

Exploring teacher leadership and the
challenges faced by post level one
teachers as they operate as leaders:
a case study of two primary schools

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ABSTRACT

Post 1994, the vision of the South African education policy terrain is to transform schools into more effective places of teaching and learning. To achieve this vision, policy suggests a shift in management practices from traditional autocratic headship to more participatory leadership practices, including the leadership of teachers.

Theorizing from a distributed leadership perspective, the aim of this study was to explore the concept of teacher leadership and the challenges that are faced by post level one teachers as they operate as leaders in their schools in the South African context. The study sought to investigate how the concept of teacher leadership was understood, how post level one teachers lead in their schools and what challenges to teacher leadership are in schools. The study was conducted in one rural and one semi-urban primary school and it was qualitative in nature. A case study methodology was suitable for this study since it was aimed at gaining teachers understanding and perceptions of teacher leadership. Different methods of collecting data were used and these included interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis. Data were analyzed thematically using Grant's (2008) model of teacher leadership.

The findings indicated that teacher leadership as a concept was still new to certain teachers, even though research on the topic in the South African context is increasing. Some teachers did not think of the roles they played in a school as teacher leadership. The findings further indicated that teacher leadership was experienced differently across the two schools with teacher leadership in the rural school being more restricted than the teacher leadership in the semi-urban school, where it was more emergent. In the rural school, leadership could, at best, be described as authorized distributed leadership while in the semi-urban school, leadership could be described as dispersed distributed leadership.

In addition, the findings showed that the major barrier to teacher leadership in the rural school was resistance from the School Management Team while in the semi-urban school the major barrier to teacher leadership was a lack of time. A further barrier to teacher leadership in both schools was teachers themselves who were lazy and did not want to take on additional leadership tasks. The study also found that the major enhancing factor to teacher leadership, particularly in the semi-urban school, was a collaborative school culture where teachers trusted each other and worked together in professional learning communities.

DECLARATION

I, Knightingale Siphelele Gumede, declare that the work presented in this document is my own. Any references to work by other people have been duly acknowledged.

Signed:

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

Signed: Supervisor

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to conduct local research on the topic of teacher leadership with the intention to build on the research already done on the topic by other researchers in the South African context. Studies by Grant (2005), Grant (2006), Rajagopaul (2007), Singh (2007) and Chatturgoon (2009), for example, indicate that teacher leadership is an emerging research topic in South Africa which requires further research. My interest in teacher leadership, which was a fairly new concept to me, began when I studied the Master of Education module called *Leadership and Strategic Management* at the University of KwaZulu-Natal where I was a registered student.

The studies on teacher leadership in the South African context, at the time of my involvement in the course work aspect of the degree, focused on the various understandings of the concept of teacher leadership, the role of the School Management Team (SMT) in promoting and hindering teacher leadership as well as the factors that enhance or hinder teacher leadership. As a consequence, I decided to focus my research on the perceptions of post level one educators on the topic of teacher leadership and I was interested in finding out the challenges that they encountered as they operated as teacher leaders in their schools.

The purpose of this first chapter of the dissertation is to give an overview of the whole study. This is achieved, firstly, by discussing the background and context of the study, where I focus on leadership in South African schools during the apartheid era and compare it to leadership in the new democratic South Africa. I then outline the research problem. This is followed by the research rationale for the study. After the rationale, I discuss the aim of the research and the key research questions that informed the study. Lastly, I go on to mention the methodology and research design that was used in

conducting the study. Finally, I offer the reader an outline of each of the chapters in the dissertation. I now move on to discuss the background and context of the study.

1.2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.2.1. The Education System in South Africa during the apartheid era

When the Nationalist Party came into power in 1948, schools were formally segregated according to race and ethnic group. Before 1994, there were 15 departments of education which were established because of the racial and geographic divisions in the education system (Mda and Mothata, 2000). Bantu Education was one of the racial domination strategies adopted by the apartheid government. People resisted the implementation of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 (Nekhwevha, 2002). The state policy towards black schooling “was possibly the single most important factor accounting for the 1976 students revolt” (Nasson and Samuel, 1990, p. 17). The 1976 student revolt marked the beginning of a new phase in the educational sphere. The state was initially slow to respond to the crises provoked by the 1976 revolts. The first immediate concession was the dropping of Afrikaans as a compulsory medium of instruction (Nasson and Samuel, 1990). According to Nekhwevha, “the government responded to the 1976 uprising by changing the name Department of Bantu Education to the Department of Education and Training in 1978” (2002, p. 136). It is clear from the literature that this change of name did not bring about the change in education because racial division still remained and education was not the same for all South Africans. White South Africans still received better education than Black South Africans. The distribution of funds was still not the same as white schools were allocated a bigger budget than black schools (Nasson and Samuel 1990). This brought about the imbalances and inequalities in the education system of that time.

According to Nasson and Samuel (1990), the state was determined to ensure that, in line with the apartheid policy, the vast majority of Black children received inferior education that did not equip them for anything other than unskilled manual labour. At the same time

the “state through schooling, was endeavouring to ensure that whites were prepared for a complete monopoly of the dominant position in society” (1990, p. 19). A further attempt to restrict secondary education to a small minority was seen when the black high schools were located to the homeland (Nasson and Samuel, 1990). The apartheid government policies also promoted centralized, authoritarian control of education (Grant, 2006). The apartheid system “led to an education system characterize by racial, regional and gender inequality as well as ideological distortions in teaching and learning” (DOE, 1996, p. 18).

1.2.2. The impact of apartheid on school leadership today

During the apartheid era, school leadership and management in South Africa was hierarchical and authoritarian in nature (Lemmer, 2000). A top-down approach was used in decision making. This suggests that the principal of the school had total control and decision making powers were vested in him alone. The teachers, parents and learners on the other hand had little say in the leadership and management of the school. Even though the governing bodies played an important role in the management of the school, their role was of a supportive nature with limited decision making powers. In many instances, “they did not make fundamental policy decisions nor did they shape management policies to any great extent” (Lemmer, 2000, p.136).

Given our past political history it is not surprising that some of the schools still operate along the lines of authoritarianism where principals see schools as theirs, make their own decisions and pass them on to the teachers as orders to be carried out. In schools like these, the principals do not involve teachers in decision making processes and they control leadership autocratically. Ramphele argues that authoritarianism “expresses itself in hierarchical social relationships, high handed leadership styles intolerance of alternative viewpoints, and disrespectful treatment of the most vulnerable members of the society” (2008, p. 115). She further argues that there is urgency to root out the authoritarianism in schools and in society as a whole.

It is true that some South African schools are still suffering the adverse effects of the apartheid system (see for example DoE, 1996; Christie, 1998). The legacy of apartheid

education in South Africa has left many schools finding it difficult to survive or to produce good results. Said slightly differently, the “neglect of the quality of African education, combined with a rapid increase in numbers of students, led to the disintegration of learning environment” (DOE, 1996, p. 18). Christie (1998) describes how, during apartheid, the poor material provisioning of apartheid black schools and conditions of poverty have contributed to the low value placed on schooling. She further argues that “both the tradition of opposition and disruption in schooling and deprivation of schools and communities have not simply disappeared with the replacement of the apartheid government with a new government” (1998, p. 284). According to the Task Team Report on Education Management Development (1996), “the legacy of apartheid education has left the country with an education system that is characterized by fragmentation, inequity in provision, a crisis of legitimacy and in many schools, the demise of a culture of learning as well as resistance to changing the ways things have been done” (DOE, 1996, p. 10).

1.2.3. The need for transformation

When the democratic government came to power in 1994 there was an influx of policies from the government because there was a deep desire to wipe out the traces of the apartheid regime (Sayed and Jansen, 2001). The South African School Act (SASA) of (1996) was one policy that was developed with the aim to bring about change in the culture and practice in the South African schools (DoE, 1996). Other policies, with similar aims, include policies pertaining to school governance, Outcomes Based Education (OBE), Inclusive Education to name but a few. These policies were meant to address the imbalances caused by apartheid (Davidoff and Lazarus, 2002). Jansen (2000) argues that the “first ten years of policy making in South Africa, following official moves towards a new democracy in 1990, hinged largely on the symbolism rather than the substance of change in education” (2000, p. 41). Jansen further argues that the development of educational policies in 1990 was “in anticipation of the formal legal termination of apartheid” (2000, p. 42). As a result of the multitude of value-laden policies, schools were expected to move swiftly from the old paradigm of apartheid to a more democratic paradigm in order to address the inequalities inherited from the old

regime (DoE, 1996). The focus was on equality, democracy, non-sexism, inclusivity, a respect for human rights and diversity, as well as a call for national identity (Jansen and Sayed, 2001). At a school level, the new education policies required a shift from the traditional, authoritarian control to a school based system of education management (DoE, 1996).

The South African School's Act (1996) "requires schools to transform themselves from being institutions which historically were hierarchically structured into democratic organizations" (Grant, 2006, p.511). The Act challenges schools to move from the old, autocratic style of leadership and management to a more participatory style of leadership from various stakeholders. It requires all public schools to change the ways in which schools were led and managed and adopt democratic management practices and abandon the top-down approach. This new approach to leading, managing and governing schools led to the restructuring and functioning of schools with the introduction of the School Management Team (SMT), the Representative Council for Learners (RCL) and the School Governing Body (SGB) as the new structures. Before democracy, school management and leadership was not the responsibility of all the members of the institution; it was the task of the principal. The Department of Education, during this era of democracy, now calls for management to be "seen as the activity in which all the members of educational organization engage and should not be seen as the task of a few" (1996, p. 27).

While the SASA (1996) calls for the democratic changes in schools, schools at the same time are also required to transform themselves into what Senge (1990) calls learning organizations. However, even though changes are happening in schools it is a slow process and not in keeping with the new demands which require schools to restructure themselves as learning organizations (Moloi, 2002). The SMT members, because of their formal management positions, are the people who can steer change in school by empowering post level one teachers through distributed leadership and it is they who can promote teacher leadership (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). From an international

perspective, Brundrett, Burton and Smith (2003) comment that leadership is a permeable process that needs to be distributed throughout the school. South African schools need to move away from bureaucratic ways of working where principals hold absolute power to a more distributed leadership practice if schools are to be more successful. Spillane (2006) asserts that distributed leadership is more than shared leadership - it is about leadership practice. I believe that the SMT, as school leaders and managers, should create learning opportunities that will allow others to become leaders.

In addition to SASA (1996), the Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) document requires teachers to assume seven roles, amongst those one of being a leader, manager and administrator. Presently, it is true that post level one teachers in South African schools do not hold any formal positions of management within the organizational structure of their school, but this does not mean that they cannot contribute meaningfully towards successful leadership of the school. They need to be involved and participate in decision making and leadership practices. I believe that teachers must be willing to learn continuously and empower themselves if they want to assume different leadership roles. This is in line with what Earley (2005) calls learning communities. Changes in the education curriculum in South Africa, and especially the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), require teachers to change the ways in which they used to work (that is in isolation) and to work collaboratively with their colleagues in schools and in neighbouring schools.

1.2.4 The need for new leadership approaches

Even though South Africa is enjoying democracy there are still traces of autocratic leadership in certain schools. To deal with the imbalances of the past, and to strive for the success of our schools, we need to change the old leadership style and adopt new approaches to leadership and management in schools. One of the new approaches is distributed leadership, which requires everybody to share in the leadership practice; its focus is on all the stakeholders in school and not just the principal and the members of the SMT (Spillane, 2006). From within a distributed leadership framing, it stands to reason that the leadership of teachers becomes important. Katzenmeyer and Moller

(2001) believe that teachers have the potential to change their old ways of teaching in isolation to a collaborative approach to teaching and leading, where teachers can share ideas and decision making with their colleagues.

Studies by Harris and Muijs (2005) and Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) show that distributive leadership and teacher leadership cannot be separated and that the SMT, by virtue of the formal management positions they hold in schools, are in a position to foster or hinder teacher leadership. For teacher leadership to develop, schools need to change the way they are structured and function. Collaboration and shared decision making seem to be at the centre of teacher leadership and distributive leadership. Researchers in education like Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), Harris and Muijs (2005) and Wasley (1991) argue that in-order to improve schools, collaboration and collegiality are the tools by which to facilitate positive change in school. In line with this thinking, studies by Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999) on teacher leadership contend that collaborative cultures encourage the change of ideas and endorse mutual problem solving, thereby providing rich opportunities for the exercise of teacher leadership, and suitable motivation for potential teacher leaders to develop their capacities. Harris and Muijs (2005) write that leadership as a distributed entity fosters collegiality among teachers and it contributes to school effectiveness, improvement and development. In their research Leithwood *et al* (1999) found that most teachers prefer a risk free environment and would like a principal to build collaborative cultures and structures required for collaboration to take place. They also see the tradition of shared decision making as crucial.

By involving teachers in decision making processes and allowing them to work collaboratively with their colleagues in improving school practices, changes are more likely to gain momentum. The principals of the schools are in a position to make collegial practice a norm in their schools. They should allow teachers to experiment and share leadership through delegating certain tasks, in that way they will be giving teachers a platform to practice skills required for collaboration and collegiality.

In South African schools, especially in rural areas, I believe that teacher leadership exercised by post level one teachers should not be restricted to the classroom only but should be extended to other areas of leadership within the school and outside the school. I also believe that the principals should encourage teachers to take on leadership roles instead of showing negativity towards teachers who take initiatives, by not giving them support. I believe that change in schools is necessary for school improvement and effectiveness but this change cannot be sustained if teachers are not willing to take up leadership roles. Teachers should volunteer and be willing to be involved in leadership and it is the work of school management to create a culture of participative decision making. In line with this thinking Frost, Durrant, Head and Holden (2000, p.1) argue that “to improve the quality of education teachers need to embrace the role of change agent which involves exercising leadership and engaging in strategic thinking and planning”. In my opinion, change in schools cannot be sustained if principals and SMTs are not willing to relinquish their powers and give post level one teachers a chance to exercise their leadership skills.

1.3. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Studies by Grant (2006), Rajagopaul (2007), Singh (2007) and Chatturgoon (2009) show that teacher leadership is fairly restricted in South African schools. The research shows that change in the leadership practice of schools is happening at a very slow pace and is not in keeping with the new demands of policy and a curriculum which is ever changing. The changes in education require schools to reorganize themselves into learning organizations. In-order to keep up with the changes, teachers need to be leaders themselves. Despite the call of Task Team Report (1996) for schools to change from traditional forms of management to more participatory leadership styles, this is not happening in many South African schools. Many schools are still operating along autocratic and bureaucratic lines where decisions still lie with the people who hold formal management positions and, thereby, authority and power. Grant (2006) argues that some schools have not yet heeded the call to change. She argues that while some schools have

an appearance of change, in reality not much has changed. In these schools, decision making is still centralized within the person of the principal and a top-down approach is still used.

I believe that teachers in schools have the will and the power to effect changes in schools if they are given a chance to prove themselves as leaders. I also believe that it is in the best interests of the school for SMTs to empower their teachers and allow them to use their talent, skills and expertise to lead and improve their schools. Amongst other educational values mentioned Dimmock (2003) concerning leadership for school improvement, an important one for me is that leaders should strive to empower their people. If they empower their teachers and provide them with the support they need, this will benefit the school because teacher leadership can only develop in a climate where teachers feel that if they take on leadership roles they will be supported and will not be isolated.

Teacher leadership requires that the SMT should encourage teachers to work collaboratively with one another and it also requires teachers to be motivated to such an extent that they will be willing to take the school forward by engaging themselves in leadership roles in and outside the classroom. I believe that for teacher leadership to take place in a school, the SMT needs to create a school culture that will allow teachers to participate in leadership activities. Stone and Cuper (2006) point out that support and encouragement from school administrators is essential. They argue that it can drive teachers to do things they did not think they could do or are capable of doing. This means leadership in school should be distributed by the SMT because, if only a few individuals hold power to make decisions, teacher leadership will not become a reality in schools. I am also of the opinion that the teachers can only show their capabilities if they are given a chance to do so and, without the support of the SMT, teacher leadership is doomed to fail in schools.

1.4. RESEARCH RATIONALE

1.4.1. Professional motivation

I developed an interest in teacher leadership because I am a post level one teacher who has taught for the past 16 years, in both primary and high schools. As a post level one teacher, I have undertaken a lot of leadership roles, both formal and informal. Being a teacher in a rural school and in a semi rural school in KwaZulu-Natal, exposed me to two different kinds of school structures and cultures, one being collaborative and collegial and the other being non collaborative and contrived .

In the first school at which I taught I found that teachers were not willing to take up leadership roles. They believed that this was a task of those who held formal management positions. I believe that the structure and the culture of the school can promote or hinder teacher leadership. Coming from a school where decision making was centralized and was the task of a few individuals, where teachers were informed of decisions taken and expected to implement those decisions, this restricted teachers from volunteering and taking on leadership roles outside the classroom.

More recently in this same school, that is after the introduction of SASA (1996) and Norms and Standards for Educators (2000), the school leadership slowly changed from being autocratic to being both autocratic and democratic as the situation dictated. Teachers, for the first time, were consulted if important decisions were to be made. However, I argue that this was contrived consultation because it was clear that the SMT first met and discussed the matter and then asked for our opinion. It was evident that they had already made the decision and all they wanted was to drive teachers to agree to that decision. If we aired our views or ideas, they would oppose us and sometimes the principal would call a person to his office and tell that person how he did not like being challenged in front of the staff. It was this type of treatment that drove the teachers to develop a tendency of keeping quiet during meetings and allowing the SMT to decide on important issues. This lack of ownership of the decision-making process led teachers to withdraw from participation in certain activities. If one teacher agreed to co-ordinate a certain committee as delegated by the SMT and other teachers were not willing to

participate, that teacher was isolated by other teachers and would not get help. My experience leads me to totally agree with research by Grant (2006) and Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) which indicates that teachers engaging in leadership roles can be ostracized and isolated from their colleagues. I am of the opinion that sometimes it is not that teachers are opposing change in school; it is the way in which change is brought about that makes them resist change.

In direct contrast, in my present school the principal welcomes all ideas of the teachers and puts them on the table for discussion. The opportunity to engage in leadership roles is available to all teachers even though opportunities to lead beyond the classroom are mostly available to teachers who hold formal management positions, like the heads of department. I believe that while teacher leadership is practiced more in my present school, the issue of accountability is the main stumbling block between teachers and the SMT. The SMT is reluctant to give teachers too many leadership roles because at the end of the day they are the ones who are accountable to the authorities since they hold the formal management positions. Thus my professional experience has led me to this particular interest in the topic of teacher leadership.

1.4.2. Academic motivation

My academic interest in teacher leadership started when I first heard of the concept when I did my first module in my Master of Education degree called '*Leadership and Strategic Management*'. I reviewed literature on teacher leadership which indicated that the topic then was fairly new and under researched in South Africa, while in other countries it was well established. I believed then that by engaging myself in research on teacher leadership, I would contribute further to the research already done on teacher leadership and also learn more about the concept itself.

In reading South African literature on teacher leadership I found that a gap existed with regard to teacher leadership and distributed leadership. I therefore decided to pursue this gap. Much of South African literature on teacher leadership focused on the role played by the principals and the SMT to promote or hinder teacher leadership. There was a gap in

literature regarding the leadership of post level one teachers in schools. As a post level one teacher, I was therefore interested in whether the SMT distributed leadership and empowered post level one teachers to take on leadership roles. Thus, I was interested to explore whether shared decision making existed in schools within a collegial and collaborative culture and whether post level one teachers were taking on leadership roles. In addition, I sought to find out how post level one teachers responded to the notion of teacher leadership and lastly whether the SMT promoted or hindered teacher leadership.

1.5. AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The aim of this study was to explore the concept teacher and the challenges that are faced by post level one teachers as they operate as leaders in the South African context. The following are the research questions that guided the study.

1. How is the concept of teacher leadership understood?
2. How do post level one teachers lead in their schools?
3. What are the challenges facing post level one educators in exercising teacher leadership in their schools and how do post level one educators deal with these challenges?

1.6. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The research was designed as a small scale case study of two rural and semi-urban primary schools in the area of Port-Shepstone. A case study was a suitable approach for this study as it focused on the two schools as the case and post level one teachers as the unit of analysis. The primary participants were six post level one teachers leaders who were chosen, three from each school, to gain insight as to whether they were engaged in any leadership roles and if they had encountered any challenges. The secondary participants were all the teachers, including the SMT, at each of the two schools who participated in the initial stage of the research through answering a questionnaire. In

choosing the participants, purposive sampling was used, the motivation being that I was interested in teachers who engaged in different types of leadership roles in their schools. The criteria I used for the purposive sampling of participants was that they were all post level one teachers, they were willing to participate in my research and according to the questionnaire they had undertaken different leadership roles in their schools.

Since the study was qualitative in nature, questionnaires, interviews and document analysis were used over a four month period as tools for collecting data. Questionnaires given to post level one teachers were aimed at selecting participants for the interviews (see p.49) for a detailed discussion. The interviews were aimed at finding out how teachers understood and responded to the notion of teacher leadership. Document analysis was used to verify teachers' responses and to get insight of what was actually happening in schools.

After the process of transcribing it was important for me to break down data, to categorise it so that it could be given meaning. The data collected were analyzed using Grant's (2008) zones and roles model of teacher leadership. I had to break down the data by searching for ideas and themes and notes and grouped the same ideas together. The zones in which teachers led were put together and analysed.

1.7. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this section I briefly discuss the literature review and the conceptual framework that guided the study. I used both international and South African writers to get a wide perspective on teacher leadership. Various writers define teacher leadership in different ways and in the next chapter (Chapter 2) different definitions of teacher leadership are given. I decided to use definitions by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), Grant (2006), Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson and Hann (2002), Zepeda, Mayers and Benson (2003) and other writers.

It is also understandable that teacher leadership cannot be separated from concept of distributed leadership and a collaborative culture. Therefore in this study these concepts are widely used. Since teacher leadership depends to a large extent on the culture of the school it is important to discuss the culture of the school because these two factors can either promote or hinder teacher leadership. The culture of a school is also important in promoting teacher leadership. Research shows that teacher leadership depends to a large extent on the influence of the SMT on the culture of the school. If the culture of a school is collegial and collaborative, teachers are likely to engage themselves in leadership roles (Leithwood *et al*, 1999). The SMT must be willing to create a culture that is collegial and conducive for teacher leadership to develop. It is also true that if teachers are motivated and praised for the good work they have done they are more likely to do more for school improvements. Teachers are unlikely to take on leadership roles if they know that their views will not be valued and if they know that they will work in isolation.

As I have mentioned in the previous paragraph, the distribution of leadership goes together with teacher leadership. In an institution where the distribution of leadership is non-existent, teacher leadership is unlikely to happen. The research by Rajagopaul (2007) indicates that in her case study schools, tasks were delegated to teachers rather than being distributed. Engaging many people in leadership is at the core of distributed leadership in action (Harris and Muijs, 2005). Research findings by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) suggest that if the SMT empowers teachers to take on leadership roles this enhances their self-esteem and work satisfaction and this will lead to higher levels of motivation. The research literature, both international and local, demonstrates that where leadership is not shared and remains the task of a few individuals, resistance to change is likely to happen in such schools.

1.8. OUTLINE OF THIS DISSERTATION

In this first chapter of the dissertation, I discuss the overview of the study whereby, as an introduction, I provide the background to the study and the rationale. I also present the

aim and research questions and then offer the reader a brief summary of the research design and methodology as well as the literature which frames the study.

Chapter Two presents the literature review on teacher leadership. It attempts to define the concepts of leadership, teacher leadership and distributed leadership. It also discusses reasons why teacher leadership is important and the conditions necessary for teacher leadership. The roles of teacher leaders and barriers to teacher leadership are also mentioned.

In Chapter Three I focus on the research methodology and design used in the study. I then move on to discuss the paradigm as well as the research approach. Then I explain how I chose the schools and the participants. I go on to discuss how I got access to the schools and, in this chapter; I also describe in some detail each of the data collection methods. In addition, I explore some of the ethical considerations and describe the consent process, limitations of the study, validity issues. I also reflect on how I analysed the data.

Chapter Four deals with the presentation and discussion of my research findings. In this chapter, the findings are presented per school – School A is presented first followed much later on in the chapter by School B. The leadership of teachers in School A is presented against the backdrop of the context of School A and the same approach is taken for School B. The data is presented in response to each of the research questions.

Chapter Five, the final chapter, presents the conclusions and the recommendations that emerged from the study.

I now move on to the next chapter where I present a review of the literature.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the literature on teacher leadership. The review includes definitions of various concepts such as leadership, distributed leadership, teacher leadership and participative leadership. The chapter then explores collaboration amongst teacher leaders and teacher leadership within learning communities. The importance of teacher leadership and the challenges to teachers to take on the leadership roles is then discussed. The focus then moves to a South African perspective on teacher leadership and its associated challenges. The chapter concludes with what can be done to overcome or deal with these challenges.

2.2 DEFINITIONS OF LEADERSHIP

Different authors define the term leadership in different ways. There is therefore no one definition of leadership. Mangin and Stoelinga (2008) define leadership as setting a direction and getting others to head in that direction. Gunter (2001) cited in Thrupp and Willmott (2003) argues that leadership is a relationship which all are capable of exercising and leadership within education should be directly connected to attempts to realize democratic forms and practices. She further argues that for leadership to be educational leadership, it must encompass pedagogy, in which teachers and students engage in a leadership relationship where the emphasis is on 'problem posing' rather than 'problem solving'. For Sergiovanni (1992), cited in Thrupp and Willmott (2003), leadership is 'moral craft' and his work has an important democratic emphasis in notions of leadership as 'stewardship' or the leader as a 'servant'. Donaldson defines leadership as "the mobilization of people to adapt a school's practices and beliefs so that every child's learning and growth is optimized" (2006, p.7). He further argues that leadership

should be about developing relationships among dedicated educators and parents to ensure that learners benefit.

Leadership, for Sergiovanni (2001) is “about helping people to get a handle on how to manage the problems they face, and learning how to live with these problems” (2001, p.1). I share the same view with Sergiovanni. I strongly believe that leadership should be about developing people to be more independent, confident and being able to stand on their own, and being able to make their own decisions. Kydd, Anderson and Newton (2003) describe leadership as ‘path finding’, implying movement towards an endpoint goal. They further state that leadership is about practicing what is right. For Harris and Muijs, leadership can be defined “as providing vision, direction and support towards a different and preferred state suggesting change” (2005, p.15).

According to Gronn (1999), leadership is a quality that does not automatically come with status but as something special. Calitz, Fluglestad, Lillejord (2002) are of the opinion that school leaders must be capable of providing leadership for the teams, and be able to interact with communities and stakeholders, both inside and outside of the system. They must also be able to manage and use information to promote efficiency and support democratic governance. I also agree with Calitz, Fluglestad and Lillejord (2002) that a leader needs to be someone who will be able to work with other people, someone who can influence others in a positive way, someone who people can look up to for support, and someone who get things done.

There is a tendency to confuse the terms leadership and management. Coleman (2003) differentiates between leadership and management. She argues that both contribute to effectiveness in education. She goes further to say that in practice leadership and management functions are likely to overlap and to be carried out within the same role (2003). Morrison (1998, p.205) argue that leadership “concerns vision , strategy, creating direction and transformation of organization , whereas management concerns the effective implementation of the vision, ways of ensuring the vision happens in practice”. In my opinion management is like a tool to realize the goals of leadership. Even though

the two are different, the roles of a leader involves the roles of manager and, in the light of the above, the two in my opinion cannot be separated. Davies, Ellison and Bowring (2005, p.2) on the other hand speaks of “leadership as the direction setting and inspiring others to make the journey to a new and improved state for school”. They assert that management is concerned with efficiency operating in the current set of circumstances and planning in the shorter term for the school. For Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) the concept of power and control are central to any consideration of leadership and management. They argue that leadership is a relationship of influence, while management is a system of control.

2.3 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

After the democratic elections of 1994, there was a change in the management and governance of many schools in South Africa. There were policy directives which challenged schools to lead and manage their schools differently. There was an emphasis on the need to change the styles of leadership and management in schools from autocratic to democratic and there was devolution of power and decentralization of decision making. The South African Schools’ Act (1996) is one of the government policies that calls for schools to be transformed and democratized. It also aims at promoting democratic practices in schools where all stakeholders can share in the decision making. In other words the South African School’s Act (1996) calls for the schools to function as democratic organizations where management and leadership are conceptualised as activities that involve everyone and not just a few individuals.

Still within a South African context, the Norms and Standard for Educators Document (2000) is also very clear about the roles that educators should play .Within this policy shift, schools are enabled to make their own decisions and teachers are expected to be more involved in the decision making of the school. This is in line with a more distributed approach to leadership among the members of staff rather than a delegated

approach. Much has been written in the literature on distributed leadership and I discuss this because of its importance as the theoretical framework for my research.

Harris and Muijs (2005) describe distributed leadership as giving teachers the opportunity to lead and to take responsibility for the areas of change of most importance to the school. Distributed leadership is characterized as a form of collective leadership in which teachers develop expertise by working together. This view is also shared by Elmore (2000) as he points out that “in a knowledge intensive enterprise like teaching and learning there is no way to perform these complex tasks without widely distributing the responsibility for leadership among roles in the organization” cited in Harris and Muijs (2005, p. 28). According to Harris and Lambert (2003, p.115):

Distributed leadership extends the boundaries of leadership significantly as it is premised upon high levels of teacher involvement and decision making. It encompasses a wide variety of expertise, skills and input in the process and practice of leadership.

I totally agree with Harris and Lambert that distributed leadership gives teachers opportunities to practice their leadership skills and to learn to take responsibility for what they do, and to learn from one another. It also encourages teachers to work together in order to improve classroom practices and learner achievement.

Hopkins and Jackson (2003) suggest that “formal leaders in schools need to orchestrate and nurture the space for distributed leadership to occur and to create the shelter conditions for leadership of collaborative learning” (cited in Harris and Muijs, 2005, p. 29). Unlike Hopkins and Jackson (2003), I strongly believe that distributed leadership should not depend not only on the formal leadership of the school but should also occur naturally as teachers practice collaboration. For me if distributed leadership depends only on the formal leadership of the school or organization it is no longer distributed leadership but delegation of duties by the superiors to the subordinates. This is what Harris and Muijs refer to as the ‘top-down approach’. Gronn (2000, p.333) suggests that

“distributed leadership implies a different power relationship within the school where the distinctions between followers and leaders tend to blur”. Coleman (2005) is of the opinion that leadership should be shared throughout an organization. She goes further to suggest that leadership is better shared rather than only vested in one person. Harris (2004) identifies distributed leadership with the collective leadership of teachers working together to improve the classroom practice and therefore pupils’ outcomes. Gronn (2003), cited in Coleman (2005, p.11), “refers to leadership practice being stretched over the school, for example: when sets of two or three individuals with differing skill abilities, perhaps from across different organizational levels, pool their expertise and regularize their conduct to solve a problem, after which they may disband.”.

Gronn (2003) also talks about the division of labour as distributed leadership. According to Harris (2004) “distributed leadership concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organization rather than seeking this only through formal position or role”. Grant (2006, p.513) reminds us that, “in keeping with the notion of distributed leadership, teachers need to be encouraged to find their voices, take up their potential as leaders and change agents to produce a liberating culture in their schools”. For Thurlow (2003, p.37), “this requires a radical shift for schools from a dependency culture to one of empowerment”. In line with this thinking, Earley (2005, p.245) claims that “leadership needs to be distributed and that leadership approaches based on learning encourages learning organizations that is when learning is active and collaborative where learners take responsibility for their learning and they learn about learning”. For my study it is important to discuss distributed leadership since it is related to teacher leadership. Teacher leadership cannot happen in schools if teachers are not given a chance to practice their leadership skills and to prove themselves as leaders. It is also necessary that teachers are invited to take on leadership roles at schools as part of a distributed leadership context so that every member will have a voice and participate in decision making. Therefore leadership in schools needs to be distributed and shared so that teachers will be able to practice teacher leadership.

2.4 TEACHER LEADERSHIP

I am of the opinion that teachers in schools are the most important resource and they perform different tasks, including leadership tasks, to ensure the smooth functioning of the teaching and learning process in the school. In classrooms and in their learning areas they are leaders. With these different formal and informal roles teachers have to play they are 'teacher leaders' in many ways. This view is also echoed by Grant (2006, p.513) in suggesting that "teachers need to shift from a follower role to one of operating as teacher leaders, whether they are informal leaders or in a formal leadership role such as that of the head of department or a learning area co-coordinator". Teacher leadership in South Africa is a new concept to many educators that needs to be explored. Although it is not new in the international literature, literature claims that it is not easy to define.

2.4.1. Defining teacher leadership

For Katzenmeyer and Moller, "teachers who are leaders, lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teachers, learners and leaders, and influence others towards improved educational practice" (2001, p.5). Zepeda, Mayers and Benson describe teacher leadership as "a calling to a higher level of service" (2003, p. 2). They also describe teacher leaders as

people who assume incredible responsibilities that that often go beyond the contract day, fall outside the sphere of monetary compensation, place them at odds with bargaining units, create tensions among fellow faculty and administrators because they take a stand, they involve themselves whole heartedly in their work as teacher leaders and they seek change (2003, p.2).

According to Zepeda *et al* (2003, p.4),

A teacher leader is one who informs, who actively gathers information from colleagues and more to the point of leadership, will deliver that information in a manner suitable to the person and situation regardless of the risks. Teacher leaders are risk takers.

For Crowther and Kaagan (2002) teacher leadership is about facilitating school success and teaching children in a meaningful way and enhancing the quality of life for the communities. I also share the same views with Crowther *et al* (2002) that teachers in their professions have to play different roles; the first role includes one of being a mediator of learning. This means that teachers are required to teach in a manner that is suitable to learners' needs and these are clearly stated in the South African Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) document. For other authors, teacher leadership is more about change. Wasley (1991), for example, defines teacher leadership as the ability to encourage colleagues to change, to do things they wouldn't ordinarily consider without the influence of the leader (1991, p.23). Other authors, such as Howey (1988), maintain that teacher leadership is a natural and necessary outgrowth of the increased demands for excellence being placed on the schools. Howey also argues that "teachers must assume leadership positions that will enable them to model methods of teaching, coach and mentor colleagues, study critically and thoughtfully various aspects of the classroom life, develop curriculum and instructional materials, and strengthen relationships between the school and home" (1988, p.1).

Developing this idea further, Lieberman, Saxl and Miles (1988), in Gehrke (1991), describe the kinds of on-the-job learning of teacher leaders they studied. In their study, the teacher leaders reported that "they had to develop competence in several areas including "rapport building, organizational diagnosis, dealing with the change process, finding and using resources, managing the leadership work, and building skills and confidence in others" (1991, p.2). Lieberman, Saxl and Miles (1988) also argue that being a teacher leader is not only the accumulation of a certain set of skills, "but a way of thinking and acting that is sensitive to teachers, to teaching and to the school culture" (1988, p.149).

Lambert (1998) cited in Harris and Muijs (2003) defines teacher leadership for school capacity building as broad-based, skilful involvement in the work of leadership. She suggests that this perspective requires working with two critical dimensions of

involvement, breadth and skillfulness. Lieberman (2002) also argues that teacher leadership takes many forms: “designing curricular and instructional programs, working effectively with colleagues and parents, developing and implementing school level policies and procedures and sharing expertise and wisdom of practice with novices” (2002, p.2). Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999) describe teacher leadership as something that may be either formal or informal in nature. They also argue that “teachers exercise informal leadership in their schools by sharing their expertise, volunteering for new projects and bringing new ideas to the school” (1999, p. 117).

In South Africa there is a growing of research and literature on teacher leadership. In this context, Grant (2005) developed her own definition of teacher leadership for the South African context and she based her definition loosely on that of Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001). For Grant:

Teacher leadership implies a form of leadership beyond headship or formal position. It refers to teachers becoming aware of and taking up informal leadership roles both in the classroom and beyond. It includes teachers working collaboratively with all stakeholders towards a shared vision of their school with a culture of mutual respect and trust (2005, p. 45).

This definition of teacher leadership is important since my study is aimed at exploring teacher leadership and finding out about the challenges faced by the post level one teachers as they operate as leaders. In the next section I discuss the school culture necessary for the development of teacher leadership.

2.4.2. A collaborative school culture necessary for teacher leadership

In my opinion teacher leadership, school culture and culture of collaboration cannot be separated. Hargreaves (1994, p.166) states that a

Culture of teaching comprises beliefs, values, habits and assumed ways of doing things among communities of teachers who have had to deal with similar

demands and constraints over many years. It forms a framework for occupational learning. The content of teacher cultures can be seen in what teachers think, say and do. It is the ‘way of doing things around here’.

Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991) state that school culture is difficult to define but is best thought of as “procedures, values and expectations that guide people’s behaviour within an organization (1991, p.17). For Hoyle and Wallace (2005) culture implies a configuration of beliefs, practices, relationships, language and symbols distinctive to a particular social unit. Culture, according to Bush and Anderson (2003) “focuses on the values, beliefs and norms of the people and organization and how these individual perceptions coalesce into shared organization meanings. Culture is manifested by symbols and rituals rather than through the formal structure of the organization” (2003, p.87). Veulers and O’Hair (2005) also stress that culture is about the values, norms, rules and laws that influence how people should behave in an organization or society.

For Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), collaboration is the key to teacher leadership as is a positive school culture as it can enhance teacher leadership; the positive school culture is known to foster teacher leadership. I also agree with Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) that a culture of collaboration and the school culture are important if schools are to function effectively. Teachers need to develop the culture of working together, learning from one another and sharing information for the benefit of the learners. Therefore teacher leadership, positive school culture and collaboration, according to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) are inextricably linked to one another.

In their research with the Camelot school in the US, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) found out that there was a supportive atmosphere in the school. The context of the school encouraged teacher leadership in that teachers were sharing and respecting one another. This is the kind of context that we need to create in our South African schools, both rural and urban, to support the development of teacher leadership. Katzenmeyer and Moller further state that “building relationships with colleagues can be even more formidable than working with administrators” (2001, p. 80). They also remind us that “structural

changes are needed to promote teacher leadership” (2001, pp.80-81). In addition, they believe that “schools can structure in ways that promote autonomous teams of teachers working together” (2001, p.81).

This view is also echoed in Harris and Muijs (2005, p.93) where they argue that “school culture and structure are key elements in allowing teacher leadership to flourish” (2005, p.96). They further state that the supportive, no blame culture is clearly the reason for the development of teachers as leaders. They also maintain that developing trust is a key task within a school in which communication also plays an important role. In addition, Harris and Muijs are of the view that involving teachers in leadership, especially where this takes a form of collaborative teams and action, can help develop trust, as it allows positive relationships to develop. This suggests that teacher leadership is likely to develop in schools where the culture is collegial and collaborative.

In her research on teacher leadership, Wasley (1991) found that each of the teacher leadership positions was firmly rooted in a particular context that takes into account the school and its participants, the community, the state and region. She also suggests that the context is critically important to the success or failure of the role. She further states that teacher leaders were involved in different kinds of collaborative work. In a study done by Harris and Muijs (2005), it is evident that teacher leadership can only be fostered and nurtured in a culture that is supportive and where relationships among staff are positive. They further state that a “high degree of trust is required for teachers to lead initiatives, instead of the senior management team, and therefore in schools where the culture is not collegial the possibility of teacher leadership is inevitably reduced” (2005, p.93). I agree with this statement that for teacher leadership to develop, everyone in school must be involved in management and leadership functions of some kind. Teacher leadership requires a school culture that allows all members of staff to participate in leadership and management and offer support to one another. In my opinion, a culture of collaboration in schools is essential and the teachers need to really work together for the benefit of the learners. Although sometimes in a school the teachers may not see eye to eye on issues,

they need to look past their differences so that the learners are not negatively affected. According to Harris and Muijs:

Collaboration between teachers improves the quality of student learning essentially by improving the quality of teaching. They argue that teachers are more able to implement new ideas within the context of supportive collaboration relationships or partnerships. Collaboration pools the collected knowledge, expertise and capacities of teachers within the subject area. It increases teacher's opportunities to learn from each other between classrooms, between subject areas and between schools (2005, p. 61).

In line with this thinking, Rosenholtz (1989) writes that "when teachers work in collaborative relationships and influence each other's practice they are more creative and more willing to work longer hours, and higher moral results" (cited in Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001, p.109). I also agree with Rosenholtz (1989) that for effective teaching and learning to take place in schools, collaboration among teachers is needed and it is important for teachers to motivate and support one another. I also believe that teachers need time to work together to improve learning for their learners and I am also of the opinion that if teachers work together they can motivate one another and therefore they can achieve better results. I also believe that teachers need time to plan, share ideas and evaluate together. However, collaboration must not only happen inside the school but it must also happen outside the school. Teachers need to meet with other teachers from neighbouring schools to share resources and information and, in my experience as a teacher; networking between schools has led to the improvement of results. In the South African context this is practiced through attending workshops and forming clusters where teachers moderate their work and discuss problems they encounter in their Learning Areas. This view is also echoed by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001, p.109) who explain that "collaboration should also happen outside the school. Creating teacher networks, visiting other schools, and attending professional conferences give teachers an external perspective that helps to place their school progress within the context of a larger community". Because of the lack of time and pressure to finish the syllabus in South

Africa this is practiced through winter school where the Grade 12 teachers from neighbouring schools will do team teaching.

Similarly, Stone and Cupper (2006, p.89) argue that “collaboration brings people together and as professionals: we cannot live without collaboration”. Furthermore they say that community involvement and parent involvement is also important in that they are the main stakeholders. This, in my opinion, is inextricably linked to teacher leadership because teacher leaders need to work together as a team with other teachers to achieve excellence in their work. Moreover they need to establish good relationships with the communities and the parents they work with. In addition, Frost, Durrant, Head and Holden (2000), like Stone and Cupper (2006), also stress the importance of collaboration. They argue that collaboration is the source of moral support and a vehicle in managing change and that it also generates a critical perspective. Collaboration, according to Hargreaves and Hopkins,

- Creates a commitment to common purpose among governors , heads and staff and the school ‘s partners,
- Improves communication and reduces misunderstandings,
- Fosters creativity in finding solutions when problems are discussed,
- Enhances motivation,
- Prevents individuals from becoming isolated,
- Generates a sense of collective achievement,
- Supports team work. (1991, p.137)

2.4.3. Why teacher leadership?

One may ask oneself why there is a need for teacher leadership in our schools and how can a school benefit from having teacher leaders. I argue that the success of the school depends on strong teacher leadership because without teacher leaders a school cannot function properly. In my opinion teacher leadership is important because I believe that the success of the school is based on strong leadership and teachers taking on leadership roles, working together to improve the quality of education in their schools.

Zepeda *et al* (2003, p. 4) state that “teacher leaders have expertise, and they often want to further develop this expertise through expanding their involvement in the work of school beyond classroom. Teacher leaders are a source of valid information within a school or a district”. They express the view that teacher leaders understand the pattern of communication, the culture of the school, and they know how to effectively communicate within the context of the school. They further argue that “teacher leaders inform and gather information from the colleagues and more to the point of leadership, will deliver that information in a manner suitable to the person and situation regardless of risks” (2003, p. 4). In the light of the above, I agree with Zepeda *et al* that schools need teacher leaders in order to be transformed into a learning organization and furthermore teacher leaders can take the institution forward.

Some other advantages of having teacher leaders in schools can be found in studies such as the one done by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001). They found that “teachers experience greater satisfaction in their work, the schools benefit from the involvement of talented teachers in accomplishing the vision for change in their schools” (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001, p.33-34). They further argue that there is less resistance if teachers are participating in change processes taking place at schools. Teacher leaders also collaborate with principals who are overwhelmed with demands from both within and outside the school. This offers teachers opportunities to encourage other teachers as well as to influence practices and policies in their schools. Holding the respect of their colleagues, capable teacher leaders can mentor new teachers, assist in improving instructional practice, and help to develop the capacity of other teachers (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) further state that teacher leaders can influence their colleagues to examine options and make decisions to try new practices. This is in line with the idea of Fullan (1993) that change in school cannot be mandated. I agree with Fullan’s statement that you cannot force change, if you do so teachers can resist the change, which is why we need teacher leaders who can facilitate change and influence other teachers to buy into the idea of change.

Teacher leadership is about developing trustworthy relationships with colleagues in the practice of leadership. In this regard, Donaldson explains that teacher leaders “have an established history of contribution to the school, to students, to the community, and to colleagues. Thus they often bring to the leadership relationship trustworthiness, a fluid and open relationship with many teachers and a record of interaction that affirms their ability to collaborate with others and build unifying relationships” (2006, p.81). I agree with Donaldson because in schools teachers have a tendency to influence one another and if this is to be encouraged teachers would learn and benefit from positive influence and constructive criticism of other staff members.

Literature shows that teacher leadership exists in practice - teachers are practicing leadership without knowing and labelling it as such. In many South African schools teachers are engaged in different leadership tasks such as helping one another in their Learning Areas, motivating one another, and helping with the orientation of new teachers. These tasks they perform in schools are part of the tasks performed by teacher leaders. Wasley (1997) writes that “descriptions of the possibilities recommend that teachers assume leadership in the redesign of the school, mentor their colleagues, engage in the problem solving at school level, and provide professional growth opportunities for their colleagues” (1997, p.5). Lieberman and Miller (1990) cited in Gehrke (1991, p. 1) are of the opinion that “there have long been teacher leaders in schools”. They say they have “traditionally accepted positions as department chairs, team and grade leaders, curriculum committee chairs, and more” (1991, p.1). They further argue that “with the advent of school and teacher education restructuring efforts new leadership roles are emerging” (1991, p.1). I share the same view with Lieberman and Miller (1990) that there are teacher leaders in school and to be a teacher leader does not mean that you must be appointed to a formal management position but one can be a teacher leader within the school and perform different types of leadership duties that can help in the smooth functioning of the school. Howey (1988) also cited in Gehrke (1991, p.1) on the other hand maintains that “whether taking on traditional or emerging roles, a major characteristic of teacher leaders is that they often teach full or part time and then assume other responsibilities”. According to Gehrke (1991) “a more systematic approach to

developing the requisite skills for assuming leadership roles may be helpful. Whether or not a teacher takes on formal leadership position, the acquisition of these skills may serve to enhance performance in the classroom” (1991, p. 1).

Harris and Muijs (2005) argue that if teachers are engaged in teacher leadership this might increase their morale and this may have a positive influence in their classroom work. What Harris and Muijs say is true because, in my opinion, teachers who practice teacher leadership feel empowered and take ownership of decisions made and feel part of the school community. This is also echoed by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) who contend that there is a connection between the two concepts, leadership and power. They assert that “discussions of school reforms emphasize the importance of empowering teachers’ in-order to value the centrality of teachers as instructional leaders” (2001, p. 23). There is further evidence in the study done by Muijs and Reynolds (2003) cited in Harris and Muijs (2005, p.74) where these authors report that “teachers who exhibited more collaboration, sharing of good practice and participation in communities and decision making showed greater self efficacy. Both sharing good practice and a higher self-efficacy have been explicitly linked to effective teacher behaviours in a number of studies”.

2.4.4. Further conditions necessary for teacher leadership

I am for the opinion that, if teacher leadership is to flourish in school a number of conditions are necessary to support and enhance teachers in their leadership roles. These include: a supportive SMT, a collegial and a collaborative school culture. In the South African context in particular, teacher leadership depends on the SMT to create a culture in school that will be conducive to teacher leadership and that will allow teachers to take on leadership roles without being mocked by other teachers (Grant, 2006). According to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), the context where teacher leadership takes place is important as are the relationships within that context. They further argue that “the social interactions influence teacher leadership within a school more than training, experiences, personal characteristics, abilities, and the formal structure within the school”(Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001, p.79).

According to Zepeda *et al* (2003), teachers must not wait to be given opportunities for leadership but they must grab the opportunities by volunteering for leadership and administrative tasks. They suggest that opportunities to lead must be shared amongst teachers. They further argue that “teacher leaders need opportunities for learning how to further leadership skills, and mentoring and induction to the culture of leadership is a prerequisite to supporting the new teacher leader” (Zepeda *et al*, 2003, p.18). In their research, Harris and Muijs (2005) found that the activity of networking constituted teacher leadership. Their study showed that teacher leadership often occurred within a variety of formal and informal collaborative settings. Harris and Muijs (2005) further argue that leadership development requires strong support and specific forms of professional development of staff. External support is also important in helping schools develop teacher leadership. Harris and Muijs (2005) list ten conditions that need to be in place to ensure that the potential of teacher leadership is maximized. These conditions are as follows: supportive culture, strong leadership (i.e. support from the head teacher, senior management team and governors), commitment to action of enquiry and reflection, innovative forms of professional development, coordinated improvement efforts, high levels of participation and involvement, data richness, collective creativity, shared professional practice and recognition and reward.

According to Grant the prerequisites for teacher leadership include:

- A collaborative culture with participatory decision making and vision sharing.
- A set of values which assist to develop this collaborative culture.
- Distributed leadership on the part of the principal and formal management teams. (2006, p.523).

In a similar vein, Clarke and Hendrik (1998) write about a teacher leadership tree. When studying these teacher leadership trees important factors like conversation, conflict resolution, shared leadership and others were discussed. In my view all these factors are important in a school if teacher leadership is to flourish. The roles teachers play in their

schools are also important because they are linked to teacher leadership and these roles will be discussed in the next paragraph.

2.4.5. Roles of teacher leaders

Literature shows that teacher leaders perform different types of leadership roles in their schools. Some of the roles teacher leaders play are formal and some are informal and these roles they play can be within their classrooms and beyond (see for example Grant, 2006). The more formal the leadership position, the more formal authority the teacher assumes. For Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) teacher leadership roles can be separated into three leadership functions:

- Leadership of students or other teachers: facilitator, coach, mentor, trainer, curriculum specialist, creating new approaches, leading study groups.
- Leader of operational tasks; keeping the school organised and moving towards its goals, through roles as head of department, action researcher, member of task forces.
- Leadership through decision making or partnership: member of school teams, member of committees, instigator of partnerships with business, higher education institutions, and parent teacher association (2001, pp.12-13).

Gehrke (1991) cited in Harris and Muijs (2005) identifies similar functions of teacher leaders:

- Continuously improving their own classroom teaching,
- Organizing and leading reviews of school practice
- Providing curriculum development knowledge
- Participating in in-school decision making
- Giving in-service training to colleagues, and
- Participating in the performance evaluation of teachers.(2005, p.23)

According to Harris and Muijs (2005, p.24) some of the teacher leadership roles include curriculum developers, bid writers, leaders in the school improvement team, mentors of new or less experienced staff, and action researchers with a strong link to the classroom.

For Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999), teacher leaders can play different formal and informal roles in school:

Lead teacher, master teacher, department head, union representative, and member of school governance council, mentor- these are associated with formal teacher leadership roles. Teachers also exercise informal leadership roles in their schools by sharing their expertise, volunteering for new projects and bringing new ideas to the school, helping colleagues to carry out their classroom duties, assisting colleagues in the improvement of classroom practice through engagement of their colleagues in experimentation and examining of more powerful instructional techniques (1999, pp.116-117).

Donaldson (2006) argues that there are two types of teacher leaders: “formally appointed leaders, such as department chairs, team leaders, association officers, and standing committee chairs, and informal leaders, who naturally emerge among their colleagues as trusted and respected catalysts” (2006, p.80). Donaldson further argues that formally appointed teacher leaders always encounter in their relationships with colleagues some of the same baggage principals do whilst informal teacher leaders have no administrative duties and they often avoid the hazards of power. Zepeda *et al* (2003) concur with Donaldson (2006), and Leithwood *et al* (1999), in that teacher leaders can assume both formal and informal roles. For Zepeda *et al* (2003) “formal leadership roles includes the following: Instructional lead teacher, instructional co-coordinator, grade level leader, department chair, mentor, committee member” (2003, p.15). They continue to say “teachers can also assume informal leadership roles when they review textbook and other materials during the textbook adoption process, engage in staff development and other learning opportunities, such as attending graduate school or participating in civic events within the larger community “(Zepeda *et al*, 2003, p.15).

In South Africa, formal and informal teacher leadership roles include the following: a head of department, staff representative in the school governing body, site steward for the teacher union, a co-coordinator of staff development team, subject head, and chairing

committees like discipline, environment, catering, safety and security and others (see for example Grant, 2006). In my study both the formal and informal leadership roles will be examined.

2.4.6. Barriers to teacher leadership

Like any approach teacher leadership is not without obstacles. Literature points to various barriers to teacher leadership. Stoll and Fink (1996) argue that rules and rituals abound within schools. In my view it is these rules and rituals that can hinder teacher leadership in schools. It is also argued that if the culture of the school is not collegial barriers to teacher leadership cannot be avoided. Zepeda *et al* (2003) assert that “being a teacher leader means understanding the role of teacher leader and being willing and able to navigate the unpredictable waters of conflict, power, and politics” (2003, p.21). I agree with Zepeda *et al* in that assuming formal roles teacher leaders are faced with different challenges and teacher leadership comes with a number of barriers. According to Rajagopaul (2007), these barriers hinder teachers in leadership positions from doing their jobs successfully.

The major barrier according to Zepeda *et al* (2003) is the lack of time which forces teacher leaders to make difficult choices in prioritizing tasks that need to be done. They further state that most teacher leaders tend to give their teaching responsibility top priority thus limiting time available for leadership outside of the classroom. This view is also shared by Leithwood (1999), Harris (2004) and Grant (2006) where they state that lack of time is a major barrier to teacher leadership. Also the research done by Steyn and Squelch (1997) concurs with this view: “the time factor was identified as a major obstacle to teacher empowerment: being actively involved in decision making processes is perceived as very time consuming, especially when it involves additional meetings” (1997, p.4). I also suspect that time may be a barrier to teacher leadership in my study, particularly with the implementation of National Curriculum Statement (NCS) as the new policy. Teachers might not find enough time to practice teacher leadership as they would like to.

According to Donaldson (2006) other barriers to teacher leadership include the following: “resistance, dismissal by colleagues, unwillingness to mobilize themselves, norm of autonomy that permits colleagues to dismiss them and their efforts to build connections, teachers ignoring informal attempts to organize and to cultivate collective action, philosophical divisions, interpersonal conflicts that rule the staff culture” (2006, p.102). Donaldson (2006) continues that many teacher leaders have been frustrated by colleagues who have ‘seen it all’ before and remain unwilling and possibly unable to mobilize themselves. I share the same view with Donaldson; it is very difficult to take on leadership roles when you work with people who have the attitude that they have long been in the field and who are resistant to change and who are unwilling to try new things. Donaldson further states “that efforts to lead from within can actually divide faculties further, encourage clannishness, and provoke competition for power and resources Donaldson” (2006, p.102).

According to Harris and Muijs (2005, p.43) there are several barriers that need to be overcome for genuine teacher leadership activity to occur in schools. They found out that where support from the management team is not forthcoming, the possibilities of teacher leadership are reduced. Harris and Muijs (2005) further state that the unwillingness of senior managers to relinquish control was seen as a barrier, especially where leadership from the head was seen as weak, or where senior managers were poor communicators. Another barrier to teacher leadership, according to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), is when principals choose whom to give leadership roles to. Choosing certain teachers to take on leadership roles can have a negative impact on other teachers and this may lead to the division of staff and an uncollegial culture where teachers work in isolation and not as a team.

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) also suggest that teachers taking on leadership roles can sometimes be ostracized by their colleagues. According to Harris and Muijs (2005, p. 44) a number of studies have “identified isolation as a significant barrier to teacher leadership”. In their study of 17 teacher leaders, Lieberman, Saxl and Miles (2000) found

that the egalitarian ethic of colleagues was one of the main barriers perceived by teachers which often left them feeling isolated from colleagues.

In addition to this sense of isolationism, a lack of clarity about teachers roles and responsibilities can make teacher leadership problematic. Clemson, Ingram and Fessler (1997), Lieberman (1988), all cited in Harris and Muijs (2003), state that there may also on occasion be conflicts between groups of teachers, such as those that do and do not take on leadership roles, which can lead to estrangement among teachers. Harris and Muijs (2005) found that some teachers felt that they were lacking experience and confidence when taking on leadership roles.

Another barrier to teacher leadership, according to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), is school structure. They argue that “instead of providing collaboration and professional community, school structures often wall off teachers and parcel out their time, which contribute to professional distance” (2001, p.80). According to Burton (1990) cited in Ngcobo (2003, p. 195) “the structure of certain organizations often brings about conflict, for example, structures that do not provide personnel with channels of communication can produce frustrations that often lead to conflict. Structures that permit educators to communicate their grievances as they occur prevent conflict by building a critical mass of trust among them”. It is therefore important that educational managers examine their organization structures in order to effect timely change where necessary (Ngcobo, 2003). According to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), the leaders within the school and policy makers outside the school influence the organizational structure. They state that organizational structure can lead to the division of the staff. I feel that the school structure can either support or hinder teacher leadership. In South Africa, this would mean the relationship of the principal with the School Management Team (SMT) and the staff members.

2.4.7. Teachers leading in professional learning communities

According to the South African Norms and Standards for Educators (2000), one of the roles that teachers are expected to play is one of being a life long learner. Teachers are expected to be researchers and network with other educators for the benefit of the learners. Teacher leaders are also expected to work as teams with other educators for the same reason that is to benefit the learner. For this reason teachers need to belong to learning communities where they will constantly learn from other teachers. For schools to become learning organizations they need to develop the kind of attitudes that make them receptive to change. Leithwood *et al* (1999) define a learning organization as:

A group of people pursuing common purpose (individual purpose as well) within a collective commitment to regularly weighing the value of those purposes, modifying them when that makes sense, and continuously developing more effective and efficient ways of accomplishing those purposes (1995, p.55).

The Harvard Business Review of 1991 in Moloi (2002, p.2) sees a learning organization as “a group of people learning from the experience and best practices of others”. In my opinion teacher leadership is closely linked to the establishment of a learning organization, I therefore argue that both teacher leadership and learning organizations can lead to the improvement in student learning. Both teacher leaders and leaders in learning communities strive for the same goals - one amongst many will be to see to it that there is collaboration and collegiality among the staff members and that the school is developed so that learners can benefit academically.

According to Moloi (2002) in the context of education, “a learning organization is made up of educators who are committed to personal and professional development and growth”. She further states that one of the “advantages of having learning communities is that it can create conditions that will make the teacher and the learner want to learn about themselves and about colleagues and parents” (2002, p.3). If schools are to function effectively I feel that learning organizations need to be in place, and this might also help to motivate other teachers which, in turn, will lead to the improvement of the performance of the learners in class. Harris and Muijs (2005) argue that for schools to

sustain improvement over time they will need to ensure that they are communities of learning. They further state that in a learning community the emphasis is placed upon the personal growth and development of individuals as a means of generating improved learning outcomes.

Earley (2005, p.245) argues that “an organization wishing to become a learning community would therefore takes its professional development responsibilities very seriously and strive to secure effective learning for both its pupils and staff”. He further states that “leaders of such communities must engender an ethos that all in the organization, pupils, teachers and support staff in a school, for example are seen as learners in their own right” (2005, p.245). He further suggests that they “must seek everyone’s views and involve all, in various ways, in decision making processes, supporting, developing and empowering them to feel a sense of ownership in the future direction of their organization. Active participation by all in a collaborative culture means that everyone takes responsibility for learning” (2005, p.245). I am of the opinion that learning communities can enhance teacher leadership. As teachers work together and learn together they will be able to share ideas, support one another and this will improve the school and learners’ performance. For Earley (2005), leaders in learning communities can bring about change in an organization, through promoting shared vision, distributing leadership and empowerment of other teachers. According to Moloï (2002), “organizational learning takes place when learning processes at the individual, group and system (school) levels are intentionally used to continuously transform the organization in a direction that is increasingly satisfying to its stakeholders” (2002, p. 18). She further states that organizational learning is based on the following premises:

- There are many ways to reach the same goal
- People who are concerned about and affected by a problem are capable of developing useful knowledge to resolve it.
- Learning occurs in a context of work and praxis and results from intentional effort (2002, p. 18).

In line with this thinking, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) are of the opinion that teacher leaders are part of the community of learners and leaders. They further state that teacher leaders are not an elitist group within a school - every teacher can be part of the community. They also argue that “professional learning communities, although few in numbers, are healthy school contexts for teacher leadership” (2001, p.6). They continue to say “teacher leadership develops naturally among professionals who learn, share, and address problems together” (2001, p.6). According to Katzenmeyer and Moller, there are five dimensions that emerged as attributes of schools that are professional learning communities. These dimensions are;

- Supportive and shared leadership
- Shared values and vision
- Collective learning and application of learning
- Supportive conditions
- Shared personal practice (2001, p. 7)

2.5. CONCLUSION

This literature review has discussed definitions of leadership, distributed leadership and teacher leadership. A school culture and culture of collaboration necessary for teacher leadership was also discussed. Some conditions necessary for teacher leadership and barriers that hinder teacher leadership such as time, resistance and school structure were discussed. The literature review also considered the reasons why there is a need for teacher leadership. Finally, the chapter concludes with the discussion on teachers leading in their professional learning communities.

The literature review above is relevant to this study as I wish to explore teacher leadership and the challenges faced by post level one teachers as they operate as leaders. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology and design that was used whilst conducting this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to explore how post level one teachers (PL1) understand the notion of teacher leadership and to find out what challenges, if any, they face as they operate as leaders in their schools. In trying to find out whether teachers engage themselves in teacher leadership, I also looked at the way in which the School Management Team (SMT) of the two schools in question distributed leadership. It is impossible to study teacher leadership without looking at distributed leadership because the two concepts, in my opinion, cannot be separated. Echoing work done by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), Harris and Muijs (2005), Donaldson (2006) and Zepeda, Mayers and Benson (2003), this study explored the ways in which leadership was distributed in the schools under study. In this chapter I provide a description of the methodology and the research design that I adopted in my study. A detailed discussion of the research aim and questions, research paradigm, sampling, research instruments, gaining access, ethical issues and consent, data collection, data analysis and limitations of research follows.

3.2 THE RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTIONS

The research aimed to explore the notion of teacher leadership and the challenges faced by post level one educators as they operated as leaders in two rural schools with similar contexts in Port-Shepstone. In considering this aim, the following key research questions guided the study:

1. How is teacher leadership understood in the two case study schools?
2. How do post level one educators lead in these schools?

3. What are the challenges faced by post level one teachers in exercising teacher leadership in their schools and how do they deal with these challenges?

3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Based on the aim and research questions as presented in Section 3.2, this study was positioned within the interpretive paradigm. According to Neuman (2000), interpretive research seeks to understand the social life as it discovers how people construct meaning in their naturalistic settings. My role as a researcher working in the interpretive paradigm was to make sense of the participants' life worlds by interacting with them. To explore how teachers in both schools understood and responded to the notion of teacher leadership, I tried to understand the social dynamics of the post level one educators by inviting them to share their experiences.

The study was qualitative in nature, rich in-depth data was collected using different methods and then analysed. As a researcher I was engaged in an enquiry of my own, trying to explore teacher leadership and the challenges faced by post level one educators as they operated as leaders in their schools. A qualitative study, according to Henning (2004), "is a study presented largely in language and is about the meaning constructed from the language that presents the data" (2004, p.31). I also tried to interpret rich data in the form of narratives. I agree with Henning's (2004) statement that the role of the researcher is essential in the creation of meaning. In this study it was my intention to make meaning of the data collected through in-depth interviews. Through the use of spoken words in the form of semi-structured interviews I interpreted, recalled, understood and analysed the data.

3.4. RESEARCH APPROACH: CASE STUDY

The research was designed as a small scale case study of two rural primary schools in the Ogwini ward, Ugu district in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. A case study methodology was appropriate for this study aimed at gaining teachers' understandings of teacher leadership in two schools. Yin (2003, p. 13) states that "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". Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) state that case studies "provide a unique example of real people in real situations enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply presenting them with abstract theories or principles" (p.181). In addition, Merriam (1998, pp.28-29) "characterizes a qualitative case study as firstly *particularistic* in that it focuses on the particular situation, secondly it is *descriptive* in presenting rich thick description of phenomenon under study and lastly it is *heuristic* because it illuminates the readers' understanding of the phenomenon under study and it leads to the discovery of new meanings".

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) believe that "the case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit. The purpose of such observation is to probe deeply and to analyse intensely the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit" (p.185). This statement is relevant to my study because I was interested to determine the notion of teacher leadership in the case of two rural primary schools and elected to include six teacher leaders as my unit of analysis. I wanted to put together a rich picture of the experiences of teacher leadership of these six teachers.

Stenhouse (1985) cited in Keeves (1988, p. 49) identifies four styles of case studies: "ethnographic case study, evaluative case study, educational case study and case study in action". My study sought to understand challenges teachers were faced with as they operated as leaders therefore it was an example of an educational case study. Stenhouse (1985) describes an educational case study as a case study that is concerned with understanding educational action rather than evaluating it. Willis (2007) states that educational case studies focus on learning and educational context.

The case study method has its advantages and disadvantages as a method of conducting research. Some of the advantages of case study research that Willis (2007) mentions include the following: It allows the researcher to gather in-depth data in a natural setting, “it is holistic and thus supports the idea that much of what we can know about human behaviour is best understood as lived experience in the social context” (p.240). Lindegger (2006) in Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) argues that case studies have the advantage of “allowing new ideas and hypotheses to emerge from careful and detailed observation” (p.461). They further state that the rich information about the cases has led to the start of many existing theories. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) write that a case study may lead to learning more about a little known or poorly understood situation and it may be useful for investigating how an individual or program changes over time.

Some of the disadvantages of a case, as mentioned by Lindegger (2006) in Terre Blanche *et al* (2006) include: “there are many problems with validity of information, causal links are difficult to test, and generalizations cannot be made from single case studies” (p. 461). Leedy and Ormrod (2005) also stress that the major weakness of a case study is that the findings cannot be generalizable to other situations especially when only a single case is involved. This study is a single case of the two schools and therefore I was quite aware that I could not generalize the findings to other schools.

3.5. THE SCHOOLS

3.5.1 School selection

In this study I chose two schools, rural and semi-urban primary schools as my case, both located in the Ugu district, KwaZulu-Natal. These schools were chosen because they are seen as disciplined and moving schools. They were also convenient for me to access because they are located near the school in which I presently teach. As such, the sampling of the schools was for convenience. The schools I chose had more or less the same learner population of about 550 learners at the time of my research. They are not big schools like the ones in the nearby urban area. Both schools are located in the Ogwini

ward and I chose these schools because of the perception in the community that they have similar moving school cultures. Bush and Anderson (2003, p. 87) state that culture “focuses on the values, beliefs and norms of the people and organization and how these individual perceptions coalesce into shared organization meaning. Culture is manifested by symbols and rituals rather than through the formal structure of the organization”.

3.5.2 School A

School A is situated in a rural setting with a gravel road leading to it. The school is fenced with a hedge and has no gate. There is electricity but the school does not have enough resources. There are five single building blocks including the principal’s office and the staffroom, two for the junior phase and two for the intermediate phase. In the principal’s office there is one photocopying machine, a fax machine, a computer and a telephone. There are no additional computers and no library. School A has a learner enrolment of 550. The school has one state paid clerk. There are 14 permanent teachers who are state employed, three males and 11 females. The School Management Team (SMT) comprises the principal who is a male and two female heads of department who have been formally appointed to their management positions by the Department of Education. There is one head of department for the junior phase and one for both the intermediate and senior phases as well as a senior teacher. The school does not qualify to have a deputy principal because of the small learner enrolment. There are 11 post level one teachers who do not hold any formal management positions within the school structure.

The school services learners who come from a low income parent community. Some of the learners are dependent on the government grant and their grand parents’ pensions for survival because their parents are not working. In addition, some learners are orphans. The school has a government nutritional scheme running. Learners get one free hot meal everyday. This scheme helps learners to have something to eat on a daily basis. There is one general assistant who is responsible for preparing meals for the learners.

3.5.3 School B

In contrast to school A, School B is situated in a semi urban area with a tarred road leading up to it. A further difference between this school and school A is that it is fully fenced with a gate. School B has electricity and it also has adequate resources as compared to School A. Although the school is situated in what I call a semi-urban area, it is influenced by urban life since it is situated near the tarred road and is connected to the urban area. School B is similar to School A in that both schools falls under the leadership of the same Inkosi (Chief).

School B has a learner enrolment figure of 560. The school services learners who come from both middle and low income families in the rural area and the township. There are 16 teachers in the school, four males and 12 females. The SMT comprises the principal who is an Indian female, a deputy principal who is a black male, and three heads of department, one male and two females. The school has one head of department for the foundation phase and two for the intermediate and senior phases. The school also has a state paid clerk. Since the school services both the middle and low income earners, there is a government nutritional scheme running. Learners get one hot meal everyday just like in School A. There are two general assistants who are responsible for the cooking and the cleaning of the school. One is state paid and the other is paid by the school governing body. The school does not have a security guard.

School B consists of four building blocks and two Wendy houses. One double story and single block is for the intermediate and senior phase, one single block for the junior phase and the Wendy house is for Grade R. There are ten computers in the school that are used for the teaching of learners but there is no computer room. Computers are stored in one of the junior phase classrooms that are used by learners. The computer teacher must exchange classes with the teacher of the classroom in which the computers are kept in order to teach the learners computer lessons. There is no school library; books are kept in one of the Wendy houses which acts as a school library. The staffroom also has some shelves to keep books.

Both schools show signs of effectiveness with a commitment to a culture of teaching and learning. This is evident in the full attendance of teachers. Teachers are very committed to their work and they also serve the community.

3.6. THE PARTICIPANTS

3.6.1 Selection of participants

All teachers from each of the two schools were invited to participate in the initial stage of the research and were required to complete a closed questionnaire. At School A, of a total of 13 teachers, eight teachers completed the questionnaire, a 62% completion rate. At School B, of a total of 15 teachers, nine teachers completed the questionnaire, a 60% completion rate.

After carefully studying the questionnaires, I then chose the primary participants for my study, three teachers from each school. According to the information on the questionnaires, I chose six teachers based on the different types of leadership roles they had enacted in their schools. In choosing these participants, purposive sampling was used. Cohen and Manion and Morrison (2007) argue that “in purposive sampling the researchers select a sample for specific purpose” (p.115). They also state that convenience sampling is when researchers “choose the sample from those to whom they have easy access” (p.114). The criteria I used for the purposive sampling of participants was, firstly, that they were all post level one teachers, secondly, they were willing to participate in my study and, thirdly, they had undertaken different leadership roles in their schools. I opted for this method of sampling because I was aware that the findings of my study were not generalizable. Cohen *et al* (2007) remind us that one cannot generalize when using purposive sampling because it does not represent wide population except for itself.

In both School A and School B it happened that the participant group included two females and one male. This was co-incidental and was not part of the criteria for choosing

the primary participants. To remind the reader, I specifically chose teachers according to the leadership roles they enacted in their schools, which made a total of six participants. The participants that were chosen for the interview were given pseudonyms, those who belonged to School A were referred as educator A1, A2 and A3 and those that belonged to School B were referred to as educator B1, B2 and B3. Fraenkel and Wallen (1993, p.35) state that “whenever possible, the names of the subjects should be removed from all data collection forms. This can be done by assigning a number or a letter to each form or if possible, subjects can be asked to furnish information anonymously”.

3.6.2. Teachers in School A

Briefly, teacher A1 is a female with 33 years teaching experience in a primary school with a qualification of M+4 (fully qualified with two diplomas). She teaches Grade 5. Teacher A2 is a male with 11 years teaching experience with a qualification of M+5 (fully qualified with a diploma and a degree). He teaches Grade 6. Teacher A3 is a female in her 17th year of teaching with a qualification of M+4 and she teaches Grade 7.

3.6.3. Teachers in School B

In School B, teacher B1 is a female with seven years teaching experience and with a teaching qualification of M+4. She teaches Social Sciences in Grades 5 to 7, Arts and Culture in Grade 6 and Life Orientation in Grade 4. Teacher B2 is a male with eight years teaching experience and a qualification of M+4. He teaches Technology in Grades four to seven, Life Orientation in Grade 5 and Computer Studies in Grade 5 to 7. Teacher B3 is a female with teaching experience of 15 years and a qualification of M+4. She teaches Mathematics in Grades 4 to 7 as well as Arts and Culture in Grade 4 to 5.

3.7. GAINING ACCESS TO THE SCHOOLS

Before the beginning of this study, I telephoned the principals of the two schools to ask for permission to conduct the study in their schools. In our conversation the principals of

the schools were willing to help me with my inquiry. However they requested me to send them a letter explaining the nature of my study so that they could inform their school governing body and teachers. Because of the geographical location of the schools in relation to my school, I faxed the letters requesting permission for access to conduct the study (Refer to Appendix A). The letters explained in detail the nature of the study and the reasons why I chose the schools as my research sites. My identity and the name of the institution as well as the name and contact details of my supervisor were provided to the principals of both schools in case they needed to verify the information. Once permission was granted by the principals of the schools, I made an appointment to meet and discuss the details of the study with the teachers. I explained that the study would involve teachers and members of the SMT to fill in the questionnaires and that I would then select three posts level one teachers as my primary participants for the remaining part of the study.

3.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION AND CONSENT

In my first visit to the schools, teachers were already informed about my visit and its purpose. This was evident in the communication book that I studied as part of my research. However each principal arranged for a short staff meeting to give me a chance to explain to the teachers what the study was all about. Firstly I requested the co-operation and assistance of the educators in collecting my research data. I explained that I would need all teachers, including the SMT members, to fill in the questionnaires and sign the consent forms (Refer to Appendix B and C). I also stressed to the teachers that their participation was absolutely voluntary. All the participants who volunteered were requested to sign the consent form and I assured the confidentiality of their responses. However, I requested that post level one teachers write their telephone numbers down so that I could phone them if selected for the interviews. According to Cohen and Manion and Morrison (2000), researchers can only protect their participants by making sure that whatever information transpired from the research remains confidential or stays between the researcher and the respondent. In agreement with Cohen and Manion (2000) it was

clear to me that I could not discuss the results of the interviews with anybody, not even with the school principals.

In both schools all staff members knew that the participation in the study was voluntary and that the names of the participants and the schools would remain anonymous and confidential.

3.9. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Given the nature of my study, questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis were used over a four month period as tools for collecting data. Since the study was qualitative in nature I felt that triangulation of these methods of collecting data would ensure the trustworthiness of the study. Triangulation, according to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p.180), refers to “the use of more than one method of data collection within a single study”. Questionnaires given to post level one teachers were aimed at selecting participants for the interviews according to their leadership roles in the school. The interviews were aimed at finding out how teachers understand and respond to the notion of teacher leadership. The document analysis was used to verify teachers’ responses and to get insight into what was actually happening in relation to teacher leadership in each of the two schools.

3.9.1. Questionnaires

The questionnaires as one of the methods of collecting data were given to all the staff members, including the SMT, in both schools. I chose to replicate a questionnaire survey on teacher leadership developed by a group of Master of Education students in 2008 at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (see Appendix D and E). The questionnaires were distributed to all members of the staff, both post level one educators and SMT, at both schools. The SMT members were required to fill in a questionnaire which was slightly different from that of the post level one teachers. The reason behind giving questionnaires was to first find out the leadership roles the SMT and post level one educators were involved in, secondly their understanding of teacher leadership and lastly to select the

participants to interview in a bid to answer the research questions. According to Middlewood, Coleman and Lumby (1999, p.140), “questionnaires give time and space for respondents to consider their answers in privacy and at their leisure time”. Cohen and Manion (1994) on the other hand remind us about the advantages of using questionnaires. Amongst the advantages they mention, they highlight the reliability of questionnaires and argue that because questionnaires are answered anonymously, they encourage loyal responses.

Because I chose the participants on the basis of the leadership roles they had undertaken in their schools, the sampling was purposive and therefore could not be representative of the population from which the researcher aimed to draw conclusions. Durrheim (2006) argues that “the aim is to select a sample that will be representative of the population about which the researcher aims to draw conclusions” (2006, p. 49). The length of the questionnaire was three pages for both the post level one teachers and the SMT. The questionnaire consisted of closed questions designed so that they would be easy and quick for the respondents to answer. The first part of the questionnaire required biographical information which was aimed at making the respondents feel comfortable about the questionnaire. The second part was the school information; this part was only on the SMT questionnaire and was aimed at gaining information about the school. The last section was about teacher leadership. The questions on the questionnaire required fixed responses to choose from. There were 54 questions on the questionnaire for post level one educators, since my main interest was on the leadership of post level one teachers.

Questionnaire responses required respondents to cross in a column that mostly described their opinion of teacher leadership in their schools. According to Singh (2008), the sequencing of the questions minimizes the discomfort and the confusion of the respondents. The questions on the questionnaire were also sequenced to minimize the confusion of the respondents. Once the respondents finished completing the questionnaire I requested that they were to be placed in the envelope provided and that the envelope was then sealed. I then collected the envelope from each school. Of the 13 questionnaires

given out in School A, 62% of questionnaires were returned. At school B, 15 questionnaires were given out and 60% were collected. The non-completion of questionnaires for me meant that the teachers concerned did not wish to participate in the study. The informed consent indicated clearly that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study whenever they wished to do so.

To conclude, participants chosen for the interviews were post level one teachers who had completed the questionnaire in full and, according to the information given on the questionnaire; they had undertaken many leadership roles in their schools.

3.9.2. Interviews

In this study I also used interviews as another method of collecting data. Lankshear and Knobel (2005) state that “the purpose of the interview is to generate detailed and desired information about an event , program or person that would not otherwise be possible to obtain by means of observation or artifacts collection” (2005, p.125). For me the interviews were appropriate for this study in order to gain all the information I required from the primary participants about their leadership roles and their understanding of teacher leadership (Refer to Appendix F). According to Cohen *et al* (2007), “the interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi–sensory channels to be used; verbal, non verbal, spoken and heard” (2007, p.348). There are many types of interviews but for this study I chose to do two semi-structured interviews with each participant to ensure confidentiality. Cohen *et al* (2000) maintain that a semi-structured interview provides a desirable combination of activity and depth and often provides valuable data that could not be obtained by another means.

I used semi-structured interviews in conjunction with other methods of data collection in this study. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) argue that “semi-structured interviews provide room for a researcher to probe and to expand the respondents’ responses” (1995, p. 157). I agree with this statement because, as I interviewed the teachers, I felt that in some questions I needed more responses so I had to provide room for negotiation, discussion

and expansion of interviewee responses. I selected participants for interviews after carefully studying the questionnaires

To remind the reader, three participants per school were selected for the interviews, that is three in school A and three in school B. As a matter of process, I telephoned the principals of school A and School B and inform them about the selection of the three teachers and made an appointment to meet with the teachers. Teachers were also telephoned and we agreed on the date, venues and the time for interviews. The interviews were done face to face and, at School A, were conducted in each teacher's classroom. At school B interviews were conducted during the school holiday. Each interview took about 25 to 30 minutes.

Before each interview session I asked for permission to use the tape recorder to capture everything that was said during the interview. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) state that "teacher researchers have to obtain the permission of individuals to tape record interviews and conversations" (1995, p.170). Before we commenced the interview I requested that cell phones be switched off to avoid any interruptions. All interviews were audio taped and then transcribed. I used two recording tools to capture the data; handwritten notes and tape recording. Taking notes focused my attention on the content of what the interviewee was saying and much less on how it was said while the use of the tape recorder enabled me to capture voice quality, hesitation and self correction (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). Tape recording, according to Terre Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim (2006) in Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006), helps the researcher to remember the feedback they receive from participants.

I began each interview by explaining to the participants what the interview was all about. Using the interview schedule consisting of a list of closed and open ended questions, I tried to build rapport and prompt discussion and focus the discussion on the experience of teachers on teacher leadership (Morgan, 1994). The questions ended up not following the order of the interview schedule because I had to come up with follow up questions to probe deeper as the interviewees were speaking. This technique enabled me to receive

more data from the participants. The semi-structured interview was focused to allow the post level one educators to comment on their leadership roles and the challenges they faced as they operated as leaders in their schools. The aim was to probe further the responses to the questionnaires and to triangulate and do a validating check. During the discussion, I listened attentively and made participants feel that their views were valued, as their responses helped me to understand their take on teacher leadership.

3.9.3 Documentary analysis

In this section I discuss the third of the methods that were used in this study to collect data. Document analysis is a process in which a researcher studies the documents of the institution in question as evidence (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993). McMillan and Schumacher state that “the researcher interprets the fact to provide explanations of the past and clarifies the collective educational meaning that may be under lying current practices and issues” (1993, p. 43). Middlewood, Coleman and Lumby (1999) argue that documents are easily available and when using documents as method of collecting data, data can be collected in a shorter period of time than other methods. Fraenkel and Walllen (1993) assert that “the major advantage of document analysis is that it is unobtrusive. A researcher can observe without being observed, since the contents being analysed are not influenced by the researchers’ presence” (1993, p.64).

In my study, examining the documents of the school enabled me to find out about the distribution of leadership roles, the leadership styles employed in the two schools and the culture of the two schools under study. In this regard, Fraenkel and Wallen (1993, p. 389) state that “a person’s or groups conscious and unconscious beliefs, attitudes, values, and ideas are often revealed in the documents they produce”. I hoped that the school documents that I elected to study would give me an insight into what was really happening with regard to teacher leadership in the two schools. To reiterate, I used the questionnaire method and the interview method as the main sources of data and documents were used to supplement the primary methods. Middlewood *et al* (1999) maintain that researchers can use document analysis as the research tool to supplement interviews or questionnaires or both.

In my study I used the *Communication Book* – a book that was used for the announcements and notices for the staff meetings. The rationale for studying the communication book was to see if there was any communication at school to see if the decision making process was decentralized because, if it was decentralized, teacher leadership was likely to be in evidence in the schools. It was also important for me to study and analyse the policies of the school as they are used to achieve certain goals; they are the guideline for action in the day-to-day running of the school. The *School Policies* also enabled me to see the committees’ teachers were co-coordinating and this shed some light on the leadership roles teachers were engaged in. In addition to the above documents, *Minute Books* were also studied to see how decisions were taken in the two schools under study and to see what was discussed in the meetings; including the SMT meetings, staff meetings, departmental meetings and committee meetings. I also saw documents like the *Time Table* as well as the *Duty Roster* i.e. *Ground Duty Roster* and *Feeding Roster*.

In addition, South African policies like the Norms and Standards for Educators Document (2000), the South African Schools’ Act (1996) and the Department of Education Personnel Administrative Measure (PAM) (1999) were also used to inform this study. According to the Norms and Standards for Educators Document (2000) teachers must fulfill seven roles and the role that is relevant to this study is the role of a teacher as Leader, Manager and Administrator. The PAM document also list several core duties and responsibilities of teachers, including the “leadership role in respect of the subject, learning area or phase, sharing in the responsibilities organising and conducting extra and co- curricular activities contributing to the professional development of colleagues by sharing knowledge, ideas, and resources, and participating in school’s governing body if elected to do so” (1999, pp. 67-68). The South African Schools Act’ (1996) is very clear about how schools should be managed democratically. All these policies have implications for the ways in which schools are managed and led.

3.10. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

One of the limitations of this study is the nature of the study as a case study. In a case study the findings cannot be generalized in broad terms since it is specific to a particular context, in my case the two schools. However, the purpose of the case study was not to generalize but to gain an insight into teachers' understanding of teacher leadership and to find the answers to the critical research questions. To compensate for this limitation, triangulation of methods was used, that is questionnaires, interviews and documentary analysis to make the research as trustworthy as possible. The reason I chose the case study was because I wanted rich in-depth data.

The second limitation is that the primary participants for this study were all post level one teachers who had undertaken different leadership roles. The SMT members were not included in the interviews because I particularly wanted to hear the voices of the post level one teachers who did not hold formal management positions. Perhaps if SMT members were included in the interviews I would have got different responses and the findings may have differed. In addition, my decision not to include additional teachers in the interview process may have given a more complete picture.

A third limitation was that the study was conducted in two rural and semi-urban primary schools. It did not include schools from urban areas and neither did it include high schools. However, schools were chosen because of their convenience to the researcher and including additional schools would have been beyond the scope of a half dissertation.

A fourth limitation of the study involved the use of the tape recorder. Using the tape recorder to record the interviews could have influenced the way the participants responded to the interviews. Even though I tried by all means to make the participants feel relaxed, participants were nervous at the beginning of the interview and got less nervous as the time went by. The participants might not have been completely open and honest with me and may have said what they thought I wanted to know. To overcome this

limitation to some degree, the use of other data collection methods were included in the research design.

3.11. VALIDITY

Cohen *et al* (2007) maintain that validity is a requirement for qualitative research. They argue that the methods used in collecting data must address internal validity through demonstrating that the explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data can be sustained by data. To enhance internal validity, triangulation of different methods of collecting data was used in this study. I decided to employ one of the suggestions made by Bloor (cited in Cohen *et al*, 2007) to address the issue of validation, that the researcher should take back their research reports to the participants and record their reaction to the report. Babbie and Mouton (2001) concur and remind us that to ensure the trustworthiness of the study the researcher should go to the source of information to check both the data and the interpretation with the intention to correct errors. In line with this thinking, in my study the transcripts were given to the participants for verification, and when I needed clarity on something I telephoned the participants for assistance. In this study I also went back to the respondents with the transcripts to verify the information. In addition, I used the second interview to focus on the themes that emerged from the first interview and I also used that opportunity to get clarity on certain issues. Furthermore, I compared the findings from the questionnaires with the findings from interviews and documents analysis. Triangulation of the findings enhanced the trustworthiness of the study. Cohen and Manion (1994) argue that one way of validating interview measure is to compare the interview measure with another measure that has already been shown to be valid. They call this kind of comparison “convergent validity”. They further say if the two measures agree it can be assumed that the validity of the interview is comparable with proven validity of the other measure. The use of questionnaires and document analysis in this study might have strengthened the validity of the interviews.

3.12. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) express the view that it is important for the teacher researcher to have a thorough familiarity with the interview or conversational materials before attempting to develop any kind of systematic analysis. They further state that “the process of reading and re reading the materials will engender a sense of their coherence as whole” (1995, p.173). This view is also echoed by Kelly in Terre Blanche, Durrheim (2006, p. 322) where he state that “data analysis involves reading through your data repeatedly, and engaging in activities of breaking the data down (thematizing and categorizing) and building it up again in novel ways (elaborating and interpreting)”. I agree with her because I did this with my transcripts. I read the transcripts repeatedly and compared them with the recording to get a clear image of the interview as whole, and to get an understanding of the views of the interviewees.

After the process of transcribing it was imperative for me to break down the data and categorise it so that it can give meaning. To do this I was guided by Grants’ (2008) zones and roles model of teacher leadership

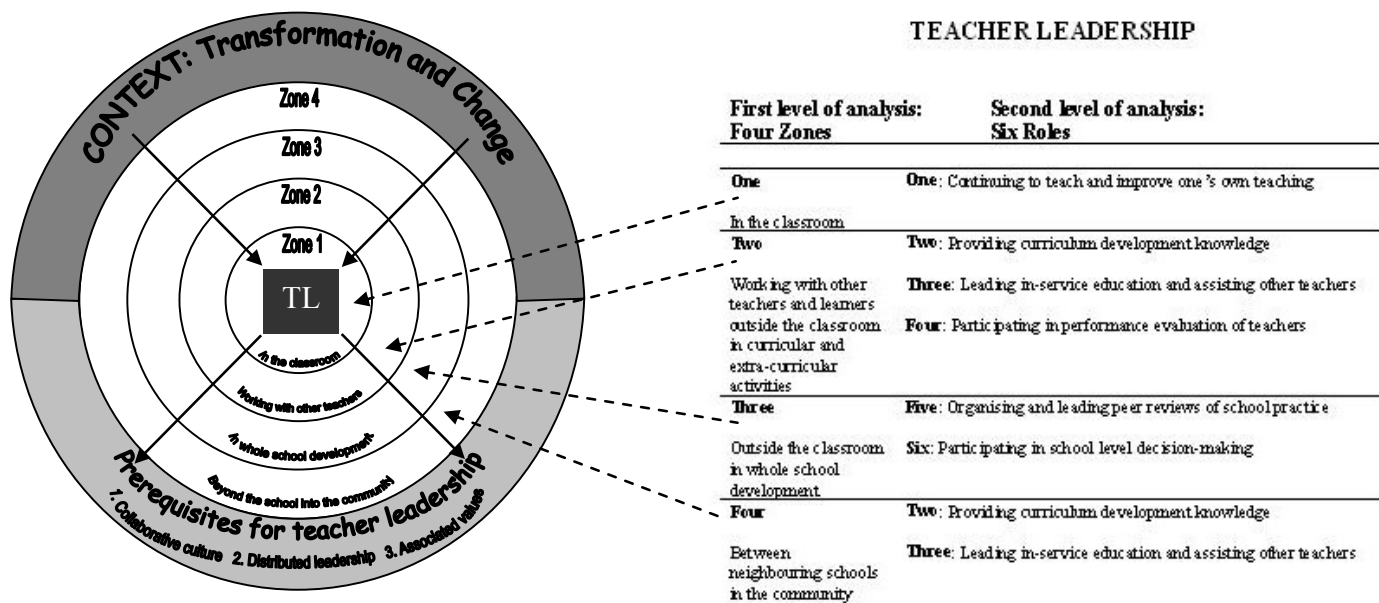


Figure 1: Model of teacher leadership with zones and roles (Grant, 2008, p. 93)

I had to break down the data by searching for ideas and themes and made notes and grouped the same ideas together. Initially I categorized the data according to the four zones of the model, i.e. according to the places where teachers lead. Thereafter I searched for the roles that teachers enacted within each of the four zones or places. The detailed notes of the leadership roles teachers took on as well as the enhancing and inhibiting factors to teacher leadership were made and, in so doing, themes began to emerge.

3.13. CONCLUSION

The above chapter has discussed the research design and methodology employed in this study. I believe I managed to gather a description of teacher leadership in the two schools. However, I am also acutely aware that I cannot make any generalizations about teacher leadership in primary schools generally because of the methodology I adopted and the small size of the study. Because of the nature of this study the research findings do not allow for generalization of any kind.

In the next chapter I discuss the findings of the research.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to explore teacher leadership and the challenges faced by the post level one teachers as they operate as leaders by looking at the roles they play as leaders, along with the barriers and enhancing factors that they encounter as teacher leaders. This chapter discusses the major themes and findings which emerged from across the different data collection instruments. The findings are presented using direct quotes from the participants to show the similarities and differences in their understandings of teacher leadership. In my discussion of the findings I reflect on the various theories covered in my literature review chapter and apply them to the data.

The following table highlights how data have been labeled and provides clarity in identifying direct quotations sourced from the data. Quotations are labeled according to participant and data collection method.

<i>Data collection methods</i>	<i>Abbreviations</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Abbreviations</i>
		SCHOOL A	
Individual interview	II	Teacher leader 1	A1
Survey Questionnaire	Q	Teacher leader 2	A2
Document analysis journal	DA	Teacher leader 3	A3
		SCHOOL B	
		Teacher leader 1	B1
		Teacher leader 2	B2
		Teacher leader 3	B3

The key themes that I discuss in this chapter are: perceptions and understandings of teacher leadership, the enactment of teacher leadership according to zones and roles, challenges faced by post level one teachers as they operate as leaders, as well as benefits

of teacher leadership. In presenting the findings, reference is made to the four zones and six roles of teacher leadership as described in Grant's (2008) model of teacher leadership and depicted in Figure 1 in the methodology chapter. For ease of reading, I do not reference the model again in this section but simply refer to the various zones or roles as it becomes necessary.

With this introduction, I now move on to present the two cases. I begin by presenting School A as the first case of teacher leadership. I then move on to discuss School B as the second case. Within these cases, I discuss the barriers and enhancing factors that emerged in each of the two schools.

4.2. THE CASE OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOL A

4.2.1. Perceptions of leadership and teacher leadership

4.2.1.1. Perceptions of leadership and teacher leadership: an overview from the questionnaire

In School A, of the five questionnaires collected, four teachers indicated that decisions in the school should be taken by both the SMT and the teachers. In other words teachers should be involved in decision making processes at the school. They also agreed that all teachers in the school can take up leadership roles. The leadership roles teachers undertook were in the form of chairing learning area committees, sports committees, fundraising committees, catering committees and others. However, two teachers viewed their school as a place where the SMT had no trust in their ability to lead and where teachers resisted leadership from other teachers. It also emerged from the questionnaires that the SMT did not value teachers opinions. Teachers were divided on the issue of who should take important decisions in the school. Three teachers agreed that it was only the SMT that took important decisions in their school.

4.2.1.2. Defining the term teacher leadership

Teachers from School A were asked to define teacher leadership. Participants in the study had different views of what teacher leadership is all about. They described teacher leadership in a variety of ways to show their different understandings. In Chapter Two, I quoted Katzenmeyer and Moller's definition of teacher leadership. To remind the reader, Katzenmeyer and Moller argue that "teacher leaders lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others towards improved educational practice" (2001, p. 5). In my study, I found out that teachers' understanding of teacher leadership included the leadership of teachers both in and beyond the classroom.

When my research participants in School A were asked what teacher leadership means, many saw teacher leadership to mean being a leader in class, teaching learners and being responsible for discipline in the class and seeing to it that teaching and learning takes place. However, they also included examples of leadership beyond the classroom. For example, A3 defined teacher leadership as follows:

Teacher leadership means being a leader and a manager in class, take part in extramural activities done at school, be a role model to learners and participate in decision making. Helping the SMT with task like controlling late coming and absenteeism in school (II).

This teacher believed that teacher leadership should involve leading in the classroom and beyond. She was entrusted by the SMT to be responsible for controlling late coming and absenteeism in school and she also coordinated extra mural activities in the form of sports. She mentioned that she was the school's netball coach. These examples confirm Donaldson's (2006) view that informal teacher leaders "naturally emerge among their colleagues as trusted and respected catalysts" (2006, p.80). This teacher was trusted by the SMT because she was capable of performing the duties that were assigned to her.

As a further example, A2 held the following view about the leadership of teachers:

Teacher leadership means that if you are a leader you need to educate yourself, get information and pass it on to other teachers, commit yourself in work that you do. You must be self disciplined, be able to communicate with others, give pastoral care to others and be a problem solver (II).

This participant believed that teacher leadership involved being a leader and being able to get information and pass it to other teachers and also being committed to one's work. This is an example of the mentoring role of teacher leaders which Zimpher (1988) talks about. In my opinion this concurs with the research of Zepeda, Mayers and Benson (2003, p.4) on teacher leadership where they argue that teacher leaders are mentors, facilitators, they provide support to their colleagues and they participate in whole school development. I also think that A2's view on teacher leadership extends beyond the classroom and it also highlights the personal attributes and skills that a teacher leader requires.

As my study progressed, I realised that the issue of defining teacher leadership was problematic since the teachers in my study were not yet familiar with the term and many of them did not see it as that important in education since there were more pressing issues that needed their attention. As a consequence, some of the participants associated the concept of teacher leadership with the roles they played in school. As we know from the literature, teachers' roles in school leadership can be both formal and informal (see for example Donaldson, 2006). Teachers in my study also took on various formal and informal roles besides the one of being teachers and leaders in their classrooms. Some of these roles teachers took on included being involved in sporting activities, teaching learners about issues of discipline, mentoring to novice teachers, providing pastoral care and developing certain school policies. In addition, teachers were involved in school governing bodies representing teachers there, convening and chairing certain committees like the time table committee, the learning area committee, the fundraising for the school and planning certain entertainment activities for learners. In this regard, A3 explained: "I

was selected to be a facilitator of inclusive education, Attended workshops and share information with the teachers; I am also a netball coach” (II). A2 described his roles as follows: “I am in charge of the library, chairperson of curriculum development, in charge of the timetable committee, mentor novice teachers” (II) while A1 explained that “I am a co-coordinator of cultural activities; I am also a netball coach. I am also involved in fundraising and entertainment committee” (II).

I would like to make the point that the above leadership roles that the teachers enacted were not considered as teacher leadership. This is in line with the study of Harris and Muijs (2005) on teachers in England where they found that most teachers were involved in leadership activities but they did not consider this to be teacher leadership. This view is also supported in a South African context by Singh (2007, p.77) who states that teachers in her study “are similar to many teachers studied in the ten schools in England, who took on leadership activities without realizing or calling this teacher leadership”. I now move on to explore some of the leadership roles that teachers enacted in their schools.

4.2.2 The enactment of teacher leadership in School A in terms of zones and roles

In my study, participants were asked to locate the areas in which teachers were engaged in leadership roles in an attempt to respond to the second critical research question. I present this data according to the four zones of teacher leadership (Grant, 2008, p. 93).

4.2.2.1 Teacher leaders in the classroom (Zone 1)

In relation to the model of teacher leadership (Grant, 2008), Zone one [Z1] is about a teacher leading within the classroom. This is where we find role one [R1] which looks at the teacher leader continuing to teach and improving one’s own teaching.

When given the questionnaire, all the members of the SMT from both schools agreed that they involved and encouraged teachers to participate in decision making processes and that they used a democratic style of leadership. They also agreed that they allowed teachers to try out new ideas and they valued teacher’s opinions.

It emerged from the data in School A that all three teachers showed strong teacher leadership within the classroom (Zone1) during the teaching and learning process. This means that teachers reflected on their teaching practices, they tried to find ways in which they could develop themselves to be better teachers and to improve teaching and learning (role1). To illustrate, A1 explained: *“I am a leader in my class. I promote teaching and learning. I prepare lessons according to the age of the learners...”* (II). Similarly, A2 was of the view that *“teacher leadership mean to be a leader of the class. If you are a leader you must know everything about the child .You must try by all means to do your work as professionally as possible”* (II).

4.2.2.2 Teacher leaders working with other teachers and learners outside the classroom in curricular and extra curricular activities (Zone 2)

In Zone two [Z2] of the model of teacher leadership this is where there is Role two [R2], which is about providing curriculum development knowledge. Secondly there is Role three [R3], which is about leading in-service education and assisting other teachers. Thirdly, there is Role four [R4], which is about participating in performance evaluation of teachers.

From the interviews it emerged that two of the teachers in School A were also involved in leadership practices beyond the classroom (Zone1). Examples of leadership roles they were involved in included the following: participant A3 explained: *“I was appointed as a facilitator for inclusive education, I attended workshops on behalf of the teachers in school and came back and gave feedback to my fellow colleagues”* (II). According to A1: *“I am a co- coordinator for cultural activities and I am also a netball coach”* (II). The above examples are examples of teacher leadership in zone two working with other teachers and learners outside the classroom in curricular and extra curricular activities (Roles 2 and 3). This is what participant A3 had to say: *“I was selected to be a facilitator*

for inclusive education, I attended meetings on behalf of the teachers and I was responsible for giving feedback from the workshops (A3, II).

4.2.2.3 Teacher leaders: outside the classroom in whole school development (Zone 3)

My observations of these participants indicated that they were not only leading within the zone of classroom [Zone 1] and beyond the classroom working with other teachers and learners outside the classroom in curricular and extra curricular activities [Zone 2], but they were also leading outside the classroom in whole school development [Zone3]. However, while examples existed in Zone 3 where the three teachers played leadership roles, there were far fewer than in Zone 1 and Zone 2.

When studying the documents of the school it emerged that teachers were involved in different activities even though they did not volunteer for those portfolios, instead the SMT delegated those tasks to them (DA). The *Assembly Roster* showed that teachers were taking turns in addressing the learners in the assembly and making announcements (DA). It also appeared on the *Ground Duty Roster* and *Feeding Roster* that teachers were also taking turns in guiding the learners in the grounds during break time and others but again teachers did not volunteer for this task; it was something that they had to do because it was an instruction from above (DA). However, these duties, as outlined in the various school documents, appeared to have a more managerial than leadership focus. One certainly has to question whether these examples are teacher leadership or not? I argue that the involvement of teachers in school maintenance functions, while important, is not the same as being involved in leadership functions.

In relation to zone 3, teachers also belonged to different committees like the catering, fundraising, sports, condolences and music committees. These are examples of leadership within zone 3 and role 5 (participating in organizing and leading peer reviews of their own school practice. A1 described this role as follows: *“I was chosen to be a chairperson of the fundraising committee. I am responsible for raising funds for the school, we do things like cake sales and we also ask local business people to help our school” (II).* A3

explained that *“I am a chairperson of the catering committee I am in charge of organizing farewell function for teachers and staff functions. I was also a site steward for the union where I was expected to attend meetings and bring information to the members of the union” (II)*. In addition, A3 was also a sports coach at School A where the responsibility was to *“manage everything from coaching to taking care of the gear transport arrangement and refreshments for learners (II)*.

In contrast, it seemed from the data that the teachers in School A did not participate in whole school decision making (role 6). There were times they were not involved when important decisions were to be taken. It was the view of A1 that *“at certain times they (the SMT) impose their decisions to PL1 teachers. Sometimes the SMT if they have decided on something the views of the teachers are not accepted” (II)*. A3, who has been at the school for a long time, concurs: *“In this school the PL1 teachers are not involved at all in decision making, for example there was a teacher who was sick, I was told to take her class without any discussion you see they make decisions by themselves and it comes to you as an instruction to follow” (II)*. Again, I would argue that this example given by A3 constitutes a management function rather than a leadership function. A2 confirmed the viewpoints of A1 and A3 and explained:

It is not much that the SMT is involve PL1 in decision making in most of the time they do not...sometimes they come up with decisions without being discussed and it becomes difficult to challenge that because of the atmosphere and the attitude, if you challenge the decision other members of the SMT has a tendency to take it personally (II).

The literature reminds us that any important decisions to be made in a school should involve everyone. If teachers are involved in decision-making processes, they are more likely to take ownership of the decisions and will then work very hard to see to it that it is a success. When people see that their opinions are valued they seem to be motivated to perform at their best. I also believe, like Leithwood *et al* (1999), that working together collaboratively will only work if teachers are also allowed to take part in decision

making. According to Middlewood and Lumby (1998, p. 106) “effective leadership encompass the inclusion of relevant stakeholders in determining the vision for which the leader assumes stewardship”.

4.2.2.4 Teacher leaders: between neighbouring schools in the community (Zone 4)

In Zone 4, there is firstly Role 2, which is about providing curriculum development knowledge across schools. Secondly there is Role 3, which is about leading in-service education and assisting other teachers across schools.

Findings in my study indicated that, in School A, only one of the participants engaged in leadership roles beyond the classroom, where she networked with teachers in other schools. This teacher showed that she participated both formally and informally in zone four by assisting teachers and gaining assistance from other teachers in neighbouring schools (Roles 2 and 3).

I also get information from other schools and give the feedback to the teachers. I also attend workshops and later conduct workshops in school and to our neighbouring school in our cluster to give feedback. We also get together as teachers and discuss new changes in the curriculum and update each other of the new developments (A1, II).

4.2.3 The challenges to teacher leadership and collaboration in School A

The teaching profession is full of challenges and pitfalls. Teachers are expected to be leaders in their classrooms and beyond the classroom. As they try to operate as leaders in their schools they are faced with numerous challenges and sometimes they get frustrated because of the lack of support in their schools. These challenges that teachers face in their schools hinder the development of teacher leadership. Various writers on teacher leadership argue that teacher leadership should be nurtured in school so that the school will function properly and develop. This theme on the challenges faced by post level one

educators as they operate as leaders points to numerous factors that prevent teachers from practicing teacher leadership in their school. Thus this section addresses the last critical question. When teachers in my study were asked about the challenges that they faced in their schools as they operated as leaders, teacher came up with these answers: a lack of support from both colleagues and the SMT which resulted in a lack of collaboration, teachers themselves as barriers to leadership, a lack of time and heavy work loads.

4.2.3.1 Lack of support from the SMT

In their study of teacher leadership, Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson and Hann (2002) assert that the active support of principal is necessary for teacher leadership to flourish. They also believe that “it is possible for teacher leadership to exist without the support of administrators. But its outcomes will not be as positive as when such leadership is accepted and encouraged” (2002, p.33). One of the challenges teachers in this study mentioned was the lack of support from the SMT when they take on leadership roles. The evidence from data showed that the SMT controlled the leadership in the school. There was no trust between the teachers and the SMT and there was a lack of emergent teacher leadership. The participants expressed the view that there was favouritism in School A with regard to the assigning of leadership roles to teachers. A 1 raised a concern on the issue of the distribution of leadership when she said that some teachers were given opportunities to take up different leadership roles whereas others were restricted or prevented from doing so the same. This is what A1 had to say during the interview: *“There is a lot of favouritism taking place in these school teachers is not treated equally, the SMT use their powers to control leadership in school and they also assign leadership roles to those under their wing (A1, II).*

The literature indicates that if schools are to promote teacher leadership, the SMT should pave a way for leadership to be shared and distributed amongst all staff members. The SMT should empower post level one teachers and encourage them to take on leadership roles. If teachers are given leadership roles in their schools their self confidence will be boosted, they will feel valued and they could be motivated to perform at their best and

this might benefit not just the school but also the learners. However, the opposite occurred in School A. Participant A1 raised a concern that because of the favouritism that was taking place in her school this led to the division of the staff: *“The staff is divided there are those who are on the side of the SMT and those who are aloof. Those who are on the side of the SMT their views are taken into account and those who are not on the side of the SMT their views are ignored”* (II). Those that were prevented felt left out and were demotivated in taking initiative which, in turn, posed a barrier to the development of teacher leadership in school. Later on in the interview, this teacher explained the consequence: *“If you fall under teachers who are undermined you will not be given a chance even if your views make sense. But those teachers who are under the wing of the SMT their views are taken seriously”* (A1, II).

Participant A2 expressed the same views as A1: *“The SMT gives us orders to follow, so we follow those orders, we do what we are told to do at a particular time. We feel that if we take initiative it might not be appreciated because there are those whose views and opinions are valued the most”* (A2, II). According to what A2 said in the interview this showed that the culture of School A was non-collaborative because it did not allow for teachers to participate in decision making. During the interview teachers also mentioned that sometimes the SMT gave leadership roles to teachers in areas where they lacked expertise and did not discuss this with the teachers concerned. This suggests that teachers sometimes were forced to take on leadership roles that they had little expertise in. A3 reacted to this practice: *“When they take decisions that involve me I must be there, they must consult me because if you decide for me I won’t do what you want me to do”* (II).

This suggests that PL1 teachers in School A were not involved in decision making. The SMT imposed decisions onto teachers, they make decisions on their own and they did not consider the views of the teachers. Teachers were not very happy with the way things were done at their school. This is what teachers said in the interview: A1 *“At certain times they impose their decision on PL1 teachers ... There is no consultation sometimes when the SMT have decided on something the views of teachers are not accepted”* (II). A2 confirmed the viewpoint of A1: *“Sometimes they (SMT) come up with decision*

without being discussed and it becomes difficult to challenge that because of the atmosphere and attitude, if we voice something out perhaps other members of the SMT might view it the other way”(II).

Evidence from the data shows that teachers in School A were not comfortable with the way the SMT handled things. It may seem as if there was a collegial culture in school A just because teachers did not question the authority of the SMT, but as a result the ethos of school A confirmed a “restricted collegial culture” as opposed to a “pure collegial culture” (Middlewood and Lumby, 1998, p.106). This kind of culture suggests that a leader shares the power with a limited number of colleagues; in School A, the principal shared the power with the members of the SMT and certain teachers.

The data also revealed that the context of a school played a role in the way in which the school was run. School A was in a rural area and the findings from the interview with teachers indicated that teachers did not take part in decision making as they wished to, they could not voice their concerns because they might be labeled as talkative. According to a participant: *“All the stakeholders in the organisation must be involved in decision making, must be encouraged to voice out their views, in our school other members they fear that if they talk too much they might be labelled as being talkative and they might be targeted”(A2 ,II).* Participants in School A, even though they were aware that they should be involved in decision making, were not willing to challenge the authority of the SMT and to demand more involvement and participation in decision making at school level. This is totally different from Grant’s (2005, p.44) stance that “collaboration and participation of all staff and stakeholders are essential in decision making and leadership and management processes”.

Literature (see for example Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001; Harris and Muijs, 2005) points out that the success of teacher leadership lies within the SMT who should create a culture that will promote teacher leadership. If teachers are not given chance to prove themselves as leaders, how are they going to nurture their leadership skills? It was clear from the data that, in School A, the SMT posed a barrier to teacher leadership. However,

this was not the only barrier to teacher leadership in School A. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) suggest that the responsibility for the development of teacher leaders is not limited to a single group or individuals but that teachers are also responsible for supporting teacher leadership in their schools. It is to this discussion that I now turn.

4.2.3.2 Teachers as barriers to teacher leadership

The success of teacher leadership in schools depends on all the staff members, including the post level one teachers. Teachers should take it upon themselves to volunteer for certain leadership roles and must not wait for the SMT to assign the role to them. It should also be the responsibility of the teachers to offer assistance to their fellow colleagues if they are given certain task or projects. However, this was not the case in School A. One teacher commented: *“Sometimes teachers they do not offer assistance, for instance if you are a coach you work alone there is no assistance from other teachers”* (A3, II). A1 concurred:

Sometimes you find it difficult to work with other teachers because some teachers take offence if you advise them on something, they do not take positive criticism well, they label you as somebody who thinks knows all, and it is hard because they do not tell you on your face (II).

4.2.4. Benefits of teacher leadership for teachers in School A

Despite the two main barriers to teacher leadership experienced by the three teachers in School A, they did experience some benefits of teacher leadership. The data indicated that teachers took on leadership roles to empower themselves and to develop their leadership skills. These teachers were of the view that taking on leadership roles could not be avoided as it is part and parcel of the job description of a teacher in South Africa. One of the requirements of the Department of Education is that teachers are expected to take on leadership roles as required for Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). One teacher spoke of the benefits of teacher leadership in the following way:

I was chosen as facilitator for inclusive education, I attended workshops and came back to school and cascade the information to the teachers. This was the best time of my career I really felt proud of myself that I was able to contribute to the professional development of my fellow teachers (A3, II).

This sense of pride and fulfillment in doing the job well was echoed in the words of A2: “*You do not know how fulfilling to see the results of your hard work. As a netball coach you have to stay behind and train the learners. It is good to see your players win the match. You get motivated and want to do more for your players (II).*” Thus it can be seen that teachers took on leadership roles for various reasons. Some teachers felt empowered and being able to contribute meaningfully to the professional growth of their colleagues and some did it for the benefit of the learners whilst others did it to boost their self confidence. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) also mention that “teachers experience satisfaction in their work and it is not just teachers that benefit but also learners from having talented teachers” (2001, p.31).

Having discussed the issues related to teacher leadership in School A, I now turn my attention to School B where a rather more collaborative culture emerges which enables more teacher leadership.

4.3 THE CASE OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOL B

4.3.1. Perceptions of leadership and teacher leadership

4.3.1.1. Perceptions of leadership and teacher leadership: an overview from the questionnaire

In School B, I collected four PL1 questionnaires and, of the four questionnaires collected, all teachers strongly agreed that the SMT together with the teachers should come together and make decisions. They also felt that teachers should take up leadership roles in school.

The leadership roles teachers undertook were in a form of co-coordinating sports, cultural activities, chairing subject committees, drawing policies and others. After carefully studying and comparing the questionnaires I found that teachers in School B were more involved in leadership roles than teachers in School A. One teacher strongly disagreed and three teachers agreed that the SMT allowed teachers to participate in school level decision making. They felt that the SMT valued teachers' opinions and allowed them to participate in school level decision making. They worked as a team and participation in important decision making was allowed and opens to all the teachers.

4.3.1.2. Defining the term teacher leadership

The teachers from School B also had different views about teacher leadership compared to the teachers at School A. When they were asked to define teacher leadership, B2 expressed his understanding in the following words:

Teacher leadership involves being a class manager, responsible for the teaching of the learners, assisting in administration, the management of the school as whole; you also get involved with the school governing body and community members (II).

According to this teacher, teaching learners and managing the class was part of being a teacher leader. This participant believed that teacher leaders assisted in the management of the school as a whole. In other words, being a teacher leader did not mean to lead in your class only but also outside the classroom in the school as whole. Another participant responded like this: *“Teacher leadership means being a leader in class, learning area specialist, being able to solve problems that arises in class and between colleagues” (B3, II)*. This teacher was of the opinion that teacher leadership meant being a learning area specialist who was able to solve the problems between teachers. Participant B1, on the other hand, had this to say about teacher leadership: *“Teacher leadership is about being a teacher and a leader in your class before you lead your colleagues, you can represent teachers in SGB meetings... and you can also be involved in many things” (II)*.

Participants from School B also led beyond the classroom. They also associated teacher leadership with the roles they played in their school as mentioned above. Teachers in this school were engaged in both formal and informal leadership tasks and, even though this increased their work load, they were happy about the leadership tasks they chose. According to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2003, p.11) “teachers can select appropriate leadership roles for themselves given their own experience, confidence level, skills and knowledge”. I concur with what Katzenmeyer and Moller are saying because we cannot expect teachers to be good in everything, one need to select a role that one is good at according to one’s experience and knowledge.

4.3.2. The enactment of teacher leadership in terms of zones and roles

4.3.2.1. Teacher leaders in the classroom (Zone 1)

The teachers in school B showed strong leadership within the classroom. They understood teacher leadership to be grounded in the classroom. The indicators they mentioned included being a manager in class, being in charge of the discipline, being in control, being responsible for teaching, preparing lessons, stimulating positive learning and being responsible for solving problems that arises in the classroom (B1, B2 and B3). This is how the participants expressed their views on teacher leadership. Participant B1 explained: *“If you are a leader you are first a leader in your class, you are responsible for what is happening in your class that is teaching and learning and discipline” (B1, II)*. Participant B2 described his leadership in the following way: *“I am a class manager; I am responsible for teaching my learning area and administration” (B2, II)*. Participant B3 described her role as follows:

My role as teacher is to engage in class teaching, prepare lessons, and use new approaches, techniques and assessment methods. Is to take leadership role in the learning area, co-ordinate, control evaluate and report on learners progress, is to establish the classroom environment that stimulate positive learning (B3, II).

In applying Grant's (2008) first zone and first role in understanding teacher leadership whereby teacher leadership is applied in the classroom, teachers' responses showed that participants mostly saw themselves as teacher leaders within the classroom. Participant B3 was very specific about how to improve her practice as a teacher within her classroom. She mentioned creating a learning environment that was conducive for learning to take place (B3, II). The other two participants did not focus on how they aimed at improving their own practice as teachers within the classroom.

4.3.2.2. Teacher leaders working with other teachers and learners outside the classroom in curricular and extra curricular activities (Zone 2)

It also emerged from the questionnaires and the interviews with teachers in school B that they participated in leadership activities beyond the classroom. They were involved in leadership roles like co-coordinating certain committees and guiding other teachers both formally and informally, they also provided assistance to other teachers (B1, B2, and B3, II). According to B3 she was appointed as subject head (II), where she said she assisted newly appointed teachers by guiding and mentoring them (role 3). This is how she commented during the interview: *"I also mentor newly appointed teachers I help them with assessment methods give them advice on how to use different forms of assessment and with the syllabus"* (B3, II). Besides this role, participant B3 also mentioned working together with other teachers: *"I find it helpful to discuss problems I experience in my learning area with my colleagues"* (B3, II). One participant mentioned that he was involved in curriculum management, (R2) *"I am a chairperson of the curriculum team responsible for management of the curriculum"* (B2, II).

Teachers in school B were also involved in extra-curricular activities where they showed their leadership skills as sports organizers, responsible for the arrangement of games between the schools (R3): *"I am a sports organizer"*(B3). B1 expanded on this idea: *"I am one of the co-coordinators under the umbrella body of sports, I am a co-coordinator of netball I am also a co-coordinator of cultural activities"* (B1,II) R 3.

From the discussion, it can be seen that teachers in school B seem to have engaged themselves in different leadership activities in Zone Two. What I found was that, unlike the teachers in school A, these School B teachers mostly volunteered for these leadership roles. Even though some leadership roles were delegated, what emerged from the interviews was that School B teachers liked to be more involved in formal leadership roles than in the informal leadership roles because this would enable them to practice for future promotion to HOD level.

4.3.2.3. Teacher leaders: Outside the classroom in the whole school development (Zone 3)

In School B, I found that there was teacher leadership happening within zone three (Role 5 and 6) where teachers organized and led peer reviews of school practice and participated in school level decision making. It emerged from the document analysis that teachers were not only leading within Zone 1 and Zone 2 but they were also leading outside the classroom in the whole school development, as with the teachers in School A. According to the teachers in School B, in each and every year they were given a chance to choose the committees they want to co-ordinate (B1, B2 and B3, II). This view was supported through the documents of the school such as the *School Policy* on duties and responsibilities. In these documents, committee level teacher leadership was recorded as follows: fundraising, health and environment, security and safety, assembly, nutrition, functions and entertainment, discipline, sports and culture, curriculum, and awards (DA). Teachers made reference to their involvement in these committees during the interviews and they said they got to choose at least two committees they wanted to belong to for that year. What I realized from the data was that all teachers played a role in the evaluation of other teachers - as peers they were members of the Development Support Group (SDG) (B1, B2 and B3, II). They also said that they could belong to as many committees as they wished because it was up to each and every individual. However, an educator was not allowed to co-ordinate less than two committees for Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) purposes (B3, II).

According to participant B2, teachers all participated in the review of the School Code of Conduct for learners because, according to their principal, this involved all the educators and not just the SMT. *“As teachers we get a chance to put our views in the review of the School Code of Conduct for learners, we use our experience in class to make recommendations and amendments in the Code of Conduct for Learners” (B2, II)*. This is an example of role 6 where teachers participate in the decision making at the school level. Even though teachers did not have a choice in the matter, they had to come up with ideas regarding the School Code of Conduct for learners, but according to the questionnaires and interviews, all teachers were quite happy with the roles that they played in those committees and they went beyond the call of duty to perform their duties in those committees. According to B2:

Because we work with learners who come from disadvantage community, even though learners get hot meals everyday in the fundraising committee, we take turns to seek sponsors who will sponsor meals which are different from what they get in school like vegetable and chicken breyani. We also get cakes from big supermarkets Spar. We also approach local business people to sponsor school uniform for the destitute learners. We have to do this during weekends and holidays because during weekdays we do not have enough time (B2, II).

I found that in School B, leadership was distributed among the teachers. This is what participants had to say about their leadership roles in Zone 3: B1 explained: *“I represent teachers in the school governing body meetings... I also co-ordinate safety and security committee” (II)*. According to participant B1, as teacher representative on the SGB, she carried a mandate of the teachers to the SGB and she also contributed in the making of decisions at that level. This is a good example of role 6 where, as a coordinator for the safety and security committee, she elaborated on her role as follows: *“I am in charge of the wellbeing of learners in the school, if learners get hurt I am responsible for applying first aid to the learners. I am also in charge of checking if the school premises are safe for learners I look for sticking wires and report these to be fixed by the school” (B1,II)*.

B2 described his various roles in zone 3 in the following manner: *“I am a chairperson of the curriculum team, in charge of the timetable committee. I also assist in the drawing of assessment policy. I also co-ordinate the fundraising committee”* (II). According to this teacher, they arranged various fund raising activities including raffles, cake sales and they also approached local business people to help them. B2 said they helped them to build three classes and he was very proud of this initiative.

B3 explained her leadership role in zone three in the following way: *“I am a coordinator of health and environment committee. I am also a member of a discipline committee. I am also a sports organizer. I was a programmer director for the awards ceremony”* (II). This teacher also mentioned that, as a coordinator for health and environment, she was responsible for things like health promotion. She was in charge of making *health promoting policies* for the whole school and these were typed and given to class teachers to put in their classroom where all learners could see them (DA). She was in charge of the cleanliness of the school where she liaised with the general assistant of the school to keep the school clean including areas like toilets, the gardens, grounds and buildings (*School Policy on duties and responsibilities*). B3 also liaised with an NGO to donate seedlings to the school for the vegetable gardens. She was also in charge of the allocation of garden patches for the whole school as each class had its garden to look after. They held competitions for the best garden which was done to motivate the learners to look after their gardens (*Communication Book*). Participant B3 also took part in the discipline of the learners (*Duties and Responsibilities*).

The evidence from the data indicated that the three teachers in School B led in Zone 3, which was outside the classroom in the area of whole school development whereby they were engaged in tasks like health promotion, environment, DSG, and others. They were also involved in both roles, whereby they organized and led peer reviews of school practices (Role 5) and they participated in decision making (Role 6).

4.3.2.4. Teacher leaders: between neighbouring schools in the community (Zone 4)

The data indicated that the teachers in school B led strongly in zone four where teachers are able to interact with other teachers from neighbouring schools. One teacher, B3, said that she shared information, such as learning programmes and resources, with teachers from other schools: *“I have good working relations with other teachers from neighbouring schools”* (B3, II). In addition, B3 also claimed that she was a cluster co-ordinator for Mathematics in the ward: *“I am also a Maths cluster co-coordinator in the ward I am responsible for moderating work for other teachers and checking if the assessments are done in accordance to the policy for assessment. I also advised teachers on using different forms of assessments”* (B3, II). Later on the interview she said: *“We share information and we also update one another on the new curriculum changes, but the only problem we have is time constraints to meet but we do talk over the phone* (B3, II).

According to this teacher they worked together with teachers from neighbouring schools by sharing information regarding curriculum developments. They also shared things like learning programmes and resources. This is an example of leadership within zone four, role two. As a cluster coordinator, the teacher was involved in the development of other teachers in terms of updating them on curriculum issues. Another example of teacher leadership in this zone came from teacher B2 who explained his role in this zone in the following way: *“I was involved in the facilitating of HIV and AIDS programme led by the Department of Education. We conducted workshops where by we encouraged teachers to get tested so that they know their status and can get help in time”*(II). Participant B2 was chosen as facilitator for the HIV assistant programme which was a government initiative to fight against HIV and AIDS. He was responsible for counselling educators and advising them on issues of HIV and AIDS and encouraged them to get tested so that they could know their status and get help if necessary.

4.3.3 The challenges to teacher leadership and collaboration in School B

The literature informs us that in a school where there is a collaborative culture, teachers and learners are likely to perform better because of the support they get from one another

and therefore teacher leadership is more likely to develop in such a school. According to Speck and Knipe (2001), “when the culture of an organization is collaborative, each teacher has a built in network of support” (2001, p.58). The only problem is that, in reality, not all schools have teachers who are able and willing to share ideas with their colleagues and who are willing to go the extra mile and give support to their colleagues. My research findings indicated that in School B teachers were quite positive about collaboration. It was my observation that in School B teachers, to some extent, worked collaboratively with one another, but the challenge that they experienced was time constraints to constantly consult one another on certain matters. Teachers also expressed the view that the changes regarding the introduction of the National Curriculum Statements (NCS) made it difficult to find time to observe and evaluate one another.

4.3.3.1. Lack of time and work load as a barrier

I found out that some teachers in school B were willing to embrace teacher leadership but they encountered different obstacles. One of the barriers to teacher leadership that emerged from the data was that teachers lacked time to engage in leadership outside their classroom. Teachers complained that they were overloaded with work and that there was no time to plan and network with colleagues from neighbouring schools. Meetings, as well as planning, were done after school and this encroached on their personal time. One teacher commented:

There is no time to engage in extra mural activities we are swamped with work we have to utilize every minute and we must make sure that the other activities we engaged ourselves in do not encroach to teaching time. As I am a coach I have to stay behind and train the learners because this cannot interfere with our teaching time (B3, II).

The three teachers complained of a lack of time to see a task through. This made them reluctant to take on leadership roles as additional tasks. The SMT did not provide them with time even if they wished to lead. The teachers also complained about their workload.

They said that the amount of paperwork and administration was too much for them to handle another additional task. One teacher voiced out his view:

We are expected to teach and assess learners regularly. Your work does not just end there you have to record your marks and report to parents about the progress of their children , you see it is hard , at the end of the day you must cover certain assessment standards with learners (B2,II).

Because of the above reasons, teachers were reluctant to take on additional leadership roles because of the time constraint. They complained about the load of work they had to perform. B1 commented:

Even though we would like to take on more leadership roles the reality is we can't, because our work is demanding and the curriculum is ever-changing, if we are not in school we have to attend developmental workshops arranged by the Department of Education. When we come back from the workshops we have to cover time lost while attending the workshop (B1, II).

They also complained that their teaching workload was bigger than that of the SMT which meant the SMT had more time for management tasks. The post level one teachers, unlike the SMT, did not have allocated time in the time table for leadership activities. If they engaged in leadership they had to juggle their time between teaching in the classroom and undertaking extra curricula activities with learners after school hours. According to Speck and Knipes (2001), “time needs to be scheduled for teachers to work together” (2001, p.93). In this regard, they suggest that schools must structure time for professional learning within the regular school calendar, or they must expand the school calendar if teachers are to have quality time for professional development.

4.3.4. Benefits of teacher leadership in School B

4.3.4.1 Support by the SMT

The findings from the data indicate that School B had a different school culture from the one in School A. The data showed that School B allowed for teacher leadership to develop. According to participants in School B, the SMT gave support to teachers and they allowed teachers to lead in certain areas. This is what teachers had to say on support from SMT: *“They allow us to lead in extra and co-curricula activities, they support us”* (B3, II). B2 confirmed the viewpoint of B3: *“I think they do promote teacher leadership in such that we are leaders in subject committees and we report to the SMT”* (B2, II).

This is in line with the roles of teacher leaders as mentioned by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001, p.12) where they state that “teacher leaders may contribute to operational tasks within or outside the school”. Teachers in my study were assigned duties of being chairpersons and coordinators for subject committees and others. This, according to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), is an important task that keeps the school organized and moving towards its goals. Clearly having chairpersons for subject committees would keep the school organized and teachers would be engaged in the culture of collaboration and working together. This, in my opinion, will help the school to move forward. Teacher commented on the way the SMT supported them when they engaged in leadership tasks:

Other members of the SMT they try to involve us in whatever happens in the school although sometimes they do things without telling us they just impose, but most of the time they consult us, even though the principal like to supercede (B1,II).

This teacher felt as if sometimes the SMT invited teachers to lead but at other times she felt as if the SMT imposed decisions on them. B2 shared the same viewpoint:

Sometimes they do take our ideas especially when it comes to curriculum we are part and parcel of the decision making, but when it comes to other issues that are outside the curriculum or beyond our level of teaching, sometimes we do get involved sometimes not (B2, II).

These were the views of PL1 teachers in School B. According to these teachers the SMT involved them in decision making when they saw fit but not in every decision-making process. In contrast to School A, School B teachers were more involved in decision making and were also consulted. They also felt that their views were valued and they were more likely to take initiative compared to teachers in School A. Leadership in School B seem to be distributed amongst teachers. Participant B3 has this to say:

Whenever there is something the SMT will have a meeting with teachers to discuss that and come to an agreement, they do not tell us what to do...they involve us in decision making. They allow us to be learning Area co-coordinators and planners and they also allow us to lead in extra mural activities (B3, II).

Crowther, Ferguson and Hann (2009) argue that “teacher leadership could flourish if there is a strong support systems, particularly from the principals or other senior administrators” (2009, p.42). The evidence from literature points to the need for SMT to provide support to those who take on leadership roles. Hence, post level one teachers should be encouraged and motivated by the SMT to take on leadership roles. This seemed to occur at School B.

4.3.4.2. Personal benefits

Like School A, School B also benefited from having teacher leaders in the school. Teachers took their leadership roles seriously and worked hard for their efforts to be recognized. When asked about the benefits of teacher leadership, teachers took leadership roles for different reasons. Some wanted their talents to be recognized and some wanted to contribute meaningfully towards the development of the school. Yet other teachers took on leadership roles for personal reasons like to see if they had what it takes to be a leader. They mentioned that to see the project succeed motivated them to do even better.

One teacher commented on the project they had recently completed: *“When we got Illovo Sugar Mills to donate a building to our school it was a greatest achievement of my life. I didn’t think we can pull it off. But when the deal was signed and sealed and the contractors started working on site I was filled with joy” (B1, II)*. This teacher was impressed about the work they did as a fundraising committee. B1 explained that they saw a need for another building because of the overcrowding of learners in classes and they took the initiative to approach Illovo Sugar Mill to donate a building to their school and this was recognised by the principal and her SMT and the School Governing Body. Yet another teacher on the fundraising committee said:

It is so amazing to see the smiles of these children when a sponsor come and give them school uniform .You know I get that fulfillment in heart and say to myself you did good ... I really don’t care what others are saying as long as I know that I made a difference in these children’s lives that’s all that matters to me (B2,II).

Having discussed teacher leadership at School A and School B independently, I now briefly compare the culture and contexts of the two schools.

4.4 COMPARING THE CULTURE AND CONTEXTS OF THE TWO SCHOOLS

In studying the two case study schools, I found out that their school cultures were different. School A’s culture was found to be non-collaborative and restricting and this hindered the development of teacher leadership. This is what A1 had to say: *“Sometimes when the SMT has decided on something the views of the teachers are accepted” (A1, II)*. This view was also shared by A3: *“They (the SMT) make decisions by themselves and come with instructions to educators” (A3, II)*. In contrast, School B’s culture was more inviting and this allowed for teacher leadership to develop. According to B1: *“the HOD, s and other members of the management try to involve us in whatever happens in the school” (B1, II)*. B2 explained further: *“The SMT do involve us as PL1 educators especially when it comes to curriculum” (B2, II)*.

In comparing the two schools in terms of their contexts, School B was semi urban and there was more participation of post level one teachers in decision making than in School A. Studies show that in the South African context there have been some changes in the leadership practices in urban schools where there is more participation by PL1 teachers in leadership (see for example Singh, 2007). In direct contrast, research has shown that in the more rural schools leadership tends to be contained at the level of the SMT and the principal (Ntuzela, 2008). This opinion may be due to the fact that semi-urban school culture and context is more accommodating to shared forms of leadership because it is influenced by the western culture whilst the rural school context and culture is perhaps less influenced by western culture and more influenced by traditional methods of leadership.

In my study, the leadership practices at School A, which was more rural than School B, were seemingly influenced by the traditional methods of leadership which held the view that the positional leader holds absolute power and colleagues or subordinates are constructed as followers. Participants from School A felt that there was little distribution of leadership and, if there was any, it was in the form of giving orders. They also felt that their talents and abilities were not recognised to bring about change in the schools. Hence there was less evidence of teacher leadership in School A than School B. What also emerged from the data collected in the two schools was that the leadership style in School A was more autocratic and that the top-down approach was used in decision making.

Unlike School A, School B exercised both autocratic and democratic styles of leadership, although the democratic style seemed to be more dominant. From listening to what teachers in School B had to say, I could say that the principal and her SMT were trying to distribute leadership as teachers were consulted during the decision-making process and teachers in School B were able to voice their opinions and their inputs were valued in certain matters. This employment of both styles of leadership paved a way for teacher leadership to develop in School B.

In School A, in particular, very little leadership was evident among the teachers and many of the examples given by the teachers were actually management rather than leadership functions. In contrast, there was evidence of teacher leadership in School B.

4.5. CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to examine whether post level one teachers had undertaken leadership roles in their schools and, if so, what were the challenges they faced as they operated as leaders and practised teacher leadership. The study also examined the distribution of leadership within the two case study schools and whether the SMT had allowed teachers to participate in decision making. The findings of this study indicated that different school cultures existed in School A and School B. School A showed signs of a non-collaborative, contrived school culture, a lack of participatory decision making processes and very little teamwork. Participants in school A felt that their principal and SMT were still holding absolute power in their schools and so the distribution of leadership was not happening. This is not in line with the material in the literature review that suggests that the SMT led by the principal should provide opportunities for teacher leadership to take place and teachers should be given a chance to take on leadership roles. School B, on the other hand, showed signs of a collaborative and collegial school culture. Various writers in the field of teacher leadership such as Harris and Muijs (2005) and Crowther *et al* (2002) remind us that for teacher leadership to develop, a school culture that is collaborative and collegial with participatory decision making is required.

Having presented and discussed the findings, the next chapter discusses the conclusions to the study and offers some recommendations. Possible areas for further research are also discussed.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMANDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of the main findings as revealed by the critical research questions. In addition, it discusses the conclusions and recommendations on what can be done to get post level one educators to be more involved in leadership roles and to promote teacher leadership. The conclusions are based on the findings of the data based on six participants. Finally it presents the recommendations for further research in the field of teacher leadership.

5.2. SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS

This study set out to explore teacher leadership and the challenges faced by post level one teachers as they operate as leaders in the two primary schools. The study was based on three research questions. All three research questions were answered. The research questions read as follows:

1. How is teacher leadership understood in the two case study schools?
2. How do post level one educators lead in their schools?
3. What are the challenges facing post level educators in exercising teacher leadership in their schools and how do post level one educators deal with these challenges?

The first research question was firstly answered by looking at the understanding of teacher leadership by teachers in the research schools. When participants from both School A and School B answered the first research question it emerged from the findings that the participants were not familiar with the concept teacher leadership. Participants gave different responses of what teacher leadership was about. Even though teachers in

the study were engaged in different leadership roles they did not consider this teacher leadership. This is in line with the research by Grant (2006, 2008) which shows that teacher leadership is still developing in South Africa. Studies by Harris and Muijs (2007) on teachers of England also revealed that teachers were practicing teacher leadership but they did not consider this teacher leadership.

The second research question i.e. 'How do post level one educators lead in their schools?' This was answered firstly, by looking at the roles teachers engaged in and secondly, by looking at the enactment of teacher leadership in terms of zones and roles as presented in the model of teacher leadership by Grant (2008). All the six participants in this study mentioned different leadership roles they were involved in. Some of these roles teachers took on include mentoring novice teachers, developing certain school policies, being involved in sport committee and other committees. The findings revealed that leadership roles were given to certain groups of teachers whom the participants labelled as close to the SMT. It is interesting to note that even though teachers were not treated equally this did not discourage the three teacher leaders in School A from volunteering and engaging themselves in different leadership roles.

In applying Grant's model of teacher leadership the findings showed that in School A teachers led mainly in classroom and leadership outside and beyond the classroom was still emerging. The data showed that teachers in School A operated mainly in zone 1 role 1 which is to continue to teach and improve teaching practice, and in zone 2, role 2 and role 3 which is to provide curriculum development and to lead in-service education. Teachers in School A did not lead strongly in zone 4 and only one teacher showed leadership in zone 4, role 2 and 3 there were no examples of role 6.

In School B the findings revealed that teachers showed strong leadership in zone 1 role 1, in zone 2 roles 2, 3, and 4 and in zone 3, roles 5 and 6 and in zone 4, roles 1 and 2. These findings tell us that there was stronger teacher leadership in School B than in School A. This may be due to the fact the schools had different cultures one being collegial and collaborative and the other being non collaborative (Preedy, Glatter and Wise, 2003).

The third research question reads: What are the challenges facing post level one teachers in exercising teacher leadership in their school and how do post level one educators deal with these challenges? This research question was answered by looking at the barriers teachers encounter when they operate as leaders in their schools. During the interview process, teachers in both School A and School B mentioned various obstacles they came across in their attempts to lead. These included a lack of time and work loads, lack of support from the SMT as well as teachers themselves as barriers.

The research showed that the SMT in both schools sometimes did not show support to teachers when they took on leadership roles. The study by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) revealed that the support of the SMT is essential if teachers are to succeed in the leadership roles they played. It also emerged from the data in my study that the SMT in both schools at certain times delegated leadership roles to teachers in areas where they lacked expertise. They did not discuss this with the teachers concerned and teachers, when they failed to perform the tasks, felt demotivated. This was mainly the case in School A where teacher felt forced to take on delegated leadership roles. The research also revealed that, particularly in School A, the SMT did not listen to teachers hence teachers felt uncomfortable in volunteering for leadership roles.

The data also revealed that teachers themselves sometimes were the barriers in the development of teacher leadership. The success of teacher leadership lies in empowerment of all teachers in school (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). Teachers should support one another and offer assistance where necessary. Most of the teachers in my study accepted leadership roles given to them. Only participant A3, in School A, showed reluctance to take up leadership roles. Participant A3 expressed the view that if the SMT make decisions about her she should be involved and consulted before she is given those leadership roles.

The findings also showed that a lack of time was one of the challenges that teachers encountered. Participants in my study expressed the view that their work was demanding and it became difficult at certain times to finish the tasks or projects.

5.3 THEORISING THE KEY FINDINGS

5.3.1. Characterising teacher leadership in School A and School B

Having discussed the summary of the findings of the schools under study, two theories emerged that need to be discussed. It emerged from the findings that the two schools had different characteristics of teacher leadership. A useful characterization of teacher leadership is offered by Harris and Muijs (2007). They distinguish between three types of teacher leadership, namely developed teacher leadership, emergent teacher leadership and restricted teacher leadership. Firstly, they describe developed teacher leadership as leadership where all the members have a say in the decision making process. In a school practising developed teacher leadership, teacher initiatives are supported by those in management. They further state that leadership of this kind is characterized by collaboration where teachers work as teams not as individuals, leadership is distributed among all staff members and it is not considered only the task of the SMT.

Secondly Harris and Muijs (2007) describe emergent teacher leadership as leadership where not everyone participates in the decision making like in developed teacher leadership. In emergent teacher leadership, distribution of leadership does not extend to other classroom teachers it is mainly open to the SMT members. In this type of teacher leadership teachers do not feel free to initiative decisions. Furthermore, Harris and Muijs argue that even though teacher involvement in decision making is somewhat limited teachers are allowed to lead new initiate and developments. Like in developed teacher leadership, collaboration is also considered an important factor in the development of teacher leadership.

Lastly, restricted teacher leadership is where teachers do not participate in decision making at the whole-school level and “involvement in leadership at the whole school level is seen to be limited to the SMT” (p.125, 2007). In schools where this kind of teacher leadership exists teacher leadership is not well developed. It also appears that the schools which are characterized by this kind of teacher leadership have cultures which do not support the development of teacher leadership.

5.3.1.1. Restricted teacher leadership in School A

In using Harris and Muijs’ (2007) characterizations of teacher leadership my research findings showed that School A had characteristics of restricted teacher leadership. The findings suggest that there was an authoritarian style of leadership. The SMT did not consult teachers in decision making and a top down approach was used in decision making. It also emerged from the interviews that teachers were not happy with the status quo and there was no distribution of leadership. The SMT held all the power and they were not willing to share or devolve their powers to all the staff members. The findings also revealed that participants in School A, even though they would have liked to be more involved in decision making they were not willing to challenge the SMT as they did not want to be targeted and labelled. Participants also expressed the view that there was no ownership of the decisions taken because the SMT made decision on issues before they were discussed in the staff meeting.

Even though teachers took initiatives and tried to engaged in leadership roles the SMT did not give support to all the teachers. It is also interesting to note that the staff was divided, the findings suggest that there was lot of favouritism from the SMT in terms of providing support and giving leadership roles, some teachers were supported while others were not. The participants expressed the view that the SMT had authority to distribute leadership roles, but instead they delegated leadership to teachers of their choice and others were excluded from the leadership process. The findings also showed that the school culture in School A was not collaborative and teamwork was non existent This not in line with the research of Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinback (1999) who argue that

teacher leadership needs a culture that is collaborative and collegial in order to develop well. This also not in line with the literature review which suggest that the SMT should provide opportunities for teacher leadership to develop.

5.3.1.2. Emergent teacher leadership in School B

The research findings showed that School B can be characterised as practicing emergent teacher leadership (Harris and Muijs, 2007). In School B the findings suggest that the participants were involved in many of the decision making processes. The findings also showed that the SMT encouraged teacher leadership in their school by providing support to teachers who engaged in leadership roles.

Participants in School B expressed the view that the SMT distributed leadership and allowed teachers to take initiative in certain projects. Teachers were allowed to choose their own committees and they were not forced to become members of or lead the committees they had no expertise in. The culture in School B allowed teachers to work collaboratively and this promoted teacher leadership in the school. Although one teacher mentioned in the interview that the principal sometimes like to supersede, in most cases teachers were allowed to participate in decision making and their opinions were taken into consideration. It is also interesting to note that the SMT was willing to work side by side with teachers.

The findings also showed that the SMT encouraged teachers to take on leadership roles. The leadership style that seemed to be dominant in School B was the democratic style. Teachers did not feel threatened by the SMT but instead they felt free to voice out their opinions.

5.3.2. Characterising distributed leadership in School A and School B

In this section I draw on Gunter's (2005) characterizations of distributed leadership. Gunter (2005) characterises distributed leadership as authorized, dispersed, and

democratic. Firstly she explains distributed leadership as authorized to mean “where work is distributed from head teacher to others. This distribution is usually accepted because it is regarded as legitimate through the complex operation of both hierarchy in the form of subordination and through attribution in the form of giving status to a person to determine activity and take actions” (2005, p. 51). This type of distributed leadership in our schools can be associated with the principal, or the SMT delegating work to teachers, where teachers have to report back to the principal or the SMT.

Secondly, dispersed distributed leadership is described “where much of the work goes on in organizations without the formal working of a hierarchy. It is accepted through the legitimacy of the differentiated knowledge and skills of those who do the work” (2005, p. 52). Gunter further states that this type of distribution is “more bottom-up through networks in which the private interests of the individuals are promoted through group and collective actions, and through the community where the public good secures the defence of the individual” (Gunter, 2005, p. 52). In dispersed distributed leadership, leadership can be shared among the members of the organization, it is where people feel free to volunteer for certain task and this might bring people closer as they work as a team.

Finally Gunter (2005, p. 57) maintains that the final characterization, democratic leadership, “opens up possibilities for leading teachers because it widens their gaze from the school as an organization to the wider role of the school as a public institution within a democracy”. The findings in my study showed that the two schools could be characterized differently with regard to these characterizations of distributed leadership which now I discuss.

5.3.2.1. Authorized distributed leadership in School A

Research at the school showed that in School A teachers were told what to do and they had to follow instructions. The evidence from the data collected in this school showed that there was little distribution of leadership. If there was any distribution it was based on the SMT delegating duties to teachers and teachers had to perform those tasks as they

were instructions from their superiors. The top-down approach was used in decision making and teachers at certain times found themselves not being able to challenge the decision taken by the SMT because they did not want to become a target. Although the tasks were delegated, teachers did not have control of the situation nor did they have the power to take decisions. Instead the power was vested in the principal and this led to less teacher leadership. At best, this is in line with Gunter's (2005) characterization of authorized distributed leadership where the principal gives duties to teachers. This may also be regarded as empowerment of teachers where teachers are expected to work in a particular way. At worst, this is in line with Grant's (2010) characterization of 'leadership as disposal' where unwanted management and administrative tasks are dumped onto teachers under the guise of leadership.

5.3.2.2. Dispersed distributed leadership in School B

The research findings in School B showed that teachers were allowed to take initiative and to volunteer without being delegated leadership tasks in their school. The SMT trusted teachers' expertise in such a way that leadership tasks were distributed amongst teachers. Even the school culture allowed for teacher leadership to develop because teachers were able to work together as a team. The collegial school culture also allowed for teacher and school development. Professional learning communities were evident in School B as teachers worked together in their grade or learning area activities.

The findings also showed that there was shared decision making in the professional learning communities and teachers were allowed to contribute in whatever way they could to bring about changes in school. The SMT played a vital role in supporting teachers in leadership roles they played. Because all teachers in school B were allowed to participate in leadership activities and in decision making, I am of the view that School B fitted well with what Gunter (2005) calls dispersed distributed leadership. My reasons for this assessment is because in School B they did not consider formal positions in assigning leadership roles but instead all teachers took on leadership roles.

According to Grant (2008, p. 87), “dispersed distributed leadership, through sharing the leadership tasks more widely and redefining roles shifts the power relations in the school in the achievement of predefined organisational goals and values”. In my opinion this shift of power is essential to bring about improvement and change in school. If we want schools to change the way they operate this cannot be the task of only those in formal management positions. In line with this thinking, Katzenmeyer and Moller state “within every school there is a sleeping giant of teacher leadership, which can be a strong catalyst for making change. By using the energy of teacher leaders as agents of school change, the reform of public education will stand a better chance of building momentum” (2001, p.2). This suggests that in schools there is some form of teacher leadership that needs to be nurtured in order to bring about change.

5.4. RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study attempted to find answers on how post level one teachers lead in their schools, and it investigated the understanding of teacher leadership by teachers. What emerged from the findings is that this concept needs to be clarified. Since it is still an under-researched topic, more research is necessary.

This research study has identified gaps that require further research such as: What can be done to motivate post level one teachers to become teacher leaders? The findings showed that some teachers do not want to be involved in leadership activities. I think this research will be worth doing and would provide the answers to the above question. The findings have shown that certain principals still hold absolute power in their schools and they do not distribute leadership. I think another area of research that needs to be explored is what could be done to motivate the principal and SMT to relinquish their power and distribute leadership. Lastly I found that even though teachers are ready to engage in leadership roles, there are no systems in place to effect the changes. Thus the following question can

attempt to address this issue: What structures should be provided in schools to engage teachers in teacher leadership activities?

5.5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The findings revealed that little teacher leadership and distributed leadership was happening in School A. It also revealed that teachers from both schools had a vague understanding of teacher leadership. The literature reminds us that for a school to develop teacher leadership, the SMT needs to distribute leadership so that teachers can contribute towards the improvement of the school. It is also true that a school which does not allow its teachers to participate in decision making is bound to have problems in achieving its goals.

It is understandable that the concept of teacher leadership is new in our country (Grant, 2005). Firstly, what is needed in schools is to introduce this concept of teacher leadership and engage teachers in leadership debates. Teachers should be encouraged to become teacher leaders; this cannot happen if structures are not in place to allow for teacher leadership to take place. In line with this thinking Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) suggest that structural changes are necessary to promote teacher leadership. They further argue that the structural changes may include the way teaching and learning is organized, how time and resources are used in an institution and the way decisions are made in schools.

When teachers take on leadership roles the SMT must make sure that structures are in place to help and develop teachers to be better leaders by providing support to those who take on leadership roles. They must ensure that time is given to perform certain tasks and guard against overloading teachers with tasks they cannot finish in a given time. The SMT should empower the teachers and trust that teachers can make decisive decisions. The research findings in School A have shown that the SMT did not give support to all the teachers but only to certain teachers and teachers were working in isolation, they did

not get any assistance from their colleagues. This could lead to conflict and division in a school and it could hinder the development of teacher leadership.

Another important factor in the development of teacher leadership is that principals in schools should be willing to relinquish their powers and distribute leadership to the entire school structure, not to certain individuals (Grant, 2005). In other words, leadership should be dispersed throughout the school where everyone can have access to leadership (Gunter, 2005). The SMT must create a school culture that is collegial and that encourages collaboration. Collaboration is essential if schools are to function effectively. It should be seen as a tool to bring about change and unity in schools. Research by Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999) shows that if teachers are involved in decision making they feel motivated, and if the principal praises often they become motivated and do things they did not know they were capable of doing.

Teachers on the other hand must move out from their comfort zone and be willing to accept leadership roles both inside and outside the classroom and beyond the school through networking with other teachers. It is also recommended that teachers should be able to solve their problems together, support one another and motivate one another for the benefit of the school and the learners.

5.6. CONCLUSION

I believe that anyone can be a leader, even though they may not hold a formal management position in an institution. This is why in this study I decided to focus on post level one teacher, as an example of teachers who do not hold any formal management position. This study has demonstrated that post level one teachers can be leaders if systems are put in place for them to become teacher leaders. This study has shown that with the support of the SMT teachers can go an extra mile in executing their duties to be teacher leaders. The study also revealed that the SMT by the virtue of their powers can promote or hinder teacher leadership, through deciding whether to support teachers or not. They can also unite or divide the staff through favouritism or by being neutral. In

concluding, for teacher leadership to develop in an institution it depends on the culture of the school whether it collegial and collaborative. Furthermore it also depends on the way decisions are taken in the institution whether teachers are allowed to participate or not.

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APPENDIX A

A letter of consent to the principal



University of KwaZulu-Natal
Private Bag X01
Scottsville, 3209

The Principal

Dear

I am currently a second year Masters in Education student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am presently engaged in a research study which explores teacher leadership and the challenges faced by post level one teachers as they operate as leaders in their schools. Teacher leadership is an emerging field of research in South Africa and it needs to be built upon. In this regard I have chosen your school because I believe that your teachers have the potential and can provide valuable insight in extending 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. They will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves. However, participants will be asked to complete a consent form. In the interest of the participants, feedback will be given to them during and at the end of the study.

My supervisor is Ms. C. Grant who can be contacted on 033-2606185 at the Faculty of Education, Room 42A, Pietermaritzburg Campus (School of Education and Development). My contact number is ...082-9547104.....

You may contact my supervisor or myself should you have any queries or questions you would like answered.

Yours faithfully

Knightingale Siphелеle Gumede

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

Declaration

I (full name of principal) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project. I am willing for my school to participate in this research project. I understand that I reserve the right to withdraw from this project at any time.

Signature of principal

Date

.....

.....

APPENDIX B

Letter of consent to the educator



University of KwaZulu-Natal
Private Bag X01
Scottsville, 3209

The Educator

Dear

I am currently a second year Masters in Education student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am presently engaged in a research study which explores teacher leadership and the challenges faced by post level educators (PL1) as they operate as leaders. Teacher leadership is an emerging field of research in South Africa and it needs to be built upon. In this regard I have chosen you as a suitable candidate as I believe that you have the potential and can provide valuable insight in extending the boundaries of our knowledge on this concept.

Please note that this is not an evaluation of your performance or competence and by no means is it a commission of inquiry! Your identity in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I acknowledge your autonomy as an educator. You will be free to withdraw from this research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to yourself. However, you will be asked to complete a consent form. In your interest, feedback will be given to you during and at the end of the study.

My supervisor is Ms. C. Grant who can be contacted on 033-2606185 at the Faculty of Education, Room 42A, Pietermaritzburg Campus (School of Education and Development). My contact number is ...082-9547104.....

You may contact my supervisor or me should you have any queries or questions.

Yours faithfully

Knightingale Siphелеle Gumede

.....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 from this project at any time.

Signature of participant

Date.

.....

.....

APPENDIX C

A letter of consent to the staff



University of KwaZulu-Natal
Private Bag X01
Scottsville, 3209

The Educator

Dear

I am currently a second year Masters in Education student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am presently engaged in a research study which explores teacher leadership and the challenges faced by post level educators (PL1) as they operate as leaders. Teacher leadership is an emerging field of research in South Africa and it needs to be built upon. In this regard I have chosen you as a suitable candidate as I believe that you have the potential and can provide valuable insight in extending the boundaries of our knowledge on this concept.

Please note that this is not an evaluation of your performance or competence and by no means is it a commission of inquiry! Your identity in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I acknowledge your autonomy as an educator. You will be free to withdraw from this research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to yourself. However, you will be asked to complete a consent form. In your interest, feedback will be given to you during and at the end of the study.

My supervisor is Ms. C. Grant who can be contacted on 033-2606185 at the Faculty of Education, Room 42A, Pietermaritzburg Campus (School of Education and Development). My contact number is ...082-9547104.....

You may contact my supervisor or me should you have any queries or questions.

Yours faithfully

Knightingale Siphhelele Gumede

.....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 from this project at any time.

Signature of participant

Date.

.....

.....

APPENDIX D

Adapted in Master of Education students (2008) University
of KwaZulu- Natal

TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN ACTION 2008**TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE****INSTRUCTIONS FOR QUESTIONNAIRE**

- Use a **BLACK** or **BLUE** ink pen. Please do not use a pencil.
- In the interests of confidentiality, you are not required to supply your name on the questionnaire.
- Please respond to each of the following items by placing a **CROSS**, which correctly reflects your opinion and experiences on the role of teacher leadership in your school.
- This questionnaire is to be answered by an educator.¹

¹ The word 'educator' refers to a post level 1 educator

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Gender

Male	Female	
------	--------	--

2. Age

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

3. Your formal qualification is:

Below M+3	M+3	M+4	M+5 and above	
-----------	-----	-----	---------------	--

4. Nature of employment

Permanent	Temporary	Contract	
-----------	-----------	----------	--

5. Employer

State	SGB	
-------	-----	--

6. Years of teaching experience

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

B. TEACHER LEADERSHIP SURVEY

Instruction: Place a **CROSS** in the column that most closely describes your opinion on the role of teacher leadership in your school.

Scale: 4= Strongly Agree 3=Agree 2= Disagree 1= Strongly disagree

B. 1

I believe:	4	3	2	1
7. Only the SMT should make decisions in the school.				
8. All educators ² can take a leadership role in the school.				
9. That only people in positions of authority should lead.				
10. That men are better able to lead than women				

B. 2

Which of the following tasks are you involved with?	4	3	2	1
11. I take initiative without being delegated duties.				
12. I reflect critically on my own classroom teaching.				
13. I organise and lead reviews of the school year plan.				

14. I participate in in-school decision making.				
15. I give in-service training to colleagues.				
16. I provide curriculum development knowledge to my colleagues.				
17. I provide curriculum development knowledge to teachers in other schools.				
18. I participate in the performance evaluation of teachers.				
19. I choose textbook and instructional materials for my grade/learning area.				
20. I co-ordinate aspects of the extra-mural activities in my school.				
21. I co-ordinate aspects of the extra-mural activities beyond my school.				
22. I set standards for pupil behaviour in my school.				
23. I design staff development programmes for my school.				
24. I co-ordinate cluster meetings for my learning area.				
25. I keep up to date with developments in teaching practices and learning.				
26. I set the duty roster for my colleagues.				

Instruction: Please respond with a CROSS either Yes/ No/ Not applicable, to your involvement in each committee.

If YES, respond with a CROSS by selecting ONE option between: Nominated by colleagues, Delegated by SMT or Volunteered.

B.3

				How I got onto this committee:		
I play a leadership role in the following committee/s:	Yes	No	Not	Nominated by colleagues	Delegated by SMT	Volunteered
27. Catering committee						
28. Sports committee						
29. Bereavement /condolence committee.						
30. Cultural committee.						
31. Library committee.						
32. Subject/ learning area committee.						
33. Awards committee						
34. Time- table committee.						
35. SGB (School Governing Body)						
36. SDT (School Development Team)						
37. Fundraising committee.						
38. Maintenance committee.						
39. Safety and security committee.						

40. Discipline committee						
41. Teacher Union						
42. Assessment committee						
43. Admission committee						
44. Other (Please specify)						

Instruction: Place a CROSS in the column that most closely describes your opinion on what factors support or hinder teacher leadership.

Scale: 4= Strongly Agree 3= Agree 2= Disagree 1= Strongly Disagree

B.4

My school is a place where:	4	3	2	1
45 The SMT has trust in my ability to lead.				
46. Teachers resist leadership from other teachers.				
47. Teachers are allowed to try out new ideas.				
48 The SMT (School Management Team) values teachers' opinions.				
49. The SMT allows teachers to participate in school level decision-making.				
50. Only the SMT takes important decisions.				
51. Only the SMT takes initiative in the school.				
52. Adequate opportunities are created for the staff to develop professionally.				
53. Team work is encouraged.				
54. Men are given more leadership roles than women.				

Thank You for your time and effort

APPENDIX E

Adapted in Master of Education Students (2008) University of
KwaZulu-Natal.

TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN ACTION 2008

SMT QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

- Use a BLACK or BLUE ink pen. Please do not use a pencil.
- In the interests of confidentiality, you are not required to supply your name on the questionnaire.
- Please respond to each of the following items by placing a CROSS, which correctly reflects your opinion and experiences on the role of teacher leadership in your school.
- This questionnaire is to be answered by a member of the School Management Team (SMT).

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Gender

Male	Female
------	--------

2. Age

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

3. Your formal qualification is:

Below M+3	M+3	M+4	M+5 and above
-----------	-----	-----	---------------

4. Nature of employment

Permanent	Temporary	Acting
-----------	-----------	--------

5. Years of teaching experience

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

6. Period of service in current position

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

B. SCHOOL INFORMATION

7. Learner Enrolment of your school

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

8. Number of educators, including management, in your school

2-10	11-19	20-28	29-37	38+
------	-------	-------	-------	-----

9. School type

Primary	Secondary	Combined	
---------	-----------	----------	--

10. School Fees

No Fees	R1-R500	R501-R1000	R1001-R5000	R5001+
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C. TEACHER LEADERSHIP SURVEY

Instruction: Place a CROSS in the column that most closely describes your opinion on the role of teacher leadership in your school.

Scale 4= Strongly agree 3= Agree 2= Disagree 1= Strongly Disagree

C. 1

I believe:	4	3	2	1
11. Only the SMT should make decisions in the school.				
12. All teachers should take a leadership role in the school.				
13. That only people in formal positions of authority should lead.				
14. That men are better able to lead than women				
15. Educators ³ should be supported when taking on leadership roles				

Instruction: Place a CROSS in the column that most closely describes your opinion on the role of teacher leadership in your school.

Scale 4= Strongly agree 3= Agree 2= Disagree 1= Strongly disagree

C.2

Which of the following tasks are you involved with?	4	3	2	1
16. I work with other educators in organising and leading reviews of the school year plan				
17. I encourage educators to participate in in-school decision making				
18. I support educators in providing curriculum development knowledge to other educators				
19. I support educators in providing curriculum development knowledge to educators in other schools				
20. I provide educators with opportunity to choose textbooks and learning materials for their grade or learning area				
21. I work with other educators in designing staff development programme for the school				
22. I include other educators in designing the duty roster				

Instruction: Place a CROSS in the column that most closely describes your opinion on what factors support or hinder teacher leadership.

Scale: 4= strongly agree 3= Agree 2= Disagree 1= strongly disagree

C.3

My school is a place where:	5	4	3	2	1
23. The SMT has trust in educator's ability to lead.					
24. Educators are allowed to try out new ideas.					
25. The SMT (School Management Team) values teachers' opinions.					
26. The SMT allows teachers to participate in school level decision-making.					
27. Only the SMT takes important decisions.					
28. Only the SMT takes initiative in the school.					
29. Adequate opportunities are created for the staff to develop professionally.					
30. Team work is encouraged.					
31. Men are given more leadership roles than women.					

Thank you for your time and effort

APPENDIX F**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS**

1. How many years of experience do you have as a teacher?
2. What do you think is the role of a teacher ?
3. What leadership role have you played as a teacher ?
4. What does the term teacher leadership mean to you?
5. Do you regard yourself as a teacher leader? What makes you feel this way?
6. How are decisions made in you school? In your view what do you think is important in decision making process?
7. To what extent the SMT involve post level one teachers in decision making?
8. In your view would you like to be more involved in decision making? Why?
9. What are the challenges have you faced as you took on leadership roles?
10. What kind of support if any does your SMT give you as a teacher leader? If not what kind of support do you need from the SMT?
11. As a teacher leader what kind support do you give to the SMT and colleagues?



RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)
WESTVILLE CAMPUS
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 - 2603587
EMAIL : ximba@ukzn.ac.za

23 NOVEMBER 2008

MRS. KS GUMEDE (981191444)
EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Dear Mrs. Gumede

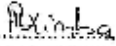
ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS0757/06M

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been approved for the following project:

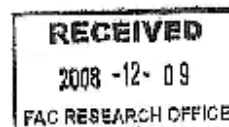
"Exploring teacher leadership and the challenges faced by post level one (PL1) educators as they operate as leaders: A case study of two primary schools in the Ugu District in KwaZulu-Natal"

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years

Yours faithfully


.....
MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA

cc: Supervisor (Callie Grant)
cc: Mr. D Bushie



Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

