

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the data obtained from fieldwork conducted at the case study school. The main purpose of the research was to investigate the way in which SMTs conceptualise and develop teacher leadership programmes in schools. During the data collection process, I utilised multiple methods to obtain my information. Firstly, data was collected by means of a questionnaire, which was administered to all teaching staff at the school. Secondly, data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews. I interviewed the Principal, one Deputy Principal, three Heads of Department and five post-Level One teachers.

Lastly, minutes of SMT meetings and daily staff briefings were analysed as part of document analysis. During the 2013 academic year, the school held twenty-two SMT meetings and had daily staff briefings. This school does not have staff meetings regularly. There was one staff meeting held in 2013, where the focus was exclusively on learner discipline. It is important to note that while the academic year runs from January to December, the minutes of SMT meetings are only taken for January 2013 to September 2013, as it is a GDE condition the data collection cannot take place in the fourth school term. The chapter begins with the profile and background information for the sample school used in this study. In this report the sample school will be referred to as School A.

The second part of the chapter presents data indicating the biographical information of the participants and their responses to the Teacher Leadership Survey that they completed. Data collected from the interviews and through document analysis are used to substantiate the responses to the survey. This chapter also includes a summary of additional information shared by the participants and concludes with a summary.

4.2 Background information

The data presented in this section was taken from the completed questionnaires and interviews. School A has a staff complement of forty, inclusive of management. I distributed forty questionnaires and thirty staff agreed to participate. Overall, school A returned twenty-eight (70%) of the forty distributed questionnaires. The total number of management staff at School A is nine. Of those nine, seven management staff (78%) returned questionnaires. School A has a total of thirty one teaching staff, of this, twenty-one (68%) returned completed questionnaires. Further, ten members of the staff were selected to be interviewed. This sample comprised five teachers (PL1), three Heads of Department (PL2), one Deputy Principal (PL3) and the Principal (PL4).

In the questionnaire, participants were asked to indicate background information regarding gender, age, level of formal qualification, nature of employment, number of years of teaching experience and period of service in current position. The aim of this section was to get a better understanding of the school's staff profile. Following the analysis of the background information, the following conclusions can be drawn. More females (68%) than males (32%) answered the questionnaire. In addition, the majority of the respondents (57%) are between the ages of twenty-one and forty. The staff at School A are highly qualified; twenty-one (75%) of the respondents have a M+4 and higher qualification. This implies that seventy-five percent of the staff has successfully completed postgraduate studies.

While the majority of the respondents (57%) are in permanent GDE positions, it is important to note that a significant percentage (43%) are in temporary and SGB positions. A particularly important factor to take into consideration here is that during 2013, the GDE withdrew all permanent positions for non-South African citizens. Their contracts became temporary appointments. School A is once again at an advantage with regard to the staffs' teaching experience. A total of seventeen respondents (61%) have more than ten years teaching experience. In contrast, only five respondents (18%) have been at School A for more than ten years.

4.3 Restating the research questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- (1) How do SMTs and staff conceptualise teacher leadership?
- (2) How are teacher leadership programmes developed, implemented and evaluated?
- (3) What are the barriers to teacher leadership development programmes?
- (4) How can teacher leadership development programmes be made more effective?

The data will now be presented according to each of the above questions.

4.4 Research questions: Data presentation and analysis

4.4.1 How do SMTs and staff conceptualise teacher leadership in school?

Participants in the survey were asked if they understood what teacher leadership means.

The following response was achieved:

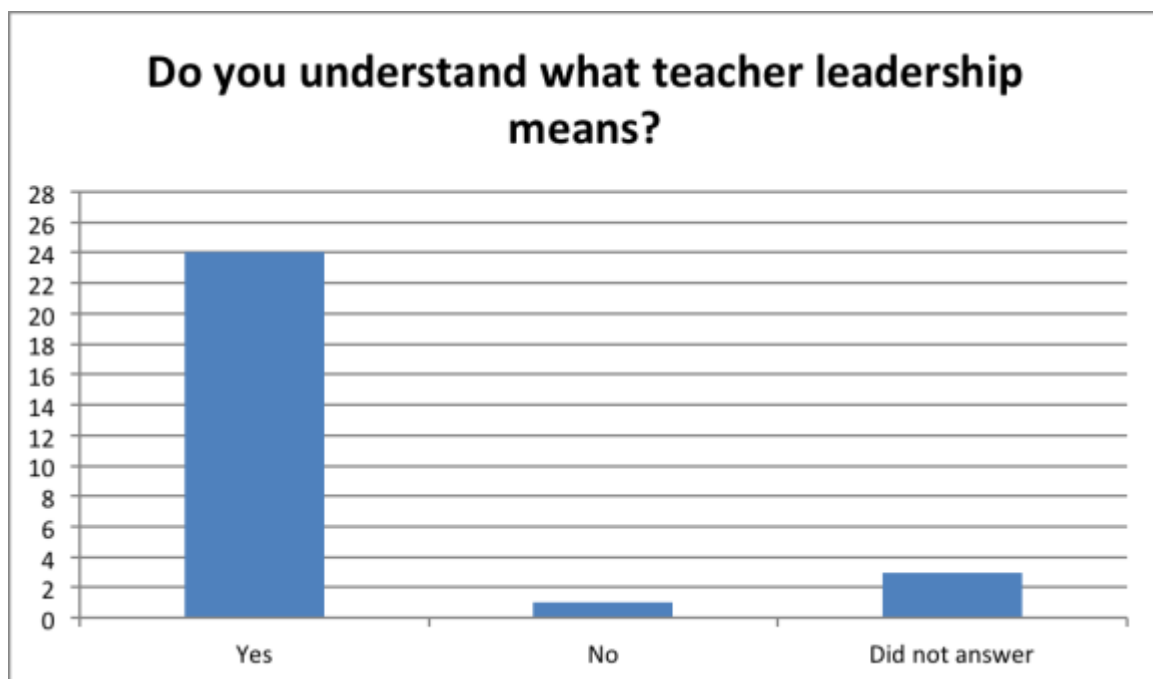


Figure 4.1 Do you understand what teacher leadership means?

Twenty four (86%) of the respondents indicated that they knew what teacher leadership means. A further analysis of the twenty four respondents yielded the following data:

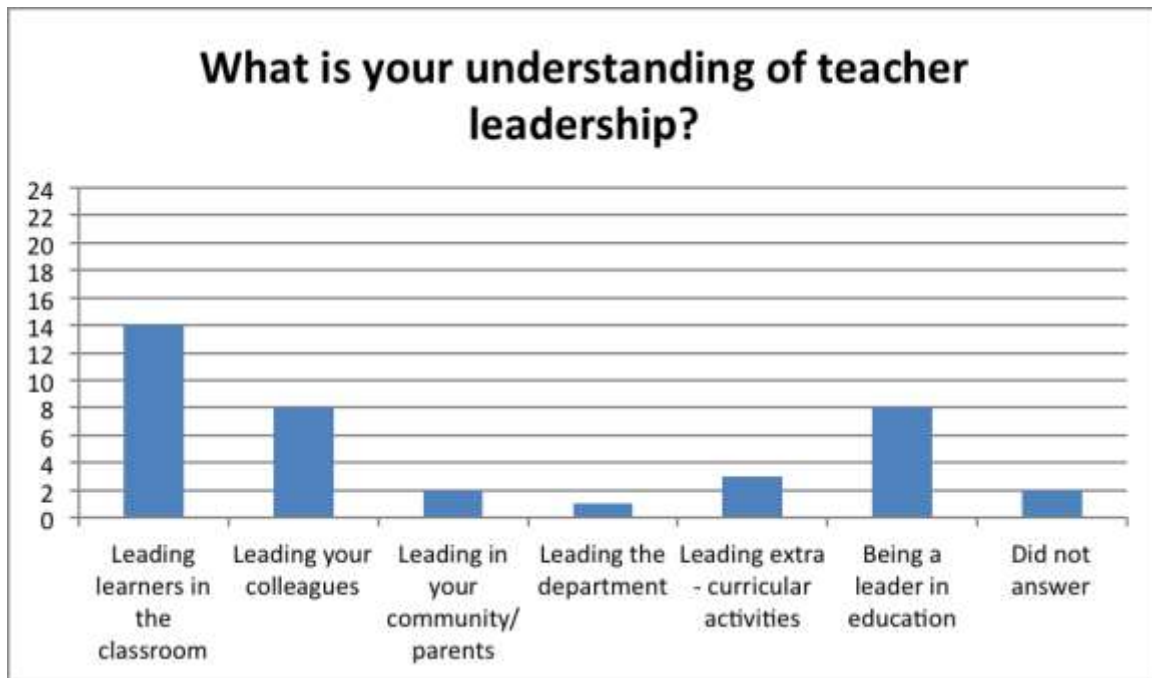


Figure 4.2 What is your understanding of teacher leadership?

The understanding of teacher leadership at School A appears to be positive. Teacher leadership is still primarily perceived and understood as an activity that teachers engage in with their learners in the classroom. However, there is clear evidence that this concept of teacher leadership is filtering through to teachers at schools. Evidence of this is provided by the teachers' responses that teacher leadership involves: *leading you colleagues; leading in your community and leading parents; leading extra curricula activities; and being a leader in education*. Overall, respondents indicated being a leader beyond the classroom eighteen times compared to sixteen times for leadership restricted to the classroom. This also correlates with Grant's (2006) definition of teacher leadership as "leadership beyond headship or formal position, teachers become aware of and take up informal leadership roles both in the classroom and beyond".

From my analysis of the staff briefing and SMT meeting minutes, I did not find any clear reference to teacher leadership as a concept. The words 'teacher leadership' or 'teacher leader/s' were not used specifically. However, considering the high level of understanding (86%) of the concept of teacher leadership, it is possible that though understood, the term teacher leadership itself is not a term in everyday use. In support of this, I found that PL1 teachers were actively involved in informal teacher leader roles. This was evidenced in: (1) the principal appointing a teacher as head of the matric dance committee; (2) PL1 teachers

giving feedback on extra-curricular activities they are coordinating; and (3) a teacher informing staff of a development workshop she had arranged for them. While neither of these teachers are formally appointed teacher leaders, they are engaged in activities outside the classroom and are fulfilling a leadership role within their chosen extra-curricular activity. According to Grant's (2006) model, both teachers were "working with other teachers in curricular and extra-curricular activities", and therefore leading in Zone 2.

The semi-structured interviews provided further insight into the way in which staff and SMT conceptualise teacher leadership. Staff member A and C as well as SMT member D were not familiar with the concept of teacher leadership, and weren't sure of the difference between leadership and teacher leadership.

Staff member A: *"Is there a difference between leadership and teacher leadership?"*

Staff member C: *"A teacher or as an educator being a leader."*

Staff member A also believed that teacher leadership was another name for SMT, asking: *"isn't that another name for SMT?"*. According to Staff member A. teacher leadership is *"a network of teachers working together, but those teachers are not in the first – what's this – first level of teachers, but they're in the second level or third and so on"* [sic]. While this statement shows evidence of collaboration, a necessary component if teacher leadership is to be developed and nurtured. This is tempered by the fact that she believes it is an activity that management engages in *"they're in the second level (PL2, HODs) or third (PL3, Deputy Principal) and so on"* [sic]. Staff member C's answer also makes reference to leadership being only for those in formal management positions: *"I believe that it's a hierarchy thing"* [sic]. This view was further supported by SMT member Band D.

SMT member B: teacher leadership is an activity conducted by a senior member *"taking the teachers who are under your authority and showing them the correct way of doing it and enabling them to find their own place"*. She further asserts that it is this activity of teacher leadership that contributes to teachers being empowered.

SMT member D: teacher leadership *"does not enable a teacher [with the skills] to lead people in management"*.

This staff member further clarified that *“empowering can sometimes [amount to] delegation”*.

Staff Member B and C’s understanding of teacher leadership was restricted to leadership within the classroom. Staff member B described teacher leadership as having *“more to do with the classroom management; because the moment you are a leader and you are a teacher, then you have to manage a classroom”* [sic]. Staff member C describes teacher leadership as *“having an understanding of my subject”* and being *“able to control whatever kids, grade that I have in my class”*. In addition, she sees a teacher leader as *“the leader of the class”*. This idea of teacher leadership being restricted to the classroom was also indicated by SMT member D *“a teacher should lead in her classroom, she should be the boss”*. SMT member E also had a restricted view of teacher leadership as being limited to the classroom. Teacher leadership referred to *“what you want in your class, meaning what order you want your lesson to go in”* [sic].

In contrast, the view of teacher leadership extending beyond the classroom was evidenced by Staff Member D, who indicated that *“teacher leadership... is about managing teachers”*. It is *“not just me standing in front of teachers and giving instructions but it’s about, it’s a two way kind of communication system that [involves] me facilitating”* [sic]. *“When I am a teacher leader... I lead by example, and I also welcome contributions from the people that I am leading”*. This idea is further supported by Staff Member E, who describes teacher leadership as a teacher who can “influence”. The use of the word “influence” is significant. While it is an indication of power, it is not limited to those in formal positions of authority (Bush, 2008). Anyone, at any level of the school has the ability to exert influence; this fact underpins the rationale for teacher leadership. Staff member E further elaborates that teacher leadership refers to *“someone who is a natural leader, that doesn’t have to be given to you or to be a title...”* [sic]. The idea of teacher leadership extending beyond the classroom was also indicated by two members of the SMT.

SMT member A described teacher leadership with regard to colleagues, *“whether you are a senior person or whether you’re just an ordinary CS educator, I see teacher leadership as being so important that if somebody has better skills than somebody else, [teacher leadership means] to be able to show them how something can be done and to show them*

the best way forward". The idea of teacher leaders being at any level of the organisation is further supported by SMT member C, who refers to teacher leadership as *"guiding and providing informed guidance to a group of teachers, or to a group of people who are involved in education, they don't have to be teachers as such"*. SMT member D also described teacher leadership as *"empowering people to lead"*. This is in line with Harris (2003), who states that teacher leadership is centrally concerned with forms of empowerment and agency.

4.4.2 How are teacher leadership programs developed, implemented and evaluated in schools?

The information collected is presented in the figures that follow. Each sample data is presented separately.

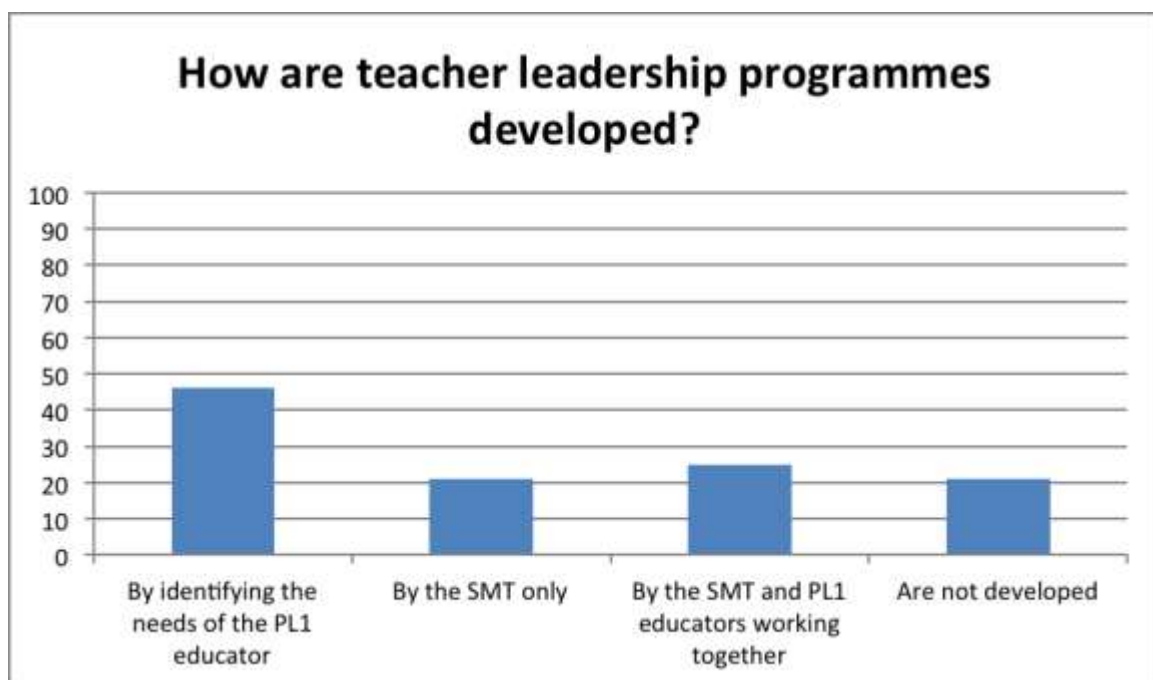


Figure 4.3 How are teacher leadership programmes developed?

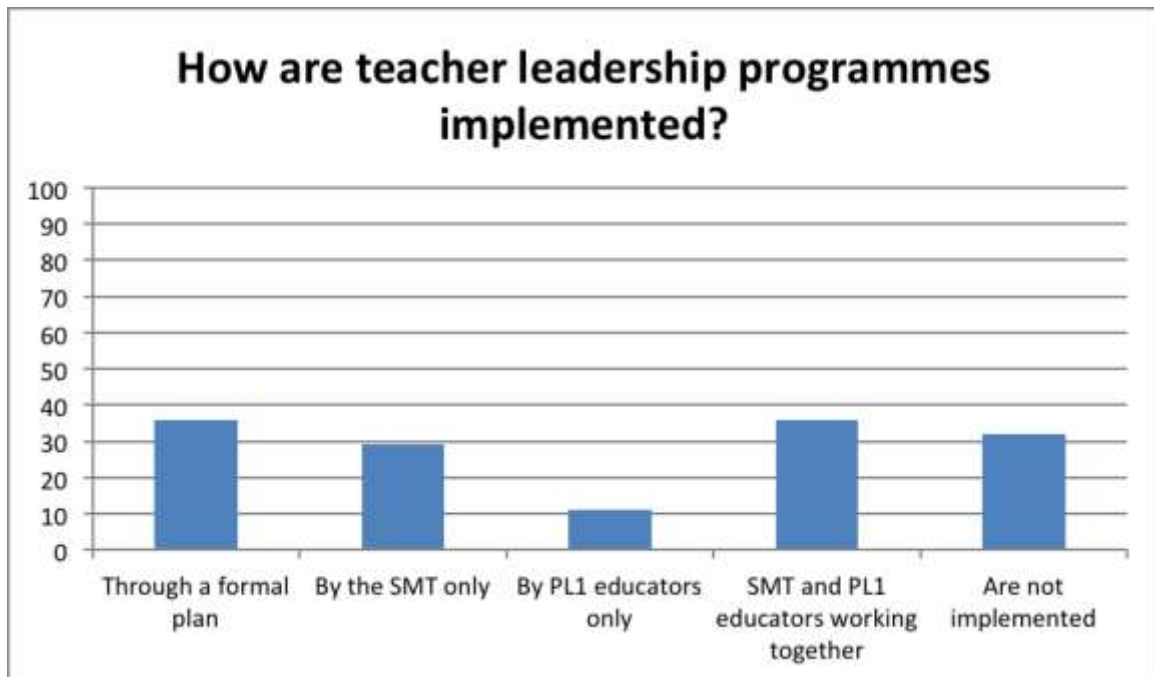


Figure 4.4 How are teacher leadership programmes implemented?

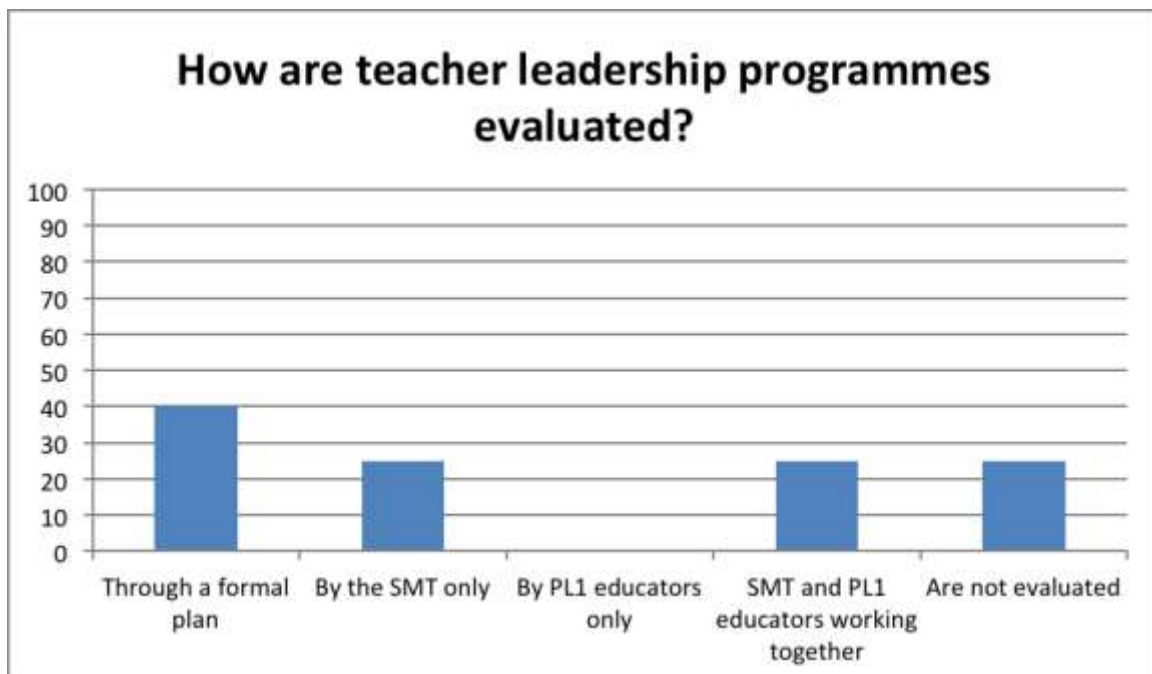


Figure 4.5 How are teacher leadership programmes evaluated?

Data collected from the questionnaires indicates that 46% of the respondents felt that the needs of the educator were taken into consideration in the development of teacher

leadership programmes. As to whether there was collaboration during this process or whether it was run solely by the SMT proves inconclusive, as both categories scored 21 percent. The strongest data came from the implementation of teacher leadership development programmes. Thirty-six percent indicated that this was done through a formal plan and a further thirty-six percent indicated that this was done through collaboration, with *SMT and PL1 educators working together*. With regards to the evaluation of the programmes, forty percent indicated that teacher leadership development programmes were evaluated through a formal plan. As to whether the evaluation was done through collaboration (25%), or by the SMT only (25%), proves inconclusive, as both categories scored the same.

4.4.3 What are the barriers to teacher leadership development programmes in schools?

Figure 4.6 provides a summary of the factors that hinder the development of teacher leadership as indicated in the questionnaire.

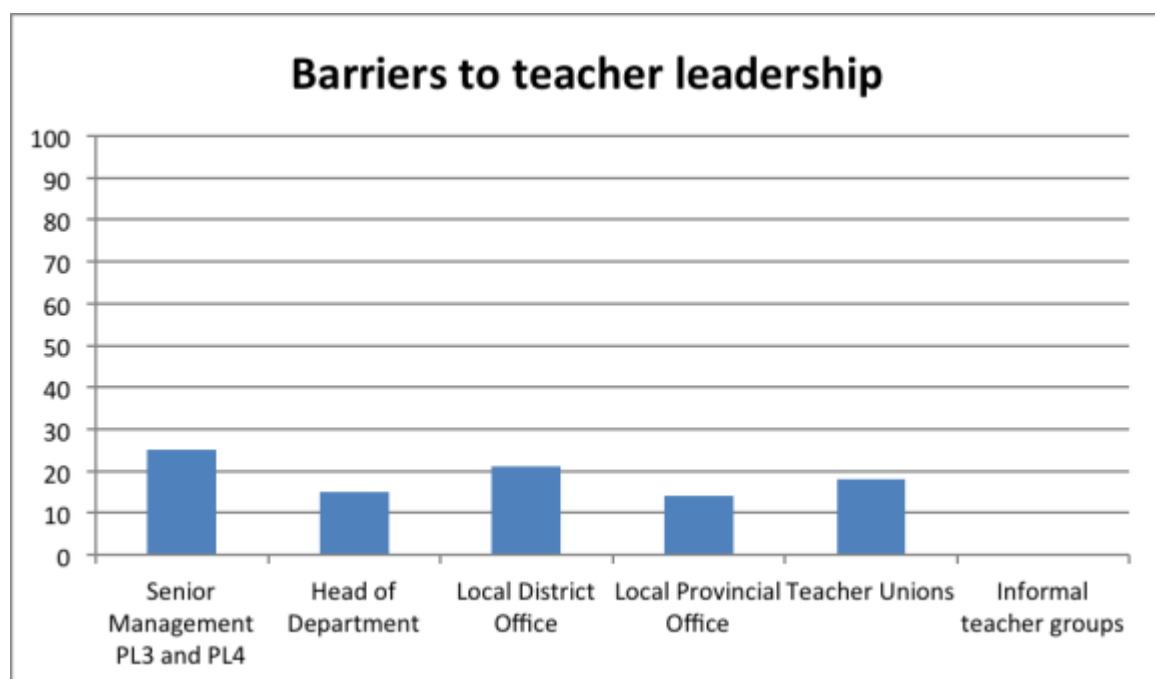


Figure 4.6 Barriers to teacher leadership

The role of senior management, specifically the Principal (PL4) and the Deputy Principal (PL3) were identified as the most significant barriers (25%) to teacher leadership. This was followed by the local District Office (21%), Teacher Unions (18%), Heads of Departments (15%), and the Provincial District Office (14%). None of the respondents (0%) indicated

informal teacher groups as a barrier to teacher leadership. This stands in contrast to the study conducted by Lieberman et al. (1998), in which they found that one of the main barriers perceived by teachers in leadership roles was the norm of equality among educators. In view of the data collected, SMTs still appear to be a significant barrier to the development of teacher leadership when compared to the other factors indicated in the survey. Senior management was indicated as 25 percent and HODs as 15 percent. A combined total of 40 percent.

When analysing the minutes of the staff meetings, there was no evidence of plans to develop teacher leadership. The development of teacher leadership does not appear to be an area of priority when compared to issues such as: learner absenteeism and late coming; staff absenteeism and late coming; learner discipline; completion of reports for District Office; preparing files for District and Head Office visits; fundraising; completing and moderating SBA tasks; and providing academic and psycho-social support for learners. Staff development programmes available to staff from an outside service provider were mentioned twice as documented in the staff meeting minutes. While there is a need for staff development, there was no evidence of the school utilising the expertise that exists within the school to offer that particular service. Here we need to be reminded that 75% of School A's staff has a postgraduate qualification that could be of benefit to the school and their colleagues. There was one in-service training session for PL1 staff on discipline, which was presented by the Deputy Principal.

Further data on the barriers to teacher development were collected from the interview. As the interview question was opened-ended this produced a greater variety of responses. Staff member A identified a number of factors (with reference to the SMT) as hindering the development of teacher leadership, including: *"racism"*; *"looking down on other members of the team"*; *"calling them names, saying they're incompetent"*; *"pulling them down"*; *"not being honest"*; and talking about you *"behind your back instead of coming to you to tell you what you are doing wrong"*. Staff member B identified the *"authorities"* as a barrier to the development of teacher leadership. From this I am going to infer that this is a reference to the SMT, and more specifically, the principal and deputy principal, as evidenced in the data from the questionnaire. She further elaborated that *"the powers that be don't like others to become leaders as well, so they keep the leadership roles to themselves and at the end of the*

day teachers don't develop to become leaders". In addition, the SMT is seen as "not good leaders themselves" at times, and as a result, "they can't produce other leaders".

Staff member C felt that the development of teacher leadership was hindered by the lack of *"challenges"* given to educators. She noted, *"it's the same thing over and over and over, that's why I'm talking about the development, there's nothing new, since I've been here it's the same thing"*. It is possible in this case to say that the lack of opportunities to learn and grow is limited, which indirectly contributes to teachers being unable to take up and fulfil leadership roles within the school. This lack of support has resulted in situations that were described as *"quite embarrassing"* and *"obviously [sic] at the end of the day you will lose [their] interest"*. Staff member E also identified a *"lack of support"* as being a barrier to the development of teacher leadership. When asked to elaborate on whether the support would be from other teachers or management, the teacher explained that *"it could be both ways, but the lack on members of the management part would be, is more disastrous than the teachers"* [sic]. SMT member E summarises by adding that *"motivation"* needs to come *"from the person themselves, as well as [from] management"*.

SMT member B identified the leadership style of a principal as being a potential barrier to the development of teacher leadership. An autocratic principal was identified as a person who would *"not have teacher development because an autocratic leader finds it difficult to let go"*. Evident in this quote are the issues of power and power-sharing. Issues around power-sharing were also highlighted by SMT member D, who commented on *"people who want to take over [sic] in high positions"*. She further elaborated that *"people who already have power want further power"* and *"perhaps people get to a certain position and they don't want to share"*. With regard to the SMT there appears to be *"a subtle understanding that perhaps one shouldn't include too many other people"*, SMT member D.

An additional barrier, identified by SMT member B, was *"the people that you are leading, because sometimes they don't want to follow. And you have to be a charismatic enough leader to get them to follow you"*. In this instance, teacher leadership appears to be something that is done to people, an activity that is provided to teachers by another person. SMT member B also refers to the concept of teacher leadership as *"teacher leading"* and talks of *"the person who is actually doing the teacher leading"*. By this I infer that she means

someone is leading teachers to complete tasks and activities, and that this is her understanding of what it means to be a teacher leader, namely that you lead teachers. Once again, there is evidence that the concept of teacher leadership is not clearly understood. This lack of understanding may have negative consequences for the development of teacher leadership in a school, even more so, if the lack of understanding comes from the SMT whose responsibility it is to develop teacher leaders. She further elaborates that teacher leadership and teacher development activities are confused with leadership.

The effects of a lack of understanding of the concept of teacher leadership was highlighted by SMT member C. If the person *“who is in a position to provide that leadership is himself or herself not aware of the dynamics which influence teacher leadership, then teacher leadership cannot take place in the first place”*. Once again, it appears that teacher leadership is something that needs to be provided for teachers.

Resistance from staff to become involved in teacher leadership activities was identified as another barrier to the development of teacher leadership. Two reasons for this were provided by Staff member D, firstly *“it’s a big challenge to lead people”* and secondly, *“teachers are not remunerated”* for the additional work they carry out. Lastly, SMT member A felt that the *“politics”* and *“social dynamics”* within the school were factors that hindered the development of teacher leadership. She stressed that *“politics has certainly had a real negative impact within this school in particular...”*.

4.4.4 How can teacher leadership development programmes be made more effective in schools?

Twenty-two (79%) of the respondents provided an answer to the above question. A further analysis of the twenty-two respondents yielded the following data:

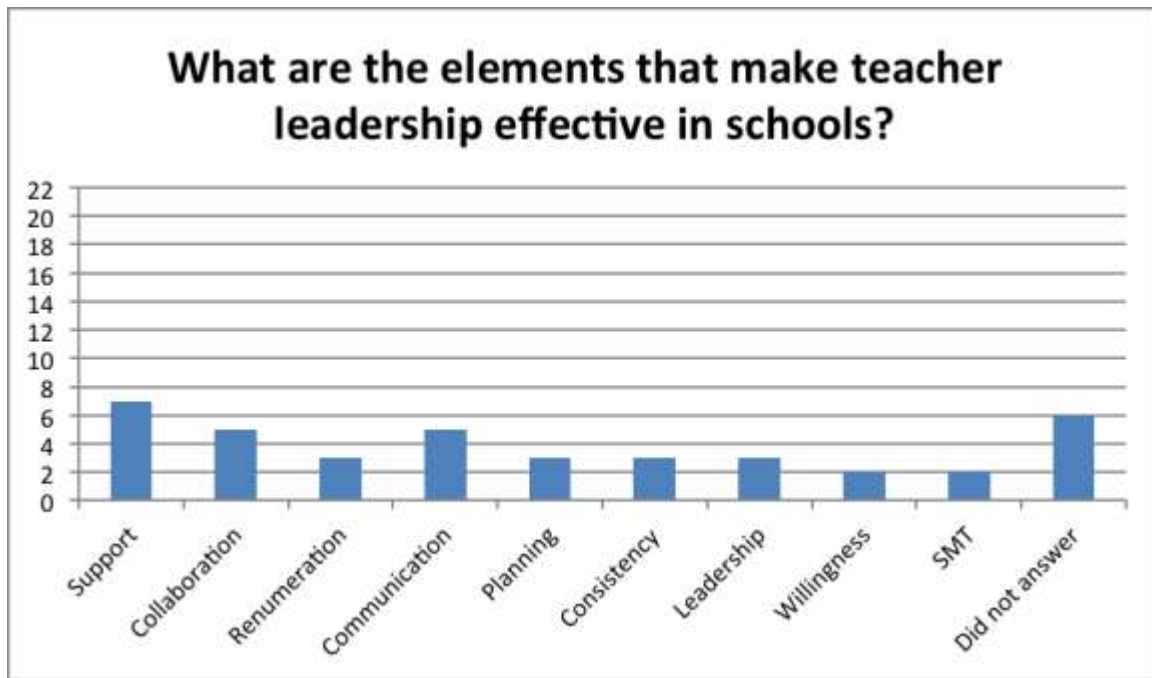


Figure 4.7 What are the elements that make teacher leadership effective in schools?

The most significant contributing factors were identified as support (32%), collaboration (23%) and communication (23%). With regard to support, respondents referred to aspects such as: *“workshops for staff to help them cope”*; *“support from SMT and vice versa for effective leadership”*; *“support from senior management through workshops”*; *“mentorship and coaching”*; *“coaching courses”*; *“training”*; and that teachers should be *“helped to fulfil the role”* of teacher leader. While the word ‘collaboration’ itself was not utilised by any of the respondents, their answers were indicative of collaboration. The respondents provided the following responses in support of collaboration: *“SMT and PL1 must work together”*, *“involve teachers in making decisions rather than expecting teachers to implement vague decisions which go on to fail”*; *“co-operation”*; *“input and views of all stakeholders has to be captured, considered”*; and lastly *“commitment by all”*.

Communication was identified as equally important to collaboration. While two of the respondents merely wrote the word *“communication”*, three respondents provided an explanation. *“Communication between peers and senior management”*, *“communication between all levels”* and *“communication between all stakeholders”*. From this it is possible to surmise that while communication is an important element in the effectiveness of teacher leadership programmes, there is an understanding that communication needs to be

between peers, between teachers and management and further between those involved in education and other stakeholders (possibly within the community). To a lesser extent (14%), the following factors were identified as effective: (1) remuneration; (2) planning; (3) consistency; (4) leadership; and (5) willingness. Leadership in particular was described as needing to be *“firm and fair”, “fair at all times”* and *“democratic and equal”* for it to be effective in the development of teacher leadership. Willingness was elaborated on as *“willing to go the extra mile”, “willingness to participate in outside class activities”* and *“recognition of the situation and stepping up to the whole”*.

Ten percent of the respondents made reference to the SMT. With regard to the SMT, respondents indicated that the *“SMT should see the potential in all”* and further *“the SMT should target educators who would suit the elements in which the programme has to offer”*. From the SMT minutes, the picture that emerged was of a SMT focused on problem solving and task completion. While this in itself is not a criticism, the SMT appears to primarily fulfil a management role, and can be seen to some extent to have neglected its leadership role.

The data collected from the interviews provided additional insight. Staff member B indicated that for teacher leadership development programmes to be more effective it is important *“to make sure that educators are also part of the facilitators”*. The development of teacher leadership *“should not be exclusively driven by people in leadership roles because this does not mean they actually know it all”* [sic]. If the teachers are included then *“they also feel that they are part of the process of developing leadership, so they actually own it, so they would participate and they would be more cooperative”*. When compared to the data from the questionnaires (Figure 4.3 - 4.5) we can conclude that even though teachers were most significantly involved in the implementation of teacher leadership development programmes (36%), they do not feel this is sufficient; and as evidenced from the interviews, are ready for greater responsibilities and additional teacher leadership roles.

This is also an indication that teachers recognise that expertise exists at all levels of the organisation and not just in those in formally appointed leadership roles. A number of other factors were also identified as contributing to the effectiveness of teacher leadership programmes. Staff member C focused on teamwork; *“there needs to be stronger focus on teamwork. This should be a sustained focus and not one that is only evident when we have a*

task at hand, for example IQMS meetings and visits" [sic]. SMT member E also makes reference to *"teambuilding"*. In-service training was highlighted by Staff member E, who identified two factors, namely: *"more seminars, more workshops, awareness – make people realise that okay if you are a leader there are your expectations..."* and *"creating good environments for leaders to excel"*.

In addition, teacher leadership programmes can be made more effective if there is a greater focus on support and guidance, where *"coaching and mentoring is happening on an on-going basis"* according to SMT members A and B. In addition, SMT member D felt that for teacher leadership development programmes to be made more effective, *"it is important to look at methods of empowerment"*. He believed that *"if teachers feel empowered, then it will probably impact on their leadership skills as well"*. SMT member D (a HOD) was the only person to mention any kind of planning or programme, noting that *"We need things that are written down to be more formalised"*. *"Teamwork and collaboration between the SMT and the educators"* was also identified as a facilitating factor. An unexpected factor that arose was providing guidelines for those teachers *"who saw themselves one day as leaders"*. The data collected from the questionnaires and interviews correlate with regard to: (1) support; (2) collaboration; and (3) planning.

Data collected for this particular question was cause for confusion for the interview participants. Some of the data revealed the lack of understanding of what the question was asking, as well as what it actually takes to make teacher leadership programmes effective. Of particular significance was the response by SMT member A, who responded: *"one way in which teacher leadership programmes can be made more effective is when people know their actual job description, that it's clearly set out"* [sic]. Staff member A explained that for teacher leadership programmes to be made more effective, the *"number of years you've been in the school should be a deciding factor in developing you as a teacher leader"*. This teacher felt that when you became a teacher leader, you became part of the SMT, and were given a title e.g. Head of Department. For this teacher, being a teacher leader was a formally appointed position.

Lastly, SMT member C focused on issues of power and power-sharing. A *"boss and follower type of situation"* [sic] is not conducive to effective development of teacher leadership. This

member of the SMT felt that *“the programmes on teacher leadership should be such that no one person is given too much powers over others”*. Most shocking of all responses for this particular question was given by SMT member B, who asserted: *“you need to teach people how to mentor those people that they’re going to do teacher leadership with”* [sic].

4.5 Is there anything else you would like to share about teacher leadership?

Thirteen (46%) of the respondents answered the above question. A further analysis of the thirteen respondents highlighted the following aspects: (1) needs of the teacher; (2) teamwork; and (3) initiative. Respondents felt that it was imperative that their needs were understood and acknowledged if the development of teacher leadership was to be implemented successfully. This was supported by the following statements: *“a professional environment where their concerns and needs are understood and valued”* and *“there should be a clear analysis of needs in the school and a clear organisational structure and culture”*. Secondly, respondents also elaborated on teamwork, noting that *“teamwork is of utmost importance”*. *“Teamwork and open participation”* are necessary for leadership *“to run effectively”*. Lastly, *“it is not necessary for someone to be appointed as a leader or even to be asked”*. Teachers need to be *“proactive”* and *“take responsibility”*. For teacher leadership to develop teachers also need to show *“initiative and desire to do something”*.

During the interviews, the interviewees were also given the opportunity to add their thoughts about teacher leadership. Their answers are summarised as follows. SMT member A noted: *“if teacher leadership is managed well within the school and your teachers are encouraged and motivated, that teacher leadership will actually just infuse through the school”*. She further elaborated that *“the management of people has a huge impact”* on the development of teacher leadership. The concept of motivation was also mentioned by Staff member D: *“we need to work on the motivation of teachers”*. Furthermore, SMT member E felt that *“many of our teachers need to inspired to go on courses in terms of building self-esteem because once self-esteem is built that person becomes more confident and if you are more confident you can go into the direction of leadership”* [sic].

Staff member C made reference to teamwork: we should be *“working as a team”*. *“I mean there are teachers here that are doing absolutely nothing”*. SMT member D, on the other hand, raised a valid question with regard to teacher leadership: *“could we ever as the SMT feel threatened by, you know [sic], too many people wanting to be leaders?”* Staff member D felt that *“passion is what is needed at all times”* [sic] if teacher leadership is to be developed, whereas staff member B made reference to opportunities: *“give everyone a chance so that maybe they can come up with ideas that will actually help other teachers and even the leaders themselves”*.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the presentation and analysis of data collected. Data was collected using a multi method approach, utilising questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. This chapter also provided the profile and background for the sample school. For each of the research questions data collected from each of the methods were utilised to inform the presentation and analysis. Furthermore, the data for each research question was presented and analysed separately. In the next and final chapter, I will be focusing on summarising my research findings, providing a discussion of the emerging concepts identified from my study and providing recommendations for the school and for further research.