide apart. Teachers' salaries were docked and up to now nothing has been refunded. This has caused a serious division that will take ages to mend. This led to serious disrespect for one another and hatred.

TLB responded such when asked whether her union has helped her develop professionally:

As of late not much development, I haven't received much development from the union. I am talking from my own personal experience I don't know others but personally I haven't got an opportunity to be developed by a union, the only thing that I see the union being

actively involved in is when it comes to issues of bargaining and negotiating for better working conditions and better salaries.

When she was asked whether she sometimes experiences a clash between her professional identity and union identity she said: *“I believe that there is a clash that takes place when you are following, I want to give an example of the strike action that took place last year in the public schools. I can’t remember whether it was three or four weeks and you find that there are some professional teachers who would have loved to be back in the classroom to give help to the learners but because the union required them to be on the streets they couldn’t do that. So that is where I find that there is a clash”.*

When she was asked whether the unions provide adequate information and support to help teachers develop professionally, she said *“No, because the strikes tend to be politically motivated than professional”.* When she was asked how the strike action that took place in 2010 affected them, she said *“The strike did affect us because we could not work for some of the days because of fear of intimidation despite the fact that we were not part of the strike as a private school”.*

On the contrary, TLC who is a leader in his union responded thus: *“they organise workshops and they form learning area committees to help us. They also encourage teachers to develop projects like Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD). There is also a Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC) initiated by unions to develop teachers in dress code. Teachers must be presentable because they are leaders in their capacity and also learners look up to them as leaders”.* However when asked whether he ever experienced a clash between his professional identity and union identity he said:

Yes. Sometimes the union takes decisions for us. When you say teaching is a profession, there are principles and professional ideas of the employer that guide you as an employee. On the other hand the unions are representing the employee’s interest. Therefore, there will always be clashes between the employer and the employee in terms of policies that are there. For instance, the Department policies dictate how a teacher should behave, whereas the union has its own way of solving problems. For example, the union would require

teachers to embark on a strike action to demand certain things and that causes a clash between what the employer wants because learners will not be taught during that time.

When Teacher Leader D was asked how the union helps to develop teachers professionally, she replied “ *I chose not to be a member of the union because I saw that union members in this school do not have a good intention in the lives of our poor learners. There is a lot of tension between union members and the SMT so I could not join because my interest is to uphold the vision and the mission of the school*”.

TLD was then asked whether the teacher unions provide adequate information and support to help teachers develop professionally, she said “*No, members of the teacher unions need thorough training themselves so that they can be able to help the teachers to develop professionally otherwise the teachers in this school abuse their membership by not co-operating at school with the hope that the union will fight for them*”.

With regards to how the teacher strike action that took place in 2010 affected their school, she said:

The learners were very much affected by that strike and that also affected grade 12 results. The fact that during those recovery periods the teachers was not serious at all about teaching and this made things worse. I think it is very important to think of learners even if we have our own grievances but we should do it in a way that will not have a negative influence on the learners.

4.5.2 School Culture

Nowadays teachers live in a society and work in a profession where demands are continually changing and expanding. Therefore in order to ensure proper preparation of their learners to be successful in this society, teachers must be willing to develop themselves professionally, expand their own abilities and assume their leadership roles. This can only be possible if principals create an environment that supports collaboration among teachers, provides time for teacher professional

development, and recognizes rewards and celebrates the concept of the teacher as a leader (Ash and Persall, 2000). It is therefore inherently clear that the culture of the school must be conducive in order for teachers to take on their leadership roles and this could help them lead their schools to become professional places of teaching and learning.

When TLA was asked whether the culture of their school encourages teachers to introduce and lead new initiatives, he replied” *new initiatives are not easily taken for one has to undergo a lot of explaining in order to convince management that the initiative is relevant for the learners. You need to prove beyond a doubt that what you want to do will be viable*”. TLA came out very strongly on this point and one could see that it is frustrating not to be trusted when coming up with an initiative.

Similarly, Ash and Persall (2000, p.15) assert that “teachers should be viewed as leaders and school principals as leaders of leaders”. They go on further to advocate that trust should drive the working relationships. When TLA was asked to talk about some of the leadership opportunities that he has had or that he think he could have had as a teacher he said:

In this school I have never had the opportunity to lead. You know, one is afraid even to organise a trip for learners to go for an educational tour. I guess it is because of the private nature of our school that makes it so difficult. You have to be very brave and very careful when organising a trip because you will end up responsible for everything if something wrong happens. But from the school in my country, I had some leadership opportunities to be a deputy-head master from what I gathered a lot of experience and I know what it means to be a leader while being a teacher.

TLB was asked whether the culture of her school encourages teachers to introduce and lead new initiatives, she replied: “ *the culture does not allow because the management is too rigid and tend to criticise and scrutinise everything you do*”. In a similar vein, Stoll and Fink (1996) argue that it is impossible to examine school culture in isolation because it is inextricably linked to structure. In other words, culture is so subtle that if one tries to infer a school's culture from existing structures, it is often impossible to make sense of the underlying assumptions that led initially to those structures.

Coleman (2005a) criticises these senior management teams who, at the top of the pyramid of authority as bureaucratic models of leadership, delay and unnecessarily complicates things. Furthermore, Sergiovanni (2001, p.132) states that these hierarchical leadership models emphasise “hierarchy, rules and management protocols that rely on bureaucratic linkages to connect people to work by forcing them to respond as subordinates”.

When TLB was asked to talk about some of the leadership opportunities she has had or could have had she said “ *I believe most of teacher leaders are not seen to be leaders because the management does not love the idea of giving teachers the responsibility and involving them in issues that enable them to bring out their leadership skills. I believe that it is an issue of management feeling that by giving teachers the opportunity to become leaders the power will be taken away from them. So as I said, the only leadership opportunity that I got was back home in Zimbabwe where I led a fundraising project and it was quite fulfilling*”.

In respect of whether the culture of the school encourages them to take on leadership roles, TLC said

Not at all, this culture has been like this ever since we were in grade one in this school. There has always been one voice and no other management structure has ever been recognised. So when I came to work here I knew exactly how it operates in terms of leadership and had no intentions of growing further than being a post-level one teacher. But I do want to move to other schools and try other leadership roles one day.

When writing from a distributive perspective, Harris (2004) advocates that the top-down approaches to leadership and the internal school structures offer significant impediments to the development of distributed leadership. The hierarchical structure, the separate pastoral and academic structures in schools, the subject or department divisions all contribute to present significant barriers to teachers working together in schools.

In a similar vein, Grant (2006) writing on teacher leadership argues that leadership is directly related to school culture. She is of the view that if a school wants to embrace teacher leadership, it

should develop a culture that supports collaboration, partnership, team teaching and collective decision making. Furthermore, Hopkins et al. (1999) emphasise that a collaborative culture facilitates teacher development through mutual support, joint work and a broad agreement on educational values.

Contrary to other four Teacher Leaders, TLD who is one of the members of the SMT responded to the question of whether the culture of the school encourages them to take on leadership roles as such :

Yes, the school is encouraging the educators to get involved in decision-making though the management and the principal gives the final decision, and educators are encouraged to take initiatives like the transformation of the school from private to public school on private property

This reply showed that the principal is still the only person who has the final word in everything that the teachers suggest. On the contrary, researchers such as Bennet et al. (2003), Hallinger and Heck (1999), Bush and Jackson (2002) argue that if schools are to be leadership rich, it is likely to be because of school principals with the will to make them so. Furthermore, Ash and Pearsall (2000) take this idea further by alluding to the fact that leadership is not role-specific and reserved only for administrators, rather, the job of the school leader is to fashion learning opportunities for the faculty and staff so that they can develop staff into productive leaders.

Linked to the idea of teachers as leaders is the concept of the teacher as a professional who does not passively carry out the programmes devised by others but constantly evaluates his or her practice, innovating and making decisions. The issue being raised here is the one of maximising a teacher's creativity and allowing collaborative decision-making. In a similar vein Barth (1988) suggests that without shared leadership it is not possible for a professional culture to exist. Professionalism and shared leadership can feed off each other. Thus, distributed leadership entails the view that varieties of expertise are distributed across the many, and not restricted to the few. Harris and Muijs (2005) take this a step further by defining the term 'distributed leadership' as a term that implies redistribution of power and a realignment of authority within the organisation.

4.5.3 Incentives

The innovative stance proposed by Harris (2004) whereby principals could use alternative ways to remunerate staff who take on leadership responsibilities, is a matter more easily recommended in developing countries, than it would be in South Africa. Current South African legislation (South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996) does not permit such a practice. But alternative incentives could be employed such as certificates and awards, negotiated 'time-off', and perhaps a reduction in classroom-based workload and could include removing the teacher as a form teacher where massive administrative loads are the norm.

Sharing similar sentiments, McMillan (1993) argued that in her research about professionalism, lower salaries for many positions in the teaching profession have caused job seekers to look for opportunities outside the profession and this has led to a shortage of qualified professionals. Furthermore, research on teacher leadership in the South African context by Khumalo (2008) also revealed that one of the factors that hinder the enactment of leadership in schools is that teachers feel that they cannot take on leadership roles because they are not incentivised for them.

When asked to voice his personal view on teacher leaders being offered incentives, Teacher Leader A said " *I think they should be incentivised because most of the teachers do not want to take up leadership roles if they are not paid for as is the case in other schools. They should be paid in the form of extra cash*".

Sachs (1997) in her research on professionalism argues that lower salaries for many positions in the teaching profession have caused job seekers to look for opportunities outside the profession and this has led to a shortage of qualified professionals.

Sharing similar sentiments, TLB went on to say :

I believe that it is good to incentivise teachers especially if they are taking on leadership positions in the school because it is a way of motivating them but it should be done with caution because people should not want to be in leadership positions because of money but they should desire to be in leadership because they have goals and visions they want to accomplish.

In a similar vein, Sachs (1997) presents the argument that the conditions of professional work have changed so that the predominant pattern is no longer that of the free practitioner in a market of services, but that of the salaried specialist in a large organization. However, she goes further to argue that in this age of corporate capitalism, the model of profession nevertheless retains its vigour; it is still something to be defended or something to be obtained by occupations in a different historical context, in radically different work settings, and in radically altered forms of practice.

On the contrary, TLD is not in support of incentives as a way of encouraging professionalism. When she was asked whether incentives can be used to enhance leadership in their school she said:

The idea of teachers being offered some incentives when they take on leadership roles is not a brilliant idea in a sense that in the first place we say that teaching is a calling then it being a calling means that the teacher should be ready to take whichever responsibility he/she is given without actually thinking of some kind of incentive. It actually demotivates other teachers in a sense that once other people have been promoted and they are given something, it automatically means they are at an advantage as compared to the other teachers and this creates some divisions among the staff.

4.6 LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

This study seeks to understand how teachers lead in their schools in order to ensure that they are professional places of teaching and learning. This question was answered by the five Teacher Leaders when they were asked to explain their leadership roles that they have undertaken in the school and what factors they considered as enhancers or inhibitors of their teacher leader roles in the school.

When TLA was asked whether he considered himself a Teacher Leader, he said: “ *Yes, I think so because I believe that I have done a lot that actually portrays that I am a leading model*”. When he was asked to give examples of some leadership opportunities that he had or not have had, he said “*well, I had some leadership opportunities to be the Deputy- Headmaster in my own country,*

where I gathered a lot of experience and I know what it means to be a leader in the form of a teacher”.

He also mentioned that he was appointed by the SMT because they realised the leadership talent in him. It is evident from the response of TLA that he associates leadership with position because he does not mention any of the other initiatives in the school that he presently works at to demonstrate his leadership role. On the contrary to this notion, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) are of the view that everyone in an organization has a potential to lead whether formally or informally. Harris and Muijs (2005, p.28), writing on distributed leadership assert that “distributed leadership concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organisation rather than seeking this only through a formal position or role”.

The important issue is whether an individual teacher has the expertise or not, irrespective of the position that he or she holds in a school. Sharing similar sentiments, Gunter (2005), writing on dispersed distributed leadership refers to the situation where the workings of the school are not delegated but take place without the formal working of the hierarchy. This is more autonomous, bottom up and emergent. It is acceptable because of the skills, knowledge and personal attributes of those members or individuals who take up leadership roles. I agree with the view of Gunter (2005) where Post Level one teachers may not be in formal positions but if they have knowledge on a particular issue they should have the space to take the initiative to lead and not wait for formal appointments to take on leadership roles.

When TLB was asked whether she considered herself a Teacher Leader, she said:

I believe that in one way or the other everybody within the teaching profession is somehow a leader because we are here to lead our children, to influence them, to inspire them to become professional people. We are here to inspire children to achieve their goals, to give them a vision and I believe that as a teacher you need to possess these qualities of a leader and most teachers are not seen as leaders because management does not seem to love the idea of giving teachers the responsibility and involving them in issues that enable them to bring out their leadership skills.

This is in line with the views of Harris and Lambert (2003) who state that the different definitions of teacher leadership tend to have one point in common which is that "teacher leaders are, in the first place expert teachers, who spend the majority of their time in the classroom but take on leadership roles at times when development and innovation is needed" (p.4).

Sharing similar sentiments, Grant (2006), writing in a South African school context, defines teacher leadership as: "teachers becoming aware of and taking up informal and formal leadership roles both in the classroom and beyond. It includes teachers working collaboratively with all stakeholders towards a shared vision of their school within a culture of mutual respect and trust (p.516)".

When TLD was asked whether she believes that she is a Teacher Leader, she said:

Yes, because I am the deputy- principal of the school. Although I do not get paid for that, I know that my duty is to serve my community and become a good example to the young ones. Not everything is about money and I understand the purpose of the school which is to serve a disadvantaged community.

TLD, being a member of the School Management Team, talked about teachers being given an opportunity to lead and said : *"Teachers are given the opportunity to come up with new ideas and participate in decision making, but the final decision has to come from the SMT"*.

Contrary to this idea, Ash and Persall (2000) are of the view that instead of principals being at the apex, teachers should be viewed as leaders and principals as leaders of leaders. The relationship, they further argue, should be interactive and participative. In other words teachers should not be made peripheral members and be excluded when it comes to important decision making processes.

Most schools claim that they distribute leadership when they appoint people to take on particular responsibilities. On the other hand, Timperly (2007, p.396) writing on distributed leadership gives a contradicting view by pointing out that "distributed leadership is not the same as dividing task

responsibilities among individuals who perform defined and separate organizational roles, but rather it comprises dynamic interactions between multiple leaders and followers”. Sharing similar sentiments, Gronn (2000) suggests that in a distributed form of leadership, there is a different power relationship where there is no difference between leaders and followers instead their relationship tends to blur.

When TLE was asked whether he considered himself a Teacher Leader, he said:

I still consider myself new to the field and therefore I am still learning. However, as a teacher I lead learners in my class and also currently head the Department of Humanities. So I believe that I am a leader in my own right.

When he was asked to talk about leadership opportunities he has had or could have had, he said:

I was appointed as the Head of Department of Humanities. I believe that there is something that the SMT saw in me. But we resigned as HODs because of the problems in the school, particularly in respect to school leadership. I guess maybe next year things will be better when the school transforms from private to public on private property.

Considering responses gathered from all the Teacher Leaders, it is inherently clear that leadership in this school is still associated with position. This means that where teachers are leading in formal leadership roles it is through the delegation by those who are in formal positions. This is what Gunter (2005) calls authorized distributed leadership. It also concurs with what Singh (2007) in her research in a South African context, concludes that, the kind of distributed leadership that is prevalent in South Africa is authorized distributed leadership. This is because those who are in formal positions are holding on to power and only letting go to a certain degree.

Similar sentiments are shared by Grant (2006), writing in a South African context, that leadership was historically understood as headship, position, status and authority was attached to the meaning. According to Spillane (2006), teacher leaders do not wait for leadership to be delegated

to them but take on leadership roles on their own initiatives (Spillane, 2006). Therefore there is a lot that needs to be done in this school being researched in order for teachers to understand leadership as being fluid and emergent instead of associating leadership with position and status.

4.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to find out how Teacher Leaders understand professionalism and also to find out about their leadership experiences in their schools. Furthermore, the chapter attempted to find out from the Teacher Leaders about the factors that they thought hindered their professionalism in schools. From the data gathered it clear that professionalism is associated with formal qualification and skills and expertise acquired during the time of study. Professionalism is also associated with personal attributes and people who are called professionals are expected to possess attributes like integrity, honesty and respect. Some Teacher Leaders associate professionalism with behaviour where a professional is expected to behave in a particular manner that distinguishes him/her from non-professionals.

It is also evident from data gathered that teachers are not willing to take on leadership roles if they are not going to be rewarded for them. Teacher Leaders felt that taking on extra responsibility means that a person should be rewarded by means of incentives so as to encourage this taking on of leadership roles. Furthermore, a good and conducive working environment was named as one of the attributes that encourages teachers to be professionals and take on leadership roles. A rigid hierarchical environment was named as one of the factors that hindered professionalism because this kind of environment prevents other teachers from participating in decision making in the school and hence all the matters of the organization are dictated to by one person. Lastly, the teacher unions were reported as not contributing enough in ensuring that teachers uphold their professional status. Teacher Leaders felt that the union was more powerful in bargaining for better working conditions and better salaries for their members than what their members are supposed to do in schools, which is to improve their main purpose, which is teaching and learning.

From the data I was able to see how leadership was understood by the participants. It was evident from the responses from Teacher Leaders that leadership is still associated with formal positions and formal appointment is necessary in order for a person to be recognised as a leader.

In conclusion, I concur with Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) who make a call for schools to become professional learning communities where democratic and participatory decision-making exists and where teachers are given an opportunity to lead in their own capacities to make a positive contribution in ensuring that the professional status of teaching still remains.

The next chapter presents the summary of the key findings, conclusions as well as the recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to present the conclusions of the entire study. Firstly, the summary of the key findings will be presented as they were discussed in Chapter Four. Secondly, I will reflect on the case study as the methodology that was used in this study by discussing its strengths and limitations. Furthermore, I will continue reflecting on the group research project as it was introduced in Chapter One. Based on the key findings, I then discuss a few recommendations on what can be done to promote the development of teacher professionalism and teacher leadership in schools as organisations. Lastly, I present suggestions for further research.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to contribute to the scholarship of teacher leadership and professionalism and also gain an insight into how teachers understand professionalism. Furthermore, the study aimed at discovering how teachers are leading in their schools as professionals, and what some of the challenges or obstacles are that they face in light of this profession taking a knock in the eye of the public due to several teacher strikes that have taken place. I also wanted to determine whether teachers are afforded opportunities to lead not only in their respective classrooms but also within the whole school and in the community surrounding the school. Lastly, the study aimed at gaining an insight into whether teacher unions contribute in ensuring that teachers retain their professional status by fulfilling their role of teaching and learning or not.

These questions were answered by first looking at the understanding of professionalism by teachers. It emerged from data collected that the teacher leaders understood professionalism as that of possessing a formal qualification, skills and expertise acquired during the time of study. Professionalism was also associated with personal attributes and as a professional you are required

to possess attributes like integrity, honesty and respect. Some Teacher Leaders associated professionalism with behaviour where a professional is expected to behave in a particular manner that distinguishes him/her from non-professionals on such matters of punctuality, honouring teaching periods and dedication. However of the five Teacher Leaders, TLC thought that teaching is not a profession giving reasons that most teachers from this particular school were employed before they went to tertiary institutions to obtain a formal professional qualification but they are producing even better results than schools in the public sector.

Secondly, the question of how teachers understood leadership was answered by asking Teacher Leaders to talk about some leadership opportunities they have had or might have had in the school. When this question was answered, it was clear that Teacher Leaders understood leadership as formal and a formal appointment by the SMT was necessary in order for one to be recognised as a leader. Furthermore, it was also evident that the teachers in the school were not happy about the way people were appointed into leadership positions since the school was not like the state schools. Teachers in the school were not happy to be given extra responsibility without additional incentives and were not happy that only one person in the school was recognised as a leader in terms of decision making and remuneration.

Furthermore, the lack of capacity for leadership by level one teachers as well as poor human relations amongst the staff as a whole was also identified as barriers to the development of teacher professionalism. What I found out is that where teachers were leading in the school it was only because they were appointed by the SMT. Gunter (2005) characterizes this kind of leadership as authorized distributed leadership. I also found within the school a lot of job insecurity. Teachers were afraid that they could lose their jobs if they challenged the status quo. This was also proven by TLE when he mentioned that if you join a union or try and question things or demand something these teachers are told that the gates are open if they feel that they cannot abide by their contract that they signed when they were first employed.

The second research question on what are the factors which enhance/ inhibit teacher leadership and professionalism in schools was answered by asking Teachers Leaders whether they think incentives must be given to teachers who take on leadership roles. All five teacher leaders agreed that incentives would encourage teachers to take on leadership roles. TLC in particular emphasised the idea of teachers being incentivised for taking on leadership positions because he claims that

teachers as employees are selling their labour to the employer. However, TLA mentioned that this must be done with caution because it can create tensions and divisions among teachers when they know that some people are getting extra remuneration. It was also clear from the observations that there is a lot of resentment within the research school regarding leadership and incentives. This was also confirmed by TLE who said that he and other colleagues who were appointed as Heads of Department decided to resign because they were performing extra responsibility without being remunerated.

Furthermore, the prevailing school culture was also identified as a barrier to teacher leadership and professionalism. Four of the Teacher Leaders felt that the culture within the school was not conducive for them to take on leadership roles. When TLA was asked whether the culture of their school encourages teachers to introduce and lead new initiatives, he replied” *new initiatives are not easily taken for one has to undergo a rigorous retting exercise and prove beyond the doubt that what you are initiating will be viable*”.

Four of my primary participants felt that the management style of the SMT is top down especially when it comes to decision-making. However, they do not blame the present management for this kind of culture that exists in the school because they mention that it has been like this ever since they knew the school. Therefore, anyone that comes to manage the school inherits this kind of school culture. However, teachers are looking forward to the transformation of the school from private to public school on private property which was up for discussion. According to Ash and Persall (2000), in a school culture where there is trust and collaboration, this drives the working relationships.

To answer the question whether teacher unions contribute in ensuring that teachers retain their professional status by continuing with their main purpose which is teaching and learning, Teacher Leaders were asked whether their unions have contributed in any way to their professional development. Four of the Teacher Leaders said they could not remember any of the times when their unions developed them professionally. However, TLC who was a leader in the union said that teacher unions do organise professional development workshops and provide them with learner support material during examinations. He went on further to explain that because of the nature of their school, there is not a good relationship between the school management and the union and

therefore they do not get the opportunity to attend these workshops and as a result do not have access to learner support materials.

TLD who was a member of the SMT was against the idea of a union and stated that she is not a member of the union. However, she mentioned that the union members in their school need to be developed and be taught how the unions function because this has caused a lot of animosity among the teachers who are union members and those that are not as well as between teachers who are union members and the SMT. She stressed that there are many divisions among the teachers because of the teacher union dynamics.

5.3 REFLECTION ON DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Distributed leadership was used as a theoretical framework in the study. It has been very useful in giving me the lens to use when I was looking for the type of leadership that was prevalent in the school. It has also enabled me to describe the kind of leadership that prevailed in the school that I was researching. Even if there is some evidence of distributed leadership present in the school I found that during my observation in one of the meetings the principal kept on saying “*I ensure that I consult before I make decisions*”. But the teacher leaders say that the consultation is in the form of informing them after the decision has been taken or has been decided upon. With distributed leadership as a theoretical lens I was able to describe the kind of distributed leadership that in fact took place in the school.

Furthermore, distributed leadership theory brings the concept of the teacher as a professional who constantly evaluates his or her practice instead of passively carrying out orders from the management. Therefore a distributed form of leadership, where teachers are allowed to lead in their own capacity, is necessary in this kind of school because, even though the system that is currently in operation, does help in producing good results for the school. But it is not conducive for healthy working relationships in the school. With a collaborative culture, the school can go very far because the teachers in the school are dedicated and they feel they have the obligation to uplift their community since most of them are from around the school and they also come to the school for church services on Sundays.

However, distributed leadership has its own limitations as a theoretical framework. As pronounced by Harris and Spillane (2008), distributed leadership is not a blueprint. There are a lot of challenges that can be experienced when distributing power to the people. It is not a smooth process. A leader has to guard against relinquishing too much power or too little power when practising distributed leadership. Furthermore, the fact that principals of schools are accounting officers to the Department of Education makes it even more difficult for principals to trust teachers with leadership responsibilities in the school. As a researcher going into this study with distributed leadership as the framework, has also tempted me to think that distributed leadership is the only kind of leadership that is the solution to the challenges in the school. This is so since all teachers are complaining about a management team that does not involve them in important decision making.

5.4 REFLECTION ON THE STUDY AS A GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT

Being part of the group research project worked well for me. The support that we gave each other during our contact sessions was very helpful. When working in a group you are able to share the challenges that you encounter and the group was very supportive. Working in a group might be scary because sometimes some group members dominate and others lose their identity thinking that they do not have anything valuable to contribute and hence end up conforming to whatever decisions are made. But the atmosphere that prevailed in our group enabled each and every one of us to contribute effectively to the ideas that were put forward during contact sessions. Brainstorming together as a group during formulation of a research topic saved us a lot of time. Furthermore, we managed to save a lot time as we worked as a group in the compilation of the data collection methods that we used, as explained in Chapter One.

One of the challenges of working in the group is the problem of due dates. As a group we set our own dates for the whole process of research. However, the fact was that life was not as linear and straight forward as we anticipated. There were a lot of challenges that caused the whole research process not to be smooth sailing. The fact that I was researching other people who had their own responsibilities was also problematic. It took me a long time to get the interviews done with my primary participants. The focus group was more of a challenge because we could not find the same

time where all my primary participants were free. I also found myself having to conform to a group because they wanted to use document analysis as one of the methods of data collection. I knew that from the context of the school where I work, the Department of Education and teacher union documents were not easily available in a private school.

However, working in a group for me has been of great benefit especially because we were group of eight and everybody's voice was adequately heard. Moreover, the biggest benefit that I got by working in a group was the emotional support that I got from the others. If one encountered a problem, one could phone another team member and in addition to this the supervisors gave us a lot of support. Personal challenges were there but together we managed to overcome them. Therefore I say from a personal point of view that the benefits of working in a group for me far outweighed those challenges that were there, including working entirely on my own.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS ON WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ENHANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM AND TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN THE CASE STUDY SCHOOL

This section discusses a few recommendations for what can be done to promote the development of teacher leadership and professionalism in the school that was researched.

5.5.1 Collaboration

Firstly, the main problem that was identified in the school was a big division between the SMT and the teachers. There was no collaboration between people who were appointed as the SMT and those who worked as Post-level one teachers. There was a lack of trust between the two groups. The one group felt that they are accountable to the Catholic Institute for Education (CIE) while the other group felt that the SMT was sending reports to the Archdiocese office that were not true and therefore creating a bad picture about them. The teachers also felt that the CIE did not care about the well being of the teachers because when they make certain demands they are told that if they do agree or conform then the gates are open if they want to leave. Therefore they felt that their contribution to the school is not valued. This has caused the teachers, themselves, to be divided into small groups. Therefore, in order to improve relations and communication between the SMT

and Post level one teachers, I suggest school leadership should schedule regular staff meetings where one of the SMT members and not the principal of the school chairs the meeting. If the principal always chairs the meetings it would appear as if he is dictating matters to the teachers. But if the SMT talks with one voice and involve the teachers in decision-making processes, then the teachers will feel part of the school and therefore own the decisions taken.

However, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) warn that teachers should decide if they need these meetings because if they have not healed from anything that has caused division among teachers and SMT, they will come to the meeting and not make a contribution. This means that meetings should have a clearly defined aim to avoid a situation where there is a meeting for the sake of having a meeting. Furthermore, I also agree with Harris and Muijs (2005) who are of the view that staff meetings should provide the teachers with an opportunity to participate in matters concerning teaching and learning as opposed to staff meetings that are dominated by the management of the school.

5.5.2 Teacher training on unionism

Furthermore, I suggest that the teachers be trained in terms of knowledge of how teacher unions operate. The teachers in the school seemed to have welcomed the teacher union as an ally to fight the system that they are working under. The purpose of the teacher union should be clearly defined so that even people in the management may welcome the teacher union involvement and not regard it as opposing the vision and mission of the school. Even though one of the responsibilities of teacher unions is to bargain and negotiate better working conditions for the teachers, they also have the responsibility of ensuring that the main purpose of schooling, which is teaching and learning, is fulfilled. The teachers who are affiliated to the teacher unions are regarded as unprofessional by the SMT because they do not have the knowledge of what matters pertain to the union and what is their professional responsibility as teachers. As pronounced by the SADTU Code of Conduct, the teachers shall, to the best of their abilities, ensure that they improve the lives of learners. The challenge is how to make this a reality in the school context.

5.5.3 Leadership opportunities for teachers

Like Ash and Persall (2000), I also argue that principals should now regard teachers as leaders. They must stop viewing teachers as followers who are waiting to take orders from them. As pronounced by Craig (1990) who states that principals should practice delegation consistently, I believe that principals should not be afraid to let go of some of their power and trust teachers and other members of the SMT to make a contribution to decision-making. Furthermore, the SMT should also devolve some powers to the level one teachers and create platforms for them to practice their creativity.

Furthermore, I suggest that there should be more training for principals on teacher leadership. This will alleviate the fear of principals as accounting officers and get them to trust the expertise of teachers as leaders. It will also provide the principals with the information on how to distribute leadership without compromising the standards expected by the Department of Education as well as parents. Furthermore, the principals can talk about their challenges and fears regarding leadership in their schools and thereby address the factors that hinder teacher professionalism in schools.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Certainly, it has been clear that professionalism and teacher leadership are new concepts in education. Therefore, more research can be done to establish the definition of professionalism. It has been evident from this research that teachers have different definitions of professionalism. There are those teachers who think that if they possess the necessary teaching qualifications, then they are professionals. They do not consider their responsibilities as teachers and hence that is why they do not see a problem when they desert learners and go to the streets to embark on strike action. They tend to forget that their primary purpose as teachers is the promotion of teaching and learning. Some of the teachers assume that once they obtain the teaching qualification, there is no need to develop them further. Furthermore, the behaviour of teachers has posed a question even to the parents about their professionalism. Therefore, a clear and definite term that describes professionalism is necessary in order for teachers to understand what is expected of them as professionals.

Furthermore, more research on teacher leadership should be done in schools because it is clear that schools still have a different way of understanding leadership which is top-down and hierarchically structured. Most teachers still understand leadership in terms of position and a formal appointment being necessary in order for one to be recognised as a leader. Teachers are still not willing to take on their leadership roles in schools because the culture that recognises the principal as a sole leader, still exists. Therefore a distributed form of leadership could pave the way for emergent leadership if principals let go of the fear of distributing or sharing power with other members of the school organisation.

I also believe that further research on teacher unions and professionalism is necessary in order to establish a common understanding between teaching and unionism. Teachers are in a dilemma as they need the unions to bargain for them and negotiate better working conditions and improved salary structures while at the same time ponder over the thought of compromising their identity as professionals and ignoring their primary role function in the school which is teaching and learning.

5.7 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I am of the view that this study has shown that teachers have different views on what professionalism is and therefore this has caused them to be viewed by parents and the public as unprofessional due to the teacher strikes that are reported on in the media. Furthermore, I assert that a new form of leadership that introduces teachers as leaders in their own capacity must be emphasised in schools so that teachers feel as much responsible as principals in ensuring that teaching and learning is not disturbed. Another point that I have discovered is that teachers have a problem when they have to choose between their union identity and their professional identity. Therefore, there must be a shared understanding between these two so that teachers do not find themselves in a position of having to choose one and compromise the other because this could create a division among teachers themselves and also create a void between the Department of education as the employer and teachers as employees. At the end of the day, I wish to see a professional education system that reinforces the information asymmetries of professionals through knowledge sharing that will lead not only to a strengthened teaching profession, but also to growing opportunities for teacher leadership to flourish.

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APPENDIX ONE

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	
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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		Tempora ry		SG B	
-----------	--	---------------	--	---------	--

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	NAPTOS A	NATU	SAOU
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B

: School Information:

9 Learner enrolment:

1-299	300-599	600+
-------	---------	------

1

0 School type:

Primary	Seconda ry	Combin ed
---------	---------------	--------------

1

1 Funding status:

Section 20	Section 21	Private
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1

2 Annual School Fees:

R0	R1-R499	R500- R999	R1000 - R1499	R150 0 +
----	---------	---------------	---------------------	-------------

1

3 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
1 4	That teaching is a profession.				
1 5	All teachers should take on a leadership role in their school.				
1 6	All teachers should be able to bring about change.				
1 7	My school promotes discussions on HIV and AIDS.				
1 8	That teachers are professional if they work well with others (collegial).				
1 9	That teachers are professional if they are punctual.				
2 0	That teachers are professional if they promote the image of the profession.				
2 1	The majority of teachers in my school take up leadership roles.				
2 2	That only people in formal positions of authority should lead.				
2 3	That teachers are professional if they are loyal to their school.				
2 4	That teachers are professional if they respect the dignity and beliefs of learners.				
2 6	That unions develop teachers professionally.				
2 7	That teachers are professional if they refrain from any form of improper contact with learners.				
2	That teachers are professional if they refrain from undermining the status and				

8	authority of their colleagues.								
2 9	The majority of teachers in my school are part of the important decision-making processes.								
3 0	Teachers are encouraged to take initiative in my school.								
3 1	That teachers are professional if they respect the choices of their colleagues.								
3 2	That teachers are professional if they promote the ongoing development of the teaching profession.								
3 3	That unions develop leadership in teachers.								
3 4	My school has a professional ethos.								
3 5	That teachers are professional if they refrain from discussing confidential matters with unauthorised persons.								
3 6	That teachers are professional if they promote gender equality and recognize the opposite gender as equal.								
3 7	My union's influence clashes with my professional values.								
3 8	That teachers are professional if they have a manner that is respectful to the values, customs and norms of the community.								
3 9	That teachers are professional if they use appropriate language and behaviour in their interaction with colleagues.								
4 0	That men are better able to lead than women.								
4 1	Teachers should be supported when taking on leadership roles.								
4 2	That teachers who lead should be remunerated (paid).								
4 3	That teachers should receive non-financial recognition for leadership.								

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” (Nieuwenhuis, 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.
2. 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.
3. We wish to observe how teachers conduct themselves in relation to their learners.
4. Is the teacher's leadership derived from the formal position they hold or from other factors (such as age, experience, expertise, skills. etc.)?
5. Is the leadership of teachers in the school contributing to a socially just environment (are they fair, inclusive, empowering and transformative)?
6. Are teacher leaders taking up their agency role? (willingness to innovate and change)
7. Observe the teacher's role as union members.
8. 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 think teaching is a profession?
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 opportunity you have had or have not had [follow up] 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 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 tension 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 your 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



Faculty of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Private Bag X01
Scottsville
3209

The Educator

Dear

I am currently a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am presently engaged in a group research project which aims to explore teacher leadership as it relates to 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 South African 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 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 them. 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.

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

Yours sincerely

L. Ndlamlenze (Mrs.)

.....DETACH AND RETURN.....

Declaration

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 ¹¹⁷from this project at any time.

Signature of participant

Date

.....

.....

APPENDIX 6



Faculty of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Private Bag X01 Scottsville
3209

The Principal

Dear Sir

I am currently a first year Masters in Education student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am presently engaged in a group research project which aims to explore teacher leadership as it relates to professionalism in schools. Teacher leadership is an emerging field of research in South Africa and it needs to be built upon and I believe that it has a powerful role to play in improving the teaching and learning in our South African 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 the 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, Ms C. Grant can be contacted on 033-2606185 at the Faculty of Education, Room 42A, Pietermaritzburg School (School of Education and Development). My contact number is 033 3221918. You may contact my supervisor or myself should you have any queries or questions you would like answered.

Yours sincerely

Ndlamlenze Lindiwe



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

Faculty of Education

Declaration 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 for my school to be a research school in this project.

Signature of Principal

.....

Date

.....

APPENDIX SEVEN



UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Research Office, Govan Mbeki Centre
Westville Campus
Private Bag x54001
DURBAN
4000
Tel No: +27 31 260 3587
Fax No: +27 31 260 4609
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