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**Exploring teacher leadership in a select Johannesburg North school:
Challenges and possibilities.**

Humanities

Wits School of Education

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STATEMENTS BY SUPERVISORS

I, Dr. S.E Mthiyane, as the candidate's Supervisor, I agree to the submission of this research project.



Supervisor's signature

14 March 2022

Date

I, Dr. Mthembu, as the candidate's Supervisor, I agree to the submission of this research project's corrections.



Co-Supervisor's signature

8 November 2022

Date

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DEDICATION:

I dedicate this study to my late Uncle Neville.

ABSTRACT

The area of teacher leadership (what it means to be a teacher leader) has been an area of personal interest for many years. Teacher leadership has great scope, as the role of a teacher includes many responsibilities (from teaching to learning to social responsibility) and can be vital in the transformation of South African schools. Given the opportunity to explore this topic and its meaning in the South African context, it was imperative to contribute to investigating this concept.

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher leadership: the possibilities that teacher leaders face when developing themselves, the challenges that they may face and how SMTs, principals, deputy principals and HODs view teacher leadership. This study was conducted in a select public school in the Johannesburg North district. The aim of this study is to understand to how extent teacher leaders may be empowered and/or limited due to the various challenges and possibilities that they face.

This study explored the deputy principal's, HODs', and teachers' conceptualisations, experiences, and enactment of teacher leadership within the select school and how this potentially represents teacher leadership in the South African context. The literature review examined relevant literature pertaining to leadership, teacher leadership, different types of leadership, the roles and responsibilities of teachers and social justice in relation to education. Furthermore, two teacher leadership frameworks were discussed to demonstrate the expectations of teacher leaders and to serve as a guideline for what constitutes teacher leaders. This study used the qualitative approach and employed the critical paradigm. Empirical data was generated by means of semi-structured interviews, which were then analysed through the narrative research design/analysis.

The findings demonstrate that teacher leaders encounter a fair share of both possibilities and challenges, and that teacher leadership should be encouraged to empower teachers at all levels and in all aspects. The key finding is that school leadership has the means to empower and support teachers and thus, limits may often be due to external challenges. The findings are presented, and recommendations are made to encourage schools to learn more and engage with teacher leadership.

Keywords: Leadership, Teacher leadership, Empowerment, Possibilities, Challenges

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DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

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I fully understand the conditions under which I am authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

D Moodley

Signature

Date: 30 August 2021

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

STATEMENT BY THE SUPERVISOR.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
DEDICATION:.....	iv
ABSTRACT	v
ORIGINALITY REPORT	vi
ETHICAL CLEARANCE.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	xii
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Problem statement.....	3
1.3 Purpose and rationale for the study	4
1.4 Significance of the study	6
1.5 Objectives of the study	7
1.6 Key research questions	7
1.7.1 Teacher leadership.....	7
1.7.2 School leadership.....	8
1.7.3 Distributed leadership	8
1.7.4 Democratic leadership	8
1.8 Delimitations of the study.....	8
1.9 Structure of the study	9
1.10 Chapter summary	9
CHAPTER TWO:.....	10
LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS.....	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 Body of the literature review	10
2.2.1 The importance of leadership and the qualities of a leader	10
2.2.2 Teacher leadership, empowerment, and teacher leadership opportunities	11

2.2.3 Collaboration, distributed leadership, and the link to democracy	13
2.2.4 The role of teacher leaders	14
2.2.5 Teacher leadership and social justice	15
2.3 Conceptual frameworks	16
2.4 Chapter summary	22
CHAPTER THREE	23
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	23
3.1 Introduction	23
3.2 Research methodology	23
3.3 Research paradigm	24
3.4 Research design	23
3.5 Research sampling	25
3.6 Data generation methods	26
3.6.1 Interviewing	26
3.7 Data analysis	26
3.8 Measures adopted to ensure trustworthiness.....	27
3.9 Ethical considerations	28
3.10 Limitations of the study	28
3.11 Chapter summary	29
CHAPTER 4	30
DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION.....	30
4.1 Introduction	30
4.1.1 Profiling the participants.....	30
4.2 Data presentation and discussion.....	31
4.2.1 Understanding leadership.....	31
4.2.2 Understanding teacher leadership	41
4.2.3 The qualities of a leader.....	41
4.2.4 Possibilities for teacher leaders	43
4.2.5 Challenges faced by teacher- leaders	47
4.2.6 Further issues in South African schools	52
4.3 Chapter summary	55
CHAPTER FIVE.....	57
STUDY SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	57
5.1 Introduction	57
5.2 Study summary.....	57

5.3 Conclusions	58
5.3.1 Findings related to understanding leadership and teacher leadership	58
5.3.2 Findings related to the qualities of a leader	59
5.3.3 Findings related to the possibilities for teacher leaders	59
5.3.4 Findings related to challenges faced by teacher leaders	59
5.3.5 Findings related to further issues in South African schools	60
5.3.6 A summary of the findings	60
5.4 Recommendations	60
5.4.1 Recommendations to school principals and deputy principals	60
5.4.2 Recommendations to HODs	61
5.4.3 Recommendations to teachers	61
5.5 The implications of the study	61
5.6 Concluding remarks	62
REFERENCE LIST	63
Appendices.....	1
<i>APPENDIX 1.0 PERMISSION LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL TO CONDUCT THE STUDY IN THE SCHOOL.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>APPENDIX 1.1 INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS (PRINCIPALS/DEPUTY PRINCIPALS)..</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>APPENDIX 1.2 INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS (HODs).....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>APPENDIX 1.3 INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS (TEACHERS).....</i>	<i>4.</i>
<i>APPENDIX 2.1: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS/DEPUTY PRINCIPALS.</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>APPENDIX 2.2: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR SCHOOL HODs</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>APPENDIX 2.3: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR SCHOOLTEACHERS.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>APPENDIX 3.1: INTERVIEW WITH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS/DEPUTY PRINCIPALS.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>APPENDIX 3.2: INTERVIEW WITH HODs.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>APPENDIX 3.3: INTERVIEW WITH TEACHERS.....</i>	<i>15</i>

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Teachers as leaders framework	20
Figure 2.1: Model of teacher leadership	21
Figure 3.1: Participants Profile Table.....	30

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

COVID-19	Coronavirus disease of 2019
HOD	Head of department
INTERSEN	Intermediate and Senior Phases
IQMS	Integrated quality management system
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa
SGB	School governing body
SMT	School management team
N/A	Not applicable

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Teachers are leaders in their classrooms with many roles and responsibilities to fulfill (American University, 2019). Leadership can be defined as the influence a person exerts on others, particularly through transmitting values and the ability to inspire others towards achieving a vision or goal (Makoelle & Makhalemele, 2020). Good leadership is considered as imperative to any organisation's success, such as schools, and strong leadership is one of the key factors that enable successful student learning (Chen, 2020). Therefore, it is vital that teachers who spend the most time with learners, should lead, teach, mould, inspire and guide them.

Teachers' roles and responsibilities may increase due to varied reasons, including promotions, certain circumstances, or changes within the world. An example of the impact of the changing world would be the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic since 2020, which added more pressure and responsibility for teachers who may already need support (Du Plessis, 2020). Due to their many roles and responsibilities, teachers are constantly faced with many challenges, which, in turn, may lead to burnout (American University, 2021).

The challenges that teacher leaders face may include a lack of support, numerous responsibilities, as well as resistance. Teacher leaders are faced with various possibilities, for example, the possibility to work in congenial environments, where they become empowered. Possibilities could refer to being assigned tasks that assist in their professional development and promotions. There may also be the issue of democratic and distributed leadership: teachers may feel that they are not empowered or supported in their roles and that the school is only being run according to the wants of the principal, state or company who owns the school (Hatcher, 2012).

Regarding democratic and distributed leadership concepts, these are often associated with power sharing and the encouragement thereof (Ghamrawi, 2010). It is important to analyse these concepts in terms of whether or not they achieve their goals (if these concepts are actually viable and beneficial). These concepts aim to ensure a collegial working environment, which empowers and enables teachers to do their work effectively so that they can maintain a sense of authority (Williams, 2011). It is especially important to analyse these concepts within the South African

context because South Africa seeks transformation within the schooling system too (Sibanda, 2018). Transformation is due to the South African education system's history of centralised and bureaucratic control. Concepts such as distributed leadership and democratic leadership can encourage teacher involvement and collaboration, and so lead to empowerment (Makoelle & Makhalemele, 2020). Therefore, teacher leadership is linked to the historical, social and political context and its discourse.

Bush (2007) highlights the concept of Ubuntu as one of the key models in African leadership. This type of leadership entails mutual respect, unity, participation and valuing people and relationships above all (Msila, 2014). Ubuntu leadership is a leadership style for people amongst people and can be described as an African framework of a way of leading: it is relevant and embedded within the African context (Setlhodi, 2018). Recently, there have been various instances of learners reporting that their current or former schools and teachers have been problematic through either perpetuating discrimination or not handling these issues accordingly (Atsango, 2020). These incidents in schools contradict the valued concept of Ubuntu and the South African Constitution. As much as teachers may face challenges, they also need to be examples, while upholding the South African Constitution and dealing with issues accordingly (Atsango, 2020).

The area of teacher leadership is an area with massive scope -- there are multiple aspects to analyse. The role of the teacher has a deep impact on generations and that is why it is important to analyse teachers as leaders and their experiences. It is important that teachers are moulded into great leaders and given the opportunity to lead. The role of a teacher leader includes many responsibilities: from teaching to learning to social responsibility. As such, this role is vital in the transformation of South African schools (Grant, 2019).

Furthermore, it must also be clarified that this study may appear to take an unconventional approach to teacher leadership. This study does not focus on not only teachers, but on heads of departments, deputy principals, school principals and SMTs. It was important to explore how school leadership structures may support teacher leadership in order to assist their staff with possibilities to grow. For example, it was important to explore how principals may or may not support development for teacher leadership. The activities and experiences that may provide teachers with leadership development can also be explored, as well as the various outcomes regarding this development of teacher leadership (Smylie & Eckert, 2018).

1.2 Problem statement

Given the introduction above which emphasises the various expectations and requirements of teachers, it is clear that teacher leadership in South Africa should constantly be explored (Makoelle & Makhalemele, 2020). As new challenges and possibilities arise every day, teachers must be supported (Portin, Alejano, Knapp & Marzolf, 2006). An example of a challenge could include the school hierarchy affecting and limiting the agency of teacher leaders (Makoelle & Makhalemele, 2020). Additionally, it is important that teachers also become role models in their schools and classrooms. It is clear that teacher leaders face many challenges and possibilities associated with their roles, which is why it is interesting to analyse this topic.

Paddock (2021) refers to the Norms and Standards for Educators' (2000) national policy which lists several roles expected of teachers, one being the role of a leader. Paddock (2021) also lists an additional variety of unofficial roles, including that of counsellor and social worker. While all these roles are considered necessary, it should also be acknowledged that they are multiple, extensive roles. Therefore, the role of teacher is described as an “unreasonable job description”; as a systemic problem that is barely discussed (Paddock, 2021).

Teachers also deal with a variety of issues that impact their job and may add to its difficulty, as many changes occur in the world, such as shift in demographic conditions (Bates & Townsend, 2007). Teacher education faces numerous tensions and pressures, which ultimately affect learners as it affects teacher quality (Bates & Townsend, 2007). Educational issues, such as the quality of teaching and learning, lack of resources and poor infrastructure not only lead to poor learning outcomes but perpetuate inequality in a plethora of social issues within South African society (Mohamed, 2020).

Furthermore, there are social issues where various South African learners revealed their experiences of racism from schools. It is evident that there is an issue in how schools and school staff interact with learners (Karrim, 2020). There was one instance where a teacher allegedly used a racial slur against a learner (Molosankwe, 2021) in addition to many other experiences shared by multiple learners (Karrim, 2020). There is also the issue of teachers being on the receiving end of racial bias and feeling excluded themselves (Davids, 2018). When discussing issues of teacher leadership, the issue of exclusion is key for two reasons. Firstly, exclusion in a working

environment can create a negative environment where teachers feel unwelcome. It is clearly an issue and therefore investigation is required, especially if there may be a correlation to teachers who are leaving schools or becoming reluctant to fulfill roles and responsibilities because of this. Secondly, it is alarming that there are so many South African learners who have experienced racism from their teachers as teachers are supposed to be role models, as outlined by the roles expected by them (Norm and Standards for Educators, 2000). Furthermore, the importance of supporting community and all learners is included in numerous teacher leadership frameworks, such as Grant's model of teacher leadership (2019) and the Teachers as leaders framework (Crowther, Ferguson and Hann, 2009).

The issues relayed in literature and recent news show that there are a few problems in the school environment. Firstly, school hierarchies limit teacher agencies are problematic and may discourage teachers to participate in the school environment. This discouragement may be further exacerbated with issues of exclusion (Davids, 2018). Furthermore, the issue of teachers who exclude learners and discriminate against them is problematic and contradictory to the expectation required of teachers. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has added to the extensive roles and responsibilities of teachers (Robinson, 2020). These recent issues, all associated with the notion of teacher leadership, is worth studying to try understanding what teachers experience and examine the notions of teacher leadership.

1.3 Purpose and rationale for the study

As the COVID-19 pandemic has added more responsibilities for teachers, this requires an analysis of the subject of teacher leadership. The researcher believes that it is important to focus on teacher leadership as the role of a teacher is a role which inherently holds power and responsibility.

The researcher spoke to critical friends who began teaching full-time in 2020. They mentioned that, after February 2020, they suddenly had many more responsibilities due to the pandemic and that their sentiments reflect the general experiences of teachers all over the world (Barron, Cobo, Munoz-Najar & Ciarrusta, 2021). However, these were all novice teachers who had just started teaching. More experienced teachers might have developed a better ability to adapt to the circumstances or a different perspective due to their years of experience. But it is in the best interest of school leadership to recognise the potential novice teachers do hold and how they hold valuable

change agency role in the schooling context (Mthiyane & Grant, 2013). Regardless of the different experiences of different teachers, it has been strenuous and risky for all schools and teachers (Robinson, 2020). Additionally, as a student teacher prior to the pandemic, the researcher observed the massive workload and deadlines teachers had to adhere to. Developing and marking assessments, assisting learners academically and emotionally amongst a considerable heap of other responsibilities was time-consuming and overwhelming. There were numerous tasks and administration matters that had to be completed on a daily basis. It was a responsibility with multiple tasks that required determination and commitment. Numerous tasks like these do pose a challenge in developing teachers (The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2005).

Regarding the concepts of support, empowerment and distributed and democratic leadership, the researcher spoke to some critical friends who did not necessarily feel supported by their colleagues and higher management and felt that there was a lot of expectations to meet, even though they acknowledged that higher management did have more responsibilities, for example the school management teams (SMTS), although SMTS have been considered as a barrier to teacher leadership (Hlatywayo, 2010). Instead of feeling equal, they felt delegated to. This may be a constant issue with distributed leadership or the traditional school hierarchy (Hatcher, 2012). Again, these were novice teachers, therefore it would be beneficial to also investigate teachers who are more experienced, so as to explore any possible similarities and differences between more experienced teachers and novice teachers. Teachers do have different experiences, and this could be for a variety of reasons, such as whether or not they have held leadership positions and whether or not they have a degree. Such factors can play a role in teachers' different experiences and perceptions (Angelle & DeHart, 2011).

The sentiments expressed by these novice teachers are echoed in literature within the educational field. It is acknowledged that schools are intricate and complex organisations and that the traditional structures and that interpersonal relationships amongst the staff are considerably important working conditions which affect how the different school actors interact with each other and fulfil their responsibilities (Struyve, Meredith & Gielen, 2014).

It is these assumptions, observations and the existing literature which motivated the researcher to conduct research in this particular area. The researcher developed an interest regarding this topic

and feels that there is much to investigate within this area, especially regarding COVID-19 and recent issues with racism in South African schools, which show that there are challenges (Karrim, 2020). The various aspects to consider regarding teacher leadership highlights the complexity of the teacher's role, especially as a leader. The purpose of this study is to explore teacher leadership: teachers as leaders and the various challenges and possibilities that can be faced regarding this role and how they may either be empowered and/or limited due to the various challenges and possibilities that they faced.

1.4 Significance of the study

While this study cannot account for every teacher leader in South Africa and does not claim to do so, it would like to relay a general understanding of the experiences of South African teachers and leadership, specifically the notion of teacher leadership and the roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders which may lead to various possibilities or challenges. This study would like to build upon the already existing information and leadership notions, specifically leadership in education/schools and teacher leadership. While researching this topic and the general areas of leadership, authors like Harris, Bush & Glover (2003; 2007; 2016) have contributed to the foundation of understanding concepts such as leadership, teacher leadership and distributed leadership. These authors have highlighted the importance of leadership and the possibilities and challenges associated with different leadership models, such as distributed leadership. Additionally, despite the growing interest in teacher leadership, it is claimed that within South Africa, teacher leadership and the roles of teachers have not been well-explored (Makoelle & Makhalemele, 2020).

With the recent outcry of racism in South African schools (Karrim, 2020), the researcher also deems it important that this study allows the possibility to investigate this issue as it does pertain to teacher roles and responsibilities and can possibly provide insight into what some teachers think about these issues. The COVID-19 pandemic recently affected schools and forced changes within the school system. Therefore, this study could provide an understanding of what teachers' experiences have been throughout this period and how they are still adjusting.

1.5 Objectives of the study

This research study seeks to explore teacher leadership and possible challenges and possibilities in schools. The study is underpinned by the sub-research objectives below:

- 1) To explore the conceptualisations and practices of teacher leadership in the researched school at all levels (post level one, post level two and post level three);
- 2) To determine if and how schools (the schools and higher management structures such as the heads of departments, deputy principal, school principal and SMTs) encourage or promote teacher leadership in their schools;
- 3) To determine if a culture of success is cultivated by teacher leaders and why this is important; and
- 4) To establish the challenges and possibilities that teacher leaders may face in their schools.

1.6 Key research questions

How are teachers empowered and/or limited due to the various challenges and possibilities they face as teacher leaders?

Sub-research questions:

- 1) What are the conceptualisations and practices of teacher leadership (at post level one, post level two and post level three) in the researched school?
- 2) How do schools (the school and higher management structures such as the heads of departments, deputy principal, school principal and SMTs) encourage or promote teachers, and if so, what do they actually do?
- 3) How do teacher leaders cultivate a culture of success in the researched schools and why is this important?
- 4) What challenges and possibilities do teacher leaders face in their schools?

1.7 Definition of key concepts used in the study

1.7.1 Teacher leadership

Teacher leadership is a term with no singular or specific definition, but it can be pinned down to the notion that every member within the school, specifically the teachers, can lead, should have agency, and be empowered to lead (Harris, 2003). Crowther, Ferguson, and Hann (2009) identified

some ideas of what teacher leaders are and what they should do. These ideas can be summarised into six elements. Essentially, teacher leaders should be collaborative, optimistic and respectful team-players, role models, well-developed in knowledge. They must be skilled in transferring this knowledge, while continuously developing this knowledge, the community and themselves (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009).

1.7.2 School leadership

School leadership can be defined as effective leadership within schools to ensure the school's success and effectiveness (Bush & Glover, 2003). School leadership aims for the best outcomes from both learners and teachers (Day & Sammons, 2014). School leadership entails building the community and empowering both learners and teachers with perseverance and dedication (Day & Sammons, 2014). School leadership aims for improvement in the school (Day & Sammons, 2014).

1.7.3 Distributed leadership

Distributed leadership involves 'decentring' the leader and sharing power amongst staff members of the organisation to encourage leadership among the different members of staff. As such, distributed leadership aims to develop collaboration, shared decision-making, and coordination (Sibanda, 2018). Distributed leadership is not about delegating power, but rather about sharing power so that leadership capacity can increase and other school leaders can be empowered to a sense of ownership over these responsibilities (Solly, 2018).

1.7.4 Democratic leadership

Democratic leadership is a leadership style that encourages participation (Jakhar, 2017). It is an inclusive, collaborative style of leading (Lee, 2020). Additionally, democratic leadership involves the empowerment of others to enable them to participate and to also distribute responsibility (Lee, 2020). Democratic leadership enables followers to contribute to decision-making and an environment that feels equal and fair (Cherry, 2020).

1.8 Delimitations of the study

Delimitations of the study refer to how the research study has been 'reduced' in certain ways to make it more manageable (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). The delimitations are the boundaries consciously determined by the researcher (Simon & Goes, 2013). For this study, only one school

was selected to make the data collected more manageable, due to few schools' willingness to participate. The number of participants was delimited to five participants as this number of participants was acceptable and manageable to the participating school. The study was furthermore delimited to a certain district, as this chosen district was familiar to the researcher.

1.9 Structure of the study

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter explains the purpose of this study and all the key terms and issues which inform it. The second chapter contains a literature review of teacher leadership and the conceptual frameworks; the third chapter contains the research design and methodology that was used for this study. The collected data was analysed, summarised, and presented in Chapter Four. The study is concluded in Chapter Five.

1.10 Chapter summary

Chapter One introduced the study in terms of outlining its purpose, aims, objectives and key research questions to guide the study. The purpose and rationale were explained. The definitions of key concepts and the delimitations of the study were also discussed. This chapter explained the groundwork on which this study is formed on.

CHAPTER TWO: TEACHER LEADERSHIP LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Introduction

This section reviews the existing body literature and studies on teacher leadership and the general issues, concepts and theories that exist within the leadership field. The review of related literature is guided by the research questions listed in Chapter One. The structure of this literature review is based on a discussion of leadership, specifically of school and teacher leadership; leadership concepts and theories; how leadership has evolved in recent years and the roles of the school staff (particularly teachers) in schools. The first section of this chapter reviews literature, while the second section discusses the conceptual frameworks used for this study, namely the teacher as leader framework by Crowther, Ferguson, and Hann (2009), and Grant's model of teacher leadership (2019). These two teacher leader frameworks outline what teacher leadership encompasses and how teacher leaders should conduct themselves.

2.2 Body of the literature review

2.2.1 The importance of leadership and the qualities of a leader

Leadership is defined as an art (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002). A good leader is considered to have some of these qualities: commitment, perceptiveness and passion (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002). Furthermore, a good leader should be able to deal effectively with complex situations and have a sense of understanding on how to make good judgements when dealing with such situations (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002). Leadership in schools is important, as effective leadership is key to successful schools and learner achievement (Chen, 2020). This notion is generally agreed upon within the educational field. In addition, effective school leadership also plays a role in reform (Naicker & Mestry, 2013) and enables trust, good communication, vision, and direction within the school system (Ghamrawi, 2010). Consenza (2015, p. 1) echoed this sentiment and specifically listed teacher leadership as key in schools' success and teachers' professional development. This is why good leadership is valued and integral to a successful and collegial environment.

2.2.2 Teacher leadership, empowerment, and teacher leadership opportunities

Teacher leadership can be pinned down to three key components (Harris & Jones, 2019). Firstly, teacher leadership is understood as influence rather than any specific formal role or designation (Harris & Jones, 2019). Secondly, it is about going beyond the classroom and contributing as a leader to all facets within the school (Harris & Jones, 2019). Thirdly, it is about “developing pedagogical influence” and influencing general practice (Harris & Jones, 2019, p. 4). In summation, teacher leadership is something that involves genuine leadership and the desire to go beyond classroom (Consenza, 2015). It is not about being allocated or promoted to a specific role so that one may lead, but rather about leading, influencing (within ones’ own capacity) and making a difference (Consenza, 2015). Teachers – either unconsciously or consciously – set a precedent for others, especially for their learners. It must also be noted that while teacher agency feeds into teacher leaders’ ability to be influential, structural constraints hinder the teacher leader and do not provide a good environment for the encouragement of teacher leadership (Makhalemele & Makoelle, 2020). Educational leadership and management structures are the pathway to changing leadership practises (Naicker, Grant & Pillay, 2016). The principal needs to act an agent of change to enable teacher leadership and practises. This needs to be done in conjunction with the school culture and structures all playing a role in school transformation, continuing to enable the current school status quo (Naicker, Grant & Pillay, 2016). Various conditions affect teacher leadership, including the centralisation of power and control exercised by traditional, autocratic hierarchies such as principals and the SMT members. Furthermore, there has been resistance to teacher leadership from SMT members in South Africa (Grant, 2017).

Teacher empowerment is an important concept for the reason that when teachers feel empowered within their professional environment by their colleagues and by their management, they feel confident in their ability as teachers, simply because they feel that they are trusted (Parker, 2019). Teacher empowerment is something that is emphasised within concepts such distributed leadership and teacher leadership (Bush & Glover, 2016). In addition to the roles and responsibilities expected of them, teachers must be developed and empowered to succeed in their duties and hopefully go beyond that (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009; Mokhele, 2013). Teacher empowerment is something that must be prominent as teachers will not feel encouraged to grow or develop and therefore not have the desire to take initiative if they are in an inhibiting environment. Therefore,

if teachers work within an environment where their colleagues and management provide a safe space where they are trusted and encouraged to learn, develop, and grow, they will feel compelled to challenge themselves, since they have the support and means to do so. Furthermore, there is resistance to teacher leadership, even from teachers themselves; therefore, teachers may have to be motivated by management and colleagues to see the personal and professional advantages of embracing being a teacher leader (Grant, 2006). Teacher empowerment can be practised in terms of pedagogical content knowledge, expanding their teaching repertoire, collaborating with colleagues, decision-making within their school, and learning how to interact with parents (Meher, Ummulbanin & Lalwani, 2003; Parker, 2019).

In South Africa, the notion of promoting teacher leaders can be underpinned in two policies. Firstly, there is the Norms and Standards for Educators policy, which states that teachers should also play the role of leaders (Norms and Standards for Educators, 2000). Furthermore, the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 emphasises school-based decision making (Juta's Pocket Status, 2017). In South Africa, after 1994, democracy was implemented in all areas, including the educational and schooling system (Grant, 2006). The South African education system is diverse, complex and haunted by the effects of Apartheid. The latter left a deeply entrenched culture characterised by a lack of professional teacher development, lack of participation, and self-doubt (Grant, 2006). Therefore, the South African context needs transformation for all educational stakeholders, especially the teachers, who need to be encouraged and developed into teacher leaders (Grant, 2006).

Furthermore, teacher leadership can operate within a formal or informal context, meaning that teachers teach and lead their classrooms daily in a natural manner but also deliberately take on formal roles within the school (Grant, 2006). However, it is key that the school staff operates with cognisance of what they are doing, so that they can develop further. Teacher leadership must be implemented in a systemic manner, where the school and its staff develop themselves and make efforts to develop each other. This is what leads teachers into becoming visionary leaders who can improve their schools (Msila, 2014).

2.2.3 Collaboration, distributed leadership, and the link to democracy

Distributed leadership is about power sharing: all staff members are encouraged to lead and to participate and contribute to decision-making and leading (Williams, 2011). Distributed leadership is a concept that must be implemented properly. It starts with understanding the goal of distributed leadership and understanding what it truly is and aims to be. Distributed leadership is interlinked with the notion of democracy, as the goal of distributed leadership is to empower teachers and create and encourage a more democratic environment (Hatcher, 2012).

A democratic environment is something that many strive for as democracy is a value and viewed as something that ensures a fair society, especially in South Africa. Furthermore, it is believed that when leadership is distributed, this is what leads the school to perform well (Ghamrawi, 2010). However, it is argued that distributed leadership is a difficult concept to implement, specifically within traditional, hierarchal systems (Bush & Glover, 2016). It is important that the leaders at the top agree with this concept and therefore implement it correctly, not through conflating distribution with delegation, but through creating a democratic environment and empowering teachers.

Representative and participative democracy are two systems of democracy that are key when trying to create a democratic environment. Both these systems allow for participation and for staff members to feel represented in the school and via the democratic process (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002). This is key as participation and inclusion are key in a democratic leadership and management style (Lee, 2020). It is evident in the links to distributed leadership regarding shared decision-making, participation, and collaboration (Lee, 2020). When analysing teachers within the school, it is important to question if democracy is indeed being served or not. If there is no democratic environment, then teachers are not being empowered but being limited. This then poses a challenge to their agency and is not representative of the South African Constitution. Ultimately, educational leadership needs to be understood as a shared practice which all educators should partake in, thus ensuring a distributive leadership practise and democratic environment (Grant, 2009). These educators include SMT members and teachers who must be willing to transform the traditional hierarchal system of schools (Grant, 2009).

Additionally, collaboration is integral when planning to empower and develop teachers as it is a component of teacher leadership and vital for school improvement (Hlatywayo, 2010). When there is a collegial environment and a strong network of support between the school staff members, the

incentive is created to develop as a teacher leader (Hlatywayo, 2010). When there is no respect and peer support, or when disrespect remains due to a perceived lack of status within the school, this is problematic for teacher-empowerment, collaboration, and collegiality (Hlatywayo, 2010).

2.2.4 The role of teacher leaders

School leaders and their respective roles and responsibilities are always changing over time (Portin, Alejano, Knapp & Marzolf, 2006). This has been prominent since the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, teacher had to shift to online learning and becoming more reliant on technology (Robinson, 2020). This serves highlights the very complex role of the teacher. Since many responsibilities and roles are required of them, teachers have to take on a magnitude of roles regarding teaching and learning.

Paddock (2021) refers to the Norms and Standards for Educators' (2000) national policy which lists several roles expected of teachers, one being the role of a leader. Paddock (2021) also lists an additional variety of unofficial roles, including that of counsellor and social worker. While all these roles are considered necessary, it should also be acknowledged that they are multiple, extensive roles. Therefore, the role of teacher is described as an “unreasonable job description”; as a systemic problem that is barely discussed (Paddock, 2021).

As mentioned in first chapter, South Africa's, Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) national policy, lists a number of teacher roles. These roles include learning mediator; interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials; leader, administrator, manager; scholar, researcher, and lifelong student. In addition, the teacher plays a role in the community, takes on a citizen's role, a pastoral role, and assessor's role. Finally, the teacher takes on the role of a learning area/subject discipline/phase specialist (Norms and Standards for Educators, 2000). Furthermore, Paddock (2021) pointed out a variety of unofficial roles that teachers play, such as a sports coach; a counsellor; technical support and a social worker.

Furthermore, Grant (2019) lists six roles teacher leader play in their classrooms, in their school and within the larger community. The first role involves when the teacher focuses on teaching and the second role expands on this role by emphasising that teachers need to also provide curriculum development knowledge (Grant, 2019). The third role is when teacher leaders are also required to lead in-service education by assisting other teachers. The fourth role includes participating in the

performance evaluations of other teachers and the fifth role involves organising and leading these peer reviews of school practice (Grant, 2019). Finally, the sixth role is about contributing to decision-making, lead in-service education, and assist other teachers (Grant, 2019).

With all these various expectations and roles that have been outlined, it can be said that teacher leaders are expected to fulfil many responsibilities and play different roles within their school and their community.

2.2.5 Teacher leadership and social justice

The aspect of social justice within the educational sector, and especially from a teacher leadership must be discussed as one of the incentives for this study was to investigate teacher leader's perspectives on social issues within South African schools. Firstly, it is noted that there are ways in which "social injustice impacts education for all learners" (Grant et al., 2020). This can occur in a variety of ways: learners may deal with exclusion due to issues such behaviour, culture, disability, gender and poverty (Grant et al., 2020). As mentioned in chapter one, as much as teachers may face challenges, they also need to be examples, while upholding the South African Constitution and dealing with issues accordingly (Atsango, 2020).

It must also be noted that schools and organisational conditions heavily influence the development of leadership within the school (Smylie & Eckert, 2018). The organisational culture of the school includes and influence the following aspects: "include the mission, vision and core values of the school, structures and processes, social relationships, politics and climate and culture" (Smylie & Eckert, 2018). School leadership needs to cultivate the internal and assist with the external organisational conditions so that teacher leadership may be developed (Smylie & Eckert, 2018).

The literature reviewed in this section shows a strong interest in teacher leadership and its core concepts, specifically for school improvement (Crowther, 2012). There is a positive correlation between constructive educational change and teacher leadership (Harris & Jones, 2019). Teacher leadership can create a more democratic environment, use teacher expertise effectively and enable positive school change (Angelle & DeHart, 2011). Therefore, teacher leaders must be empowered and encouraged to facilitate difference, not only because of duty, but because of the positive change their influence has, especially in the way this contributes to school improvement.

2.3 Conceptual frameworks

Two conceptual frameworks were applied in this study to serve as a foundation for understanding what teacher leadership can constitute, and to serve as a basis for the research and interview questions.

The first framework that was used in this study is the Teachers as Leaders Framework by Crowther, Ferguson, and Hann (2009). This framework is characterized by six elements which outline the expectations of what teacher leaders should do and how they should conduct themselves. These six elements are explained next:

Firstly, teacher leaders should relay positive convictions about the world by encouraging students to have a positive image of the future. This can be achieved by teachers doing this themselves and by the way they conduct themselves professionally as teachers (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). Teachers lead by example, by being the example and this positive image and attitude inspires the learners. Teachers must become agents of hope who advocate for change and transformation in the learners' lives and in the school (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009).

Secondly, teacher leaders need to facilitate communities of learning (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). Teacher leaders can do this by encouraging a more collaborative approach to teaching and the pedagogical process (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). This includes involving both staff and learners in enhancing the learning process and collaborating with other teachers to share knowledge.

Thirdly, this links to dedication in achieving continuous pedagogical excellence (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). Teacher leaders must develop and demonstrate a sincere interest in their learners' needs and develop good interactions and an understanding with their learners (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). It is about continuously developing themselves as professionals and pedagogically.

The fourth element pertaining to this teacher leader framework is the element of confronting the barriers in the school's culture and structures (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). This involves promoting equality and an environment where learners feel safe and taken care of. This includes teachers standing up for learners, especially those learners who are marginalised and disadvantaged and those who need assistance. An example would be having feeding schemes for

learners who need it (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). When linking this to the Ubuntu model of leadership, this element aligns with the vision and core of the true meaning of Ubuntu. An Ubuntu leadership style is based on respect, unity and people-centredness (Msila, 2014) which correlates with the various elements within this framework that emphasises the need of working together, helping others, and protecting learners.

The fifth element is about teacher leaders who should translate their ideas into sustainable systems of action (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). This includes actually having plans of action; their ideas for improvement in the school and regarding their pedagogy actually coming to fruition (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). It is about actually aligning the school's hopes, visions and values to the actions of staff members and executing the ideas and plans of the school (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). Teachers must be competent in their interpersonal and communication skills in order to effectively bring about change through unity and effective management within the school. In turn, this will bring about the capacity for sustainable change (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009).

The sixth element refers to the teacher leaders nurturing a culture of success (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). Teacher leaders can ensure a school culture that is encouraging and cultivates success through positive affirmations (which motivates learners). An example of this could be telling the learners: 'You can do anything you set your mind to.' This element refers to the optimism teacher leaders should have to inspire the learners. This attitude of encouragement sets a precedent for learners and other individuals in the school, such as other staff members (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009).

To summarise this framework, teacher leaders are expected to be team-players (and role-models) who continuously develop themselves as professionals through pedagogy and sustainable plans of actions (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). Teacher leaders are leaders in knowledge and pedagogy (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). Essentially, the aim of teacher leaders and this framework (they ought to subscribe to) is to ensure a "capacity for professional leadership" (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009, p.19).

Additionally, this framework can be adapted according to different subject teachers and what is needed pertaining their subjects. An example would be how science teachers can adopt the collaboration aspect of this framework. This is something expected from teacher leaders, and a

science teacher leader would then be expected to collaborate and contribute to science education and the community of science teacher leaders (Cheung, Warren Little & Stone, 2018).

Additionally, another conceptual framework that has helped contextualise this study is the model of teacher leadership (Grant, 2019). The model contains four elements with three levels of analysis. The model can be used to examine teacher leadership as it outlines the various practices of teacher leadership within the different zones and various roles expected from teacher leaders at different times (Grant, 2019).

The model of teacher leadership framework was created within the South African context, so it is suitable for this study. Firstly, it must be noted that this model was first conceptualised in 2008 and during this time, there were only two levels of analysis (Grant et al., 2008; Grant et al., 2010). This framework was first characterised by four different zones and two levels of analysis (Grant et al., 2008). The zones within the first level of analysis are: zone 1 (the classroom), zone 2 (when teacher leaders work with teachers and learners outside their classrooms), zone 3 (outside the classroom within the whole school development), and zone 4 (beyond the school, within the larger community) (Grant et al., 2009).

The second level of analysis outlines the six roles that teachers may be required to take up within these zones (Grant et al., 2008). These roles were briefly mentioned in the literature review but will be further elaborated here. The first of these six roles within the second level of analysis are when the teacher continues to teach and focuses on improving how they teach (Grant et al., 2008). Secondly, when teachers need to provide curriculum development knowledge (Grant et al., 2008). The third role is when teacher leaders must also lead in-service education by assisting other teachers and they must participate in performance evaluations of other teachers (the fourth role.) Then, teacher leaders are expected to organise and lead these peer reviews of school practice and the sixth role is about contributing to decision-making, lead in-service education, and assist other teachers (Grant et al., 2008).

The model has continuously been developed since its inception. The model now includes a third level of analysis, which contains multiple indicators on how teachers can operate as teacher leaders within varying zones and different roles, specifically (Grant, 2019).

The third level of analysis gives examples of how these roles within the different zones can operate. For instance, when a teacher focuses on improving their teaching in their classroom, this is the first role within the first zone (Grant, 2019). When applying this to the third level of analysis, a teacher leader can do this by constantly following new developments, such as attending workshops or maintaining effective classroom discipline (Grant, 2019). Curriculum development knowledge can be provided through liaising with the SGB about curriculum issues and attending DBE curriculum workshops (Grant, 2019). Teacher leaders can play the third role by offering support and encouragement to their colleagues; through mentoring and staff development initiatives (Grant, 2019). The fourth role would include engaging in both formal and informal peer assessment evaluations such as IQMS (Grant, 2019). The fifth role within the third analysis focuses on aspects such as conducting school-based research, organisational diagnosis, and school practices, including fundraising (Grant, 2019). Finally, teacher leaders can participate in school-level decision-making through conflict resolution, ensuring that they work with integrity and having participative leadership practises within the school (Grant, 2019).

Both these frameworks share similar guidelines on what constitutes as teacher leadership. For instance, the fourth element pertaining to the Teachers as Leaders Framework is the element of confronting the barriers in the school's culture and structures (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). This involves promoting equality and an environment where learners feel safe and are taken care of. This includes teachers advocating for learners, especially the learners who are marginalised and may need assistance, such as having feeding schemes for learners who need it (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). When linking this to the Ubuntu leadership model, this element aligns with the vision and core of what Ubuntu means. An Ubuntu leadership style is based on respect, unity and people-centredness (Msila, 2014), which correlates with the various elements within this framework emphasising the importance and need of working together, helping others, and protecting learners. Furthermore, the fourth zone from Grant's model includes going beyond the school and into the community (Grant, 2019).

These frameworks have assisted the researcher in obtaining her research objectives because it provides a guideline on what a teacher leader should be. Through these frameworks, various elements were compared and referenced to the data presented, in order to explore what understanding and practices of teacher leadership exist in schools. Ultimately, these frameworks

provide a good structure and foundation for what constitutes teacher leadership. It sheds light on how certain standards are required in addition to the multiple aspects and opportunities available for teacher leadership development. For example, the issue of confronting barriers within the school culture are direct questions that have been posed to the research participants. See Appendix 3 (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009).

The first framework that was discussed is the Teachers as Leaders Framework (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009) as presented below in Figure 1.

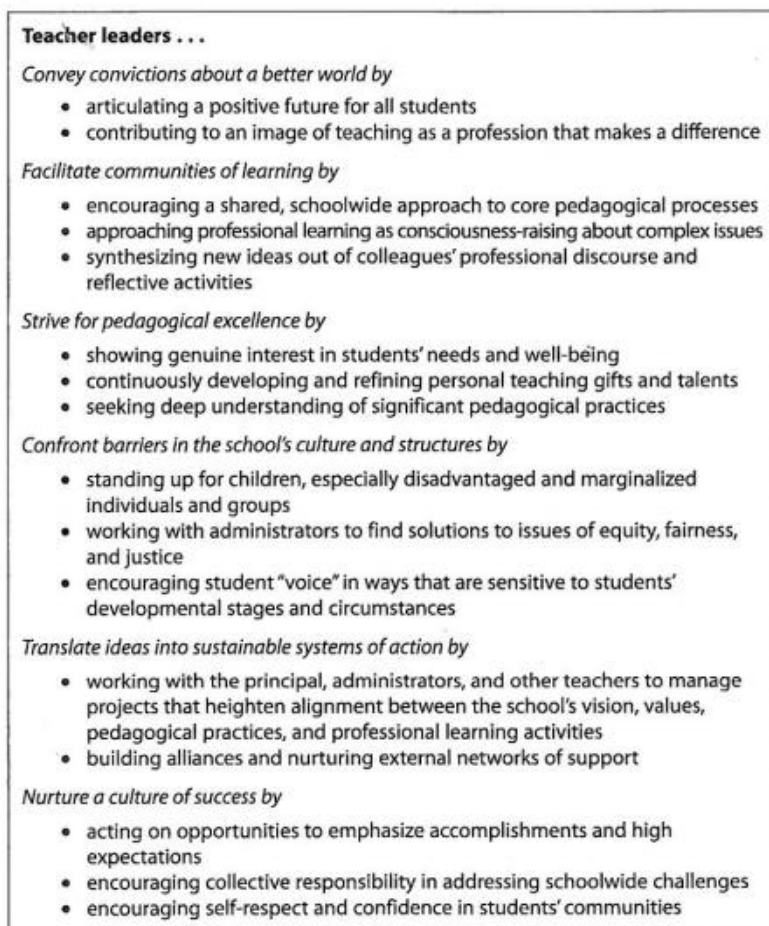
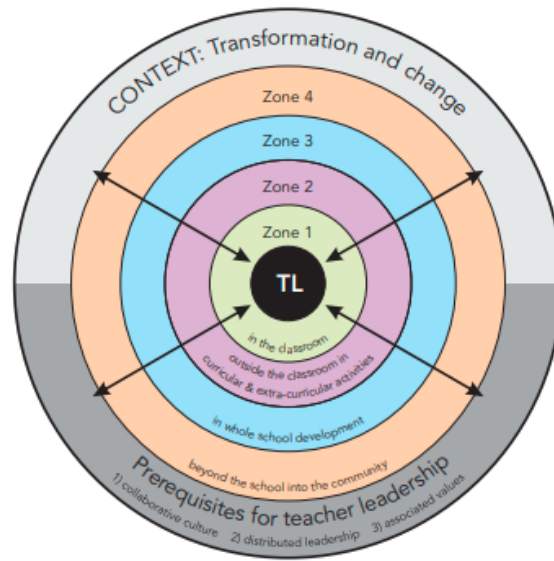


Figure 2.1: Teachers as leaders framework (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009, p.3).

Additionally, the model of teacher leadership framework as adapted from (Grant, 2019) is presented below in Figure 2.



FIRST LEVEL OF ANALYSIS FOUR ZONES							
Zone 1 In the classroom	Zone 2 Working with other teachers and learners outside the classroom in curricular and extra- curricular activities		Zone 3 Outside the classroom in whole school development		Zone 4 Beyond the school into the community		
SECOND LEVEL OF ANALYSIS SIX ROLES							
One: Continuing to teach and improve one's own teaching	Two: Providing curriculum development knowledge	Three: Leading in-service education and assisting other teachers	Four: Participating in performance evaluation of teachers	Five: Organising and leading peer reviews of school practice	Six: participating in school level decision-making	Two: Providing curriculum development knowledge	Three: Leading in-service education and assisting other teachers
THIRD LEVEL OF ANALYSIS INDICATORS							
1. centrality of expert practice (including appropriate teaching & assessment strategies & expert knowledge) 2. keep abreast of new developments (attendance at workshops & further study) for own professional development 3. design of learning activities & improvisation/appropriate use of resources 4. processes of record keeping & reflective practice 5. engagement in classroom action research 6. maintain effective classroom discipline & meaningful relationship with learners (evidence of pastoral care role) 7. take initiative & engage in autonomous decision-making to make change happen in classroom to benefit of learners	1. joint curriculum development (core & extra/co-curricular) 2. team teaching 3. take initiative in subject committees meetings 4. work to contextualise curriculum for own particular school 5. attend DOE curriculum workshops & take new learning, with critique, back to school staff 6. extra/co-curricular coordination (e.g. sports, cultural activities etc.)	1. forge close relationships & build rapport with individual teachers through which mutual learning takes place 2. staff development initiatives 3. peer coaching 4. mentoring role of teacher leaders (including induction) 5. building skills & confidence in others 6. work with integrity, trust & transparency	1. engage in ICMS activities such as peer assessment, e.g. involvement in development support groups 2. informal peer assessment activities 3. moderation of assessment tasks 4. reflections on core & co/extra curricular activities	1. organisational diagnosis (Audit – SWOT) & dealing with the change process (School Development Planning) 2. whole school evaluation processes 3. school-based action research (informal mediation as well as union representation) 4. mediating role (school practices including fundraising, policy development, staff development, professional development initiatives etc.)	1. awareness of & non-partisan to macro-politics of school (work with integrity, trust & transparency) 2. participative leadership where all teachers feel part of the change or development & have a sense of ownership 3. problem identification & resolution 4. conflict resolution & communication skills 5. school-based planning & decision-making	1. joint curriculum development (core & extra/co-curricular) 2. liaison with & empower parents about curriculum issues (parent meetings, visits, communication – written or verbal) 3. liaison with & empower the SGB about curriculum issues (SGB meetings, workshops, training – influencing of agendas) 4. networking at circuit/district/ regional/provincial level through committee or cluster meeting involvement	1. forge close relationships & build rapport with individual teachers through which mutual learning takes place 2. staff development initiatives 3. peer coaching 4. mentoring role of teacher leaders (including induction) 5. building skills & confidence in others 6. work with integrity, trust & transparency

Model of Teacher Leadership. Parts of the figure were adapted from Grant (2006), Sage Publishing, copyright 2006; Grant (2008a), copyright 2008; and Grant (2010)

Figure 2.2: Model of teacher leadership (Grant, 2019, p.43).

2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter reviewed relevant literature regarding the leadership and all it entails, such as different leadership styles and specifically, the concept of teacher leadership. Furthermore, this chapter explained the two conceptual frameworks that were used to validate this study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design and research methodological approach used for this study. As part of the discussion on this section, the researcher commences with the research paradigm, followed by the research design, research methodology, selection of research sites and participants, data collection and analysis, issues of trustworthiness, ethical issues, and the limitations of the study.

3.2 Research methodology

When doing research, one can approach the research via three methodological approaches used for research. These approaches are the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches. The researcher chose the qualitative approach for this study because it is focused on human experiences (Bhandari, 2020). Qualitative research aims to provide an in-depth and detailed understanding of the topic and various issues at hand (Creswell, 2014). Capturing the experiences of those who find themselves in the midst of the problem and who can provide insights into the problem is why this approach is relevant for this study because these participants are situated in the context of what must be investigated (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, qualitative research is about understanding how participants make sense of all their experiences in their social world (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard & Snape, 2014). These experiences are key for this study, as the experiences of staff members in schools provide insights to what those who are on the ground experience. Therefore, it is necessary to question teachers, HODs and school principals/deputy principals as the concept of teacher leadership directly involves them.

3.3 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is a framework that holds a set of beliefs and theories that influence ones' perceptions about the world (Aliyu, Singhry, Adamu & Abubakar, 2015). There are various research paradigms, such as the positivist paradigm, the interpretivist or the constructivist paradigm, the critical theory paradigm/transformational (or emancipatory paradigm), and the pragmatic paradigm (Noel, 2016; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The critical paradigm was used for

this study since it focuses on the aspects of power relationships in society and equality (Asghar, 2013). The critical paradigm aligns with some of the themes regarding teacher leadership, such as power and hierarchy within the school. In addition, the critical paradigm also aligns with the social issues that may exist within the school environment and affect teacher leaders.

Three criteria exist for the critical paradigm: to investigate the social reality and if there is anything seemingly problematic in this reality; to identify possible solutions to change this problem; and to critique what is investigated so that the change may be enacted (Asghar, 2013). Ontology means analysing the assumptions which inform one's construction and perception of their reality (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In research paradigms, the aspect of ontology allows one to question, critique and understand the nature of one's reality (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In this study, this would require the researcher to understand the reality of how teachers, HODs and principals view their reality and question this reality. Epistemology refers to how knowledge and theory construct understanding (Kawulich, 2012). In this study, any knowledge that brings insight to what teacher leaders experience, how they are challenged and what possibilities they face, will assist in understanding their experiences better (Kawulich, 2012). Axiology requires that researchers adhere to a certain set of values to correctly conduct the study (Kawulich, 2012). The researcher's priority in the current study was that teacher leaders are inspired to bring about a democratic and equal school environment, for learners and themselves.

3.4 Research design

A research design is a specific method which is used to identify the problem and outline what is needed to ensure that the purposes of the study are fulfilled. The research design sets out details on how the research will be obtained (Sileyew, 2019). There are various research designs, such as the phenomenological research design, grounded theory design, narrative research design, ethnographic designs, and action research design, all of which can be used when using the qualitative approach (Bhandari, 2020).

The narrative research design was chosen for this study as it aims to describe and investigate the human experiences, leading to an overall story that gives meaning to experiences (Creswell, 2014). This research design allowed for the participants to relay their experiences and perceptions (Bhandari, 2020). Narrative research is rooted in the humanities and social sciences discipline; therefore, it was used for this study (Creswell, 2014). Through semi-structured interviews:

teachers, HODs, and deputy principals narrated their experiences and gave their opinions regarding teacher leadership. This approach has assisted the researcher in understanding the participants experiences with teacher leadership and how they may be empowered and/or limited due to the various challenges and possibilities they may face.

3.5 Research sampling

When conducting empirical research, a researcher has to consider who and where they want to collect research from, this is known as the sampling decision (Maxwell, 2008). Regarding from where data will be collected, the intended research sites was one public primary school in the Johannesburg North district as the staff at this school could all give an overall idea of the power and higher management structures that may exist within public schools. This important aspect within teacher leadership is a research objective of this study.

Sampling is the selection of the different individuals who will actually participate in the research study from a large population group (McCombes, 2021). Sampling is different from the population, which is the general or entire group that the researcher wants to research. The sample is the specific group that the researcher actually collects data from (Bhandari, 2020). The research participants consisted of the deputy principal, two HODs and two teachers from the participating school, therefore five research participants in total. This particular sample was chosen because study focuses on teacher leadership and power structures in the school. Therefore, it was necessary to gain teachers', HODs' and deputy principals' insights, experiences, and understandings of teacher leadership as they all taught and interacted at different levels within the school. There are different sampling methods such as simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, snowball sampling and convenience sampling (McCombes, 2021).

The sampling method selected for this study was convenience sampling. Convenience sampling, also known as accidental or volunteer sampling, is when research participants are selected because they are available and willing to participate (Omona, 2013). While trying to gain participants in the initial stages of this study, schools either declined due to low teacher morale or for other unknown reasons. Therefore, convenience sampling was the most ideal and applicable option for this study.

3.6 Data generation methods

Data generation methods refers to the systematic process of how information is collected in research (Bhandari, 2020). The data collection methods that are often used in qualitative research are interviews, focus groups, observations, and surveys (Bhandari, 2020). The data collection method for this study were interviews, a well-known qualitative method (Jamshed, 2014). Interviews can either be structured or unstructured, depending on the format chosen by the researcher (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). The semi-structured interview format was chosen for this study as it was guided by set questions with the option of follow-up questions to gain further insight and elaborate on the provided answers (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Interviews can also be conducted via technology such as online and on computers or via the telephone (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). In this study, the semi-structured interviews were conducted via the Zoom platform to adhere to Covid-19 and GDE restrictions.

3.6.1 Interviewing

As mentioned above, semi-structured interviews were used in this study. This method was suitable as interviews constitute a qualitative data collection method (Bhandari, 2020). The type of interviews that were used in this study are known as key informant interviews as participants had shared experiences and knowledge unknown to the researcher (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). The data was generated through online semi-structured interviews via Zoom. Semi-structured interviews involve having a guideline of set questions which allows the interviewer flexibility to ask follow-up questions to gain more detail and understanding (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Permission was obtained in advance to record the participants in the process of data collection (also to ensure accuracy during the interview process). The answers were transcribed after the interviews to assist in the data analysis. Furthermore, the interview questions have been attached to the study. See Appendix 3.

3.7 Data analysis

Narrative analysis was used to analyse data. The type of narrative analysis chosen is dialogic or performance analysis, which is suggested by Rodriguez (2016). This type of narrative analysis focuses on the narrative's content and the research participants' experiences (Rodriguez, 2016). A key aspect in narrative analysis and the relaying of narratives is interpreting the responses and then

linking them to the broader aspects of this study (Bamberg, 2011). Narratives aim to offer a greater understanding of the participants' experiences (Bamberg, 2011). Narratives as a method is a general approach is about viewing and understanding the participants within their environments: they offer content, the context, and insights (Bamberg, 2011). The researcher listened, reviewed, and analysed the different narratives and how they explained and reflected the understanding and conceptualisation of teacher leadership in schools. The interview responses relayed the experiences of the participants.

3.8 Measures adopted to ensure trustworthiness

When conducting a qualitative research study, certain elements should exist within the study to ensure its quality and trustworthiness (Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams & Blackman, 2016). When a qualitative research study is considered to be trustworthy, it means that the study was conducted with transparency and that the findings should be useful and have integrity (Connelly, 2016). These criteria are credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Connelly, 2016).

Credibility is when the research study findings are truthfully representative of the data that was collected (Connelly, 2016). Credibility was ensured in the current study through the recording and transcription of the interviews; therefore, the participant's narratives were ensured to be accurate.

Then, there is confirmability, which is about ensuring neutrality (Connelly, 2016). Confirmability was ensured in the current study by presenting direct quotes from the interview transcript to remove any researcher bias.

Dependability has to do with whether the data is stable over time and the condition under which the study was conducted (Moon et al., 2016). The current study tried to ensure this by outlining each research step and through further information logs regarding this study.

Transferability is about how applicable the study can be in other settings and how it can be used in other studies and further research (Moon et al., 2016). The current study ensures transferability through its theoretical framework.

All these elements ensure the element of trustworthiness for the current study. Other researchers may use this research as it is rooted in theory. It also ensures that this study is valid and reliable, as the research process was consistently outlined and shown to be accurate in its presentation

(Middleton, 2019). These elements are also present where the research design, methods and data collection process is outlined clearly (Moon et al., 2016).

3.9 Ethical considerations

Ethics in research is important because it outlines what is acceptable and appropriate (Resnik, 2020). Ethical considerations are important for research for three reasons: they ensure that the research has been conducted responsibly and legitimately; risks have been minimised when including human participants, and ethical considerations ensure that the study has beneficial outcomes (Hanekom, 2018).

For this study, ethical clearance was sought and granted from the University of Witwatersrand, School of Education's research ethics committee. Secondly, permission from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) was also obtained. It was important to obtain this permission as this was needed for conducting a study with empirical research and one that concerns external, human participants. All the participants gave their consent to be interviewed as consent was important to ensure that there was agreement between the researcher and the participants (The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees, 2015).

Confidentiality in research is key as this shows respect for the research participant and the information they relay, especially if the information is sensitive (The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees, 2015). For the current study, the names of the participants and the school was not divulged, instead pseudonyms were used and therefore the participants' identities and their information were protected.

3.10 Limitations of the study

A limitation can be defined as potential, yet uncontrollable shortcomings that can affect the study, such as funding issues or smaller geographical issues (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). Collecting empirical evidence and convincing schools to participate was difficult due to the Covid-19 pandemic and GDE restrictions, which do not allow for interviews to be conducted in person.

Firstly, it was important that the researcher ensured that she spoke to the correct person, this was done by establishing contact prior to the interviews and familiarising herself with the research participants. Secondly, there was also the option of conducting telephonic interviews or online interviews and this is how she overcame the challenge of not conducting the interviews in person.

The researcher overcame the potential issue of internet connectivity issues which could have affected the interviews as she ensured multiple possible dates for interviews in case the first date did not work out. The researcher also ensured uninterruptable power supply (UPS).

3.11 Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the selected research design, methodology and paradigm, and explained why these choices were made: the critical paradigm, the qualitative approach and the narrative analysis were outlined in relation to the study's aims and methodology. The narrative analysis and method were explained. All information regarding the methodology and research participants was included in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In this section, the researcher presents and discusses the empirical data that was generated through interviews with the research participants. The participants consisted of one deputy principal, two HODs, two post level one teachers from one selected primary school, and the teacher participants. The responses represent the key research questions and relevant literature.

The analysis focuses on how the participants responded to the research questions on their experiences and their specific school. The analysis brings together similarities, differences and common themes within these answers that may represent the culture of the participating school. The themes focus on the content and highlight the re-occurring ideas and concepts that were presented and interpreted through data generation (Smith, 2016). The empirical data that was generated serves as insights into the school leaders and teachers' conceptualisations, practices, and experiences of leadership and teacher leadership.

4.1.1 Profiling the participants

This section focuses on the participants who participated in the study.

	Age:	Gender:	Experience as Post level one:	Experience as Post level two:	Experience as Post level three:
Deputy principal one:	50 +	Female	7 years	5 years	2 and a half years
HOD one:	40-45	Female	20 years	1 year	N/A
HOD two:	35-40	Female	13 years	2 years	N/A
Teacher one:	40-45	Male	5 years	N/A	N/A
Teacher two:	20-25	Female	2 years	N/A	N/A

Figure 3.1: Participants Profile Table

It must be clarified that all the participants teach in the selected school. Therefore, while this may be perceived to be an unconventional approach to teacher leadership by including heads of department and a deputy principal, all of the participants do constitute as teacher leaders in the conventional manner. Furthermore, they all have experience as post level one teachers.

As discussed in chapter one, it was also important to explore how school leadership structures may support teacher leadership in order to assist their staff with possibilities to grow and so that not internal barriers to teacher leadership are created (Smylie & Eckert, 2018).

4.2 Data presentation and discussion

The first theme that will be discussed regarding the data analysis for this study is the theme of understanding leadership and teacher leadership. This theme focuses on how the participants conceptualised leadership and teacher leadership which will be indicative of how they practise these concepts in their school. Five main themes were conceptualised when analysing the empirical data. The data is presented through direct quotes and summarised stories from the participants. These were subsequently analysed according to the corresponding literature and the provided responses.

4.2.1 Understanding leadership

This section analyses the participants' understandings regarding leadership in order to demonstrate how these understandings inform how they incorporate leadership in their school. This first interview question (in relation to research question one) introduces the concept of this study and allows for the most general concept of leadership to be described according to each participant's understanding. This question was included in the study to provide a starting point for the concept of leadership and all it can possibly entail.

The deputy principal of the school had the following to say when asked how the concept of leadership can be understood:

My understanding is that leadership involves a vast array of things. Number one, you've got to have knowledge of what you're doing. Number 2 is: you've got to learn that it's important to work as a team. Leadership is very much knowing your content, developing, and forming relationships, um and, also, um, always making sure that the people around you know what is expected, you know. You need to be honest, and you

need to be able to be transparent so that they know if there's due dates, it needs to be communicated in advance so that also, you respect their time and their space and so that they can plan ahead for whatever it is you want.

(Deputy principal 1)

Furthermore, HOD 1 had this to say:

A successful leader is only successful with a good team. So, that is my philosophy – to have a good team behind me – who I can mentor and develop. I can achieve more with a good team behind me.

(HOD 1)

HOD 1's response emphasises having a good team and the fact that leadership entails developing and mentoring a good team (in order to ensure success).

Leadership is about setting an example, about mentoring others, inspiring others, um, to – you know- to bring out from them what they're capable of, to develop them in the places where they need development, to identify areas that need development and then obviously to then follow through with the development of that person, um, and specific skills, um, and mainly just leading by example and showing others – you know- how - um- things can be done. So, it's just – you know- about being a mentor, and um, inspiring others, and um, facilitating basically people working together as a team. I think that's important – as a leader – is to get people to work together and to facilitate that – um - that process. Um, and also a lot of problem solving goes into leader- when you're in a leadership position – in the sense that, -uh- when issues come up, you need to have -um- you know - a level head and stay calm and be able to come up with plans to -um- problem solve.

(HOD 2)

Similarly, to HOD 1, HOD 2 responded that leadership is about mentoring and developing other people and inspiring them. Furthermore, HOD 2's response also emphasises that leaders set an example, know how to solve issues, and keep calm in the face of problems. This is important, especially given the multiple issues experienced in South African schools.

Additionally, Teacher 1 mentioned:

It's very vast. It's taking control, showing the way to people, uh, leading by example basically, um, inculcating a sense of ownership in whatever you take on. Um, leadership is basically -um- taking initiative, also.

(Teacher 1)

Similar to the deputy principal's response, Teacher 1 reiterated that leadership includes a vast array of aspects and that it is all about setting an example. Teacher 1 also believed that leadership includes taking initiative and instilling in teachers a sense of ownership in what they do. Likewise, it helps teachers to teach their team about creating a sense of accountability.

In relation to the same question asked, Teacher 2 said:

Leadership goes with problem solving and decision-making.

(Teacher 2)

A few participants used similar jargon (both the deputy principal and Teacher 1 used the word 'vast'). HOD 2 and Teacher 2 both listed 'problem solving' as a characteristic for a leader. It must be noted that this is a small representation of teacher leadership in South Africa, as it is a group of teachers from one school. Nevertheless, it is representative of the specific school's culture and may offer insight as to how teachers experience leadership and teacher leadership in their schools within the South African context.

The research participants were first asked about their understanding of the term 'leadership' as this could allow for their general understanding of leadership and what it may entail, before they were moved to reflect on the more specific term namely teacher leadership. These responses would allow for a general understanding of what leadership means to each participant, respectively. Deputy principal 1's response to the first interview question demonstrates the multiple components associated with the notion of leadership. The deputy principal listed transparency, honesty and knowing how to problem-solve as some characteristics of leadership. Good leadership provides and enables trust, good communication, vision, and direction within the school system (Ghamrawi, 2010). The deputy principal also listed knowing and understanding content when leading a curriculum, as something that a leader needs to possess. This aspect can be linked to the Teachers

as Leaders Framework (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). Deputy principal one's response regarding leadership can be linked to this framework which outlines this links to a dedication in achieving continuous pedagogical excellence as an aspect of teacher-leadership (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). This continuous development about continuously developing themselves as professionals and pedagogically. This framework also requires teachers to be competent in their interpersonal and communication skills to so that effective change can be achieved; essentially the school needs an effective management system that advocates for sustainable change which deputy principal one mentions in their response (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). This aspect can also be linked to Grant's model of teacher leadership, specifically zone two which also outlines strong interpersonal and communication skills as vital for meaningful change (Grant, 2019).

From the above accounts, teamwork, mentoring, and developing a good team, appears to be key areas. This corroborates with Grant's framework, which posits that teacher leadership as it is about leading and influencing within ones' own capacity and the framework for this study, specifically how teacher leaders can take a mentoring role and developing strong working dynamics with colleagues (Consenza, 2015; Grant, 2019). Leadership, especially teacher leadership, requires the staff to be empowered to succeed in their duties (Mokhele, 2013; Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). Furthermore, HOD 2's response also emphasised that leaders set an example, know how to solve issues, and keep calm in the face of problems as the ability to be calm and rational is considered to be a characteristic of an effective leadership (Miller, 2019).

4.2.2 Understanding teacher leadership

This section analyses the participants' understandings teacher leadership specifically so that the researcher could gauge if the participants were familiar with this term and what they may perceive teacher leadership to be. Below are their responses:

Teacher leadership is basically within a structure. Teacher leadership is within a school, it's within each grade where you have one particular teacher who's a senior teacher or a master teacher who's had many years of experience in that field or in that subject. And they basically are there to assist either newer teachers or newly qualified teachers or just a group of teachers, they're the strength of that group and they basically can report to you, and they can also - we can use them to assist and mentor other teachers, so I find that we look for that type of leadership in teachers. And then,

another type of teaching leadership are like your extra-murals – you know – you get those teachers that would head an extra-mural and would co-ordinate it because we know -ok – they are - perhaps they have, um, a lot of skills in swimming or soccer or whatever it is, so you know, we get them to coordinate.

(Deputy principal)

HOD 1 responded with what they think teacher leadership would mean:

What I think it would mean is like empowering our teachers- like giving them the opportunity in the role that they play to develop and -uh- to empower themselves in their role. So, to take on different projects and to co-ordinate it and to run with it. To give them the opportunity where they can make a difference and to manage from the level where are.

(HOD 1)

Furthermore, HOD 2 focused on the relationships with learners and colleagues:

So, when it comes to teacher leadership, I think -um- you know - we have to facilitate the working with the learners. And then, also as a teacher, how do I work within the team of my colleagues and how do we collaborate and share information and -um- and help each other within the profession.

(HOD 2)

Teacher 1 linked their understanding of teacher leadership to supporting and mentoring novice teachers:

Um, let's use an example of -uh- mentoring new teachers when they come in. You know, it about showing them how to interact with learners in the class, how to discipline learners, how to -uh- be democratic in your class in that -uh- teaching has changed where it used to be 'talk and chalk.' Now, it's more interactive -uh- with COVID and everything coming in.

(Teacher 1)

The second teacher noted that they had not heard of the term teacher leadership prior to this research report, but similar to the other participants, they responded with what they thought it could mean:

Well, it's the first time I heard it [the term 'teacher leadership.] But I think what it would entail is how teachers go about with the role of leadership in a classroom or in a school setting or with their peers that they work with.

(Teacher 2)

Regarding the first two themes of understanding leadership and teacher leadership, it was important to ask the participants about their understanding of this concept as this would demonstrate their understanding of leadership first (before going into the specifics of teacher leadership). It was an interesting way to examine whether if they were implementing teacher leadership practices consciously or subconsciously. For instance, deputy one's response shows an understanding of the importance of content and curriculum model of teacher leadership, shown in the second analysis and the second role of Grant's model which lists providing knowledge on curriculum development (Grant, 2019). The importance of content and curriculum which is outlined in the Teachers as leaders framework (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). However, it must be emphasised that successful teacher leadership and its benefits work better when it is implemented systematically (through purposeful and planned teacher leadership strategies) (Msila, 2014). This means that informally following ideas of teacher leadership is not good enough, as these aspects must be formally recognised and implemented properly within the school culture.

All the participants explained their particular idea of what comes to mind when thinking of a 'teacher leader' or how one can develop into a teacher leader. The deputy principal mentioned having a hierarchical structure that functions as a system where those in higher management

positions need to guide and assist teachers, and then distributing responsibility to them (Ghamrawi, 2010). The aspect of mentoring is something that the HODs and Teacher 1 also mentioned, with HOD 1 specifically using the term 'empowerment' to enable confidence within the staff to take on more responsibility and different projects (Lee, 2020). Teacher 2 was the only participant who focused on what the teacher could do (within their own capacity) specifically within the classroom. This response adhered to the ideas associated with teacher leadership, such as a teacher having internal initiative first (Consenza, 2015).

Regarding how higher-management structures promoted teacher leadership, the deputy principal had this to say:

So, what we've done, is, we've actually done now – a subject head. So, you find that the one teacher is in charge of that particular subject. So, they would call up subject meetings at the beginning of every term -um- and more often if needed, they would guide the teachers on that subject, they will -uh- relay the policy regarding all of those subjects, they would do planning... They would not do all the planning for it, but they would share and then divide the planning, so that it's equally distributed between all the teachers. Yeah, we also have the SGB. And we obviously do a lot of finances where we have to authorize payments and things like that. So, we work closely with the SGB because we obviously need their -um- signatories and their – you know- if there's anything huge that needs to be purchased, we need authorisation and things like that.

(Deputy principal 1)

HOD 1's answer is summarised as follows:

As a leader, you should always be able to delegate things. So, I would -uh- look at a teacher who has strengths in that -uh- aspect. And maybe bring them onboard and tell them -um- this is what we aim to do and maybe let that teacher run by co-ordinating that project and that will be a way in which I can allow them to play a role in leadership. So, if -uh- I have a strength with something I can do at one time and another HOD has a strength in another field, they can run with it -uh- the next term, so it's not one person doing everything. And then with senior management also, uh, they need to delegate things to other people as well. So, in that way, like, they guide

us and develop us and say this is what's needed to be done. This is how it's done, and you run with it, come to me if you need help. And that's how we get more things done. So, it's if everyone gets the opportunity.

(HOD 1)

Teacher 1 relayed their experience while explaining how higher management structures promoted teacher leadership:

I came in as a new teacher at the school and -uh- certain responsibilities were given but it was not given without guidance, you know. You're almost given everything you need to succeed, right. Everything is handed to you and -uh- there's guidance along the way as well. Look, the SMT is very, very hands on. If there's a problem they will come to you, if there's assistance that you need, you can go to them and say: 'This is the issue. What do I do?' It's very open.

(Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 alluded to being assertive and taking initiative:

Well, our school is very about having your own ideas and your own opinions. And if you want to do something – how would you achieve it? Or let's say you want to introduce -um - an extra-mural. They'd encourage you in the ways that: 'Okay that's your extra-mural, you are in charge of it and at the end of the term, we'll just get feedback'. So, I do think there's a lot of room that our school for allows for teacher leadership on all different aspects whether it be in class or after school or within the school management teams as well. They do allow a lot of growth and on the terms that you want so it's not like a forced type of thing.

(Teacher 2)

Deputy principal explained how higher-management structures practised teacher leadership in the school:

We've basically got an SMT: the school management team. So, it's the principal, the deputy and two HODs in the Intersen phase and an HOD in the foundation phase So, we have a meeting once a week and, in that meeting, we touch on school, um, assessment. Basically, we also formed a school assessment team and a school-based support (SBST) team. So, what we do is we meet weekly, and we discuss – number one – um, any issues that may have arisen, we discuss the learners that have challenges or experience barriers to learning, we discuss teachers – what's working, what's not working – we also, um, well basically I then make out – and have - a management plan that we give to the teachers at the beginning of every term. And um, yeah, so that's basically what we- we also have a staff meeting so we can, uh, – you know – keep in touch with the staff and, uh, meet with them at least so that there is that type of a communication. And we also have assemblies once a week, so we meet with the children. Because often you find you're behind your computers and the children don't know you. So, we do teach, and we do meet the children and we always walk around the corridors - that we find is really important. Not to check on the teachers, but just so much to be - for your presence to be made, so that - you know - the children know you, the teachers know you. And, um, we, um, we-we like to communicate with our teachers via email so that there is a trace of -uh- what's happening.

(Deputy principal 1)

HOD 1 stated:

As a post-level two educator, it's -um- my role to manage my educators. Uh, so, uh, to do that, um, they have to understand what my expectations are. And uh, we're guided a lot by policies and as a manager, I need to know my policies and we need to be following that in order to communicate to my educators what I need from them, what needs to be done. We need to set by example and -uh- always be there to develop them, like share examples with them, share ideas with them. And also get input from them because in education I believe we're always learning.

(HOD 1)

HOD 2 added:

We do -um - very much work as teams within the school. So, we have – what we call -subject teams. And we also have – what we call – phase teams. And um, it's important that there's always these teams that can share ideas. I think teamwork comes down to the main facet-um- uh- when we talk about education and educating children.

(HOD 2)

Teacher 2 had this to say:

Okay, so in my school because I teach [a foundation phase grade], so I teach all their subjects that they have to do. So, I'm the teacher that's with them the whole day from morning till they have to go home and with extra-murals. So, I think with teacher leadership it means being able to be with your class and lead them through the day from beginning to end. Making sure that you always are the one that has to make all the decisions and make sure that everything is followed through. Leading through what you have to do and getting it done. Knowing- knowing how - what your concepts are, how you're going to teach it in a level that each learner will understand or an overall understanding for each grade.

(Teacher 2)

In the participating school, the deputy principal discussed how the SGB and SMT helped to coordinate, facilitate and plan. Furthermore, both HODs mentioned their roles in managing educators and working in teams, with subject and phase teams also being instrumental in planning and leading the way for different subjects and phases.

The concept of delegation usually has a connotation (Hatcher, 2012). However, it is evident that HOD 1's interpretation is that delegation is synonymous with trusting your colleagues with certain tasks and therefore believed that it was instead an exercise of distributed leadership (Hatcher, 2005). Through effective leadership and management, these participants believed that through using of specific teams' guidance and development were provided for the staff members. Teacher 1 mentioned this guidance that was offered by management. Teacher 2 mentioned that their

management team did indeed encourage growth in an organic way. Teacher two also focused specifically on the teacher as an individual. This is interesting as it put the focus on how well a teacher should be developed as an individual, considering the need to be well-informed in terms of decision-making, well-versed in pedagogy, and taking responsibility within one's own classroom. This links to the Grant's model of teacher leadership, which focuses firstly on what a teacher as an individual can do within their own classroom (Grant, 2019). The Teachers as leaders framework also focuses on facilitating communities of learning and maintaining a good pedagogical development (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009).

While conventional teacher leadership can be understood as being focused on teachers specifically, and what they feel they can do within their classroom in order to go the extra the mile, an important aspect of this study focuses on how internal factors such as school leadership may influence teacher leadership.

4.2.3 The qualities of a leader

This theme focuses on what qualities a leader should have. The participants responded with what they thought leaders in the educational field should possess. They responded to the question:

What important qualities do you think school leaders should possess and how do these qualities contribute to a culture of success within your school?

Basically, I think you need to be approachable, honest... Mm, you've- you've got to be able to be empathetic as well. However, you need to be firm and set your goals. And make your goals known. You should have a vision and a mission that your teachers should be aware of, um, and you need to be transparent, and you need to plan. You need to lead by example, and you need to work as a team. Okay, you need to enforce collaboration, it's very important because you – obviously – it's not - you being the leader doesn't mean you have all the ideas. You know, it's amazing what you can get out of your staff.

(Deputy principal)

Teacher 1 gave their opinion:

I think the greatest quality that they have is the ability to read situations and read people. You know, um, if you cannot read a situation, your judgement will be clouded and often you make wrong decisions or react in a way you shouldn't. [To be] Very perceptive, yes. It shows or displays to the rest of the school that my superior, my HOD, my deputy, principal is calm and in control, can handle the situation, you know. I don't need to stress that everything is in control when it comes to management.

(Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 stated the following:

Hmm, I think you have to be – well, in our school, I'm not really sure about others at our school- you have to be confident and outspoken in what you want. You have to be a critical thinker in the sense of – if something – to think on the spot and how to deal with situations. And also, on what could – and problem solving. How would you solve problems or how would you solve an issue that arises in your class or in the school?

(Teacher 2)

Both HODs responded by echoing certain qualities mentioned by the deputy principal, respectively. HOD 1 mentioned communication, which resonated the view of the deputy principal, who stated that honesty was important. Furthermore, HOD 2 also mentioned that being approachable was a good quality to possess. If management was seen as approachable, then staff members would feel supported and encouraged to confide in them. This would thus create a school culture where honesty and teamwork (which characterise effective leadership) are enabled (Ghamrawi, 2010). Teacher 1 believed that a good leader is perceptive: being observant and skilled in analysing a situation and the people around them (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002). Teacher 2 believed that leaders have the quality of being confident, knowing how to obtain their goals and being vocal on what they want (Ghamrawi, 2010). Teacher 2 reiterated their earlier statement

where they believed that being a leader is being a good problem-solver: to think on the spot critically and quickly.

This theme focuses on what various teacher leaders shared about what they deemed to be the qualities of a leader. It was important to investigate some of these of these qualities.

4.2.4 Possibilities for teacher leaders

The next theme that will be discussed is the theme of the possibilities that teachers have within their schools to further develop themselves and to contribute to the school. This theme focused on the participants' understanding of how their school provided them with the opportunities to develop professionally and personally as teacher leaders. It must be clarified that if teacher leaders do not have the room to explore and engage in these possibilities, they would be hindered and not reach their best potential for themselves and for their school.

When the participants were asked about the possibilities that teacher leaders bring to the schools, this is what they had to say:

There's a lot they can do. Number one: They can develop by the SMT. Like I said, we can delegate tasks to them and projects to them to do. Um and also like I said, make them subject heads. Then there are meetings that they could attend that we'd ask them to assist in attending with us – HOD meetings and things- just to develop them. And then the department offers- um- the department database has a lot of courses available. It's related to management, its courses related to their subjects, to teaching methods, to dealing with children with barriers NAPTOSA also offers a lot of courses that our teachers attend as well. And uh, we're lucky to be an affluent school, so we do pay for the courses. And then we have an IQMS system which is an Integrated Quality Management System, you must have heard. So, what they do, is they basically develop teachers and grade- the teachers are rated. They're rated by regular class visits. Um, and so, we monitor them based on that and then there's a whole little document that needs to be filled in and from there, we can judge – and they themselves do a self-evaluation as well – you know? So, there's – to judge – this is where they self-evaluate themselves from the beginning: where are they at the end of the year? What then are the needs for development? And then they fill in what they call a personal growth plan.

And then we – that person’s growth plan and– we formulate a school improvement plan: where can we help them? And then, that’s how we allocate the different courses or whatever we think they need for development. So yeah, there’s a lot of room for development. It’s just that they need to want to do it. We do try to have team building and things like that once a term just to get teachers to unwind and also [to get together] as a staff.

(Deputy principal)

HOD 1 mentioned sport as a possibility and elaborated on how extra-murals encouraged an environment to empower teachers:

Okay, so, uh with regard to sport, I think there’s always an open possibility for us to introduce -uh- more sporting codes. And uh, teachers can go for training. Like -uh- um- recently we realized -like- uh- chess is a good sport to have at your school. But you don’t have enough teachers -uh- empowered to do it. So, um, if we -uh- give them the opportunity and create like a workshop or for them to do training, there’s a possibility for them to grow.

(HOD 1)

Furthermore, Teacher 1 gave their perspective:

There’s so much room for plenty of personal growth within the school. Um, I was teaching mathematics and then I was approached by a corporate -uh- to come and do an inventory management. Uh, so, you know if you take pride in what you do and take ownership and show a keen interest in- in the work – you know – it goes out there. People will notice what you are doing and the possibilities outside of teaching also comes up. You know, our learners – their parents are key to this, also. When you are helping learners and the parents pick up on this and, you know, it just grows from there. It’s not just teaching in isolation – there’s a whole network via your learners that you can tap into.

(Teacher 1)

The deputy principal outlined several opportunities to grow, develop, and empower staff members in their school. This included the encouragement of ‘shadowing’ HODs to learn from them in meetings and to encourage them to attend NAPTOSA and department courses. These actions constitute teacher leadership, where leaders are ‘nurturing’ and developing their staff (Msila, 2014). Furthermore, they were evaluated through an IQMS system and self-evaluation to highlight areas where they could improve, which is also mentioned in Grant’s framework (2019). Regarding the stories of the HODs, HOD 2 also reiterated that they attended NAPTOSA courses. Both HODs mentioned how management supported and encouraged teachers to attend these courses and to embark on new endeavours within the school. Teacher 2 echoed this sentiment and emphasised that teachers needed to be outspoken on what they wanted to try. This highlights the importance of a motivation when a teacher leader (Makhalemele & Makoelle, 2020) being. Furthermore, the funding and encouragement of taking these courses, was a way to encourage teacher leaders to develop themselves (Meher, Ummulbanin & Lalwani, 2003). HOD 1 mentioned that sports and the possibility of adding more sports would require the necessary training and courses to enhance teacher leader’s knowledge. The most interesting response came from Teacher 1 who focused on how doing one’s job well created opportunities outside the education sphere, professional development in other avenues (not just education). It is clear that this is a school that provides opportunities for their staff to grow and develop with guidance (Msila, 2014).

Furthermore, the following question was asked to the participants: Do you think you empower teachers to take more leadership roles in your school?

Deputy principal 1 responded as follows:

Yeah. Yes, we do. [This is done through the NAPTOSA courses, department courses and funding.] And like I said, we give them, we-we delegate roles of co-ordinating certain functions and activities and co-curriculars, subject heads. So, they do co-ordinate a lot of stuff that gives them the edge. Like our sports day was co-ordinated by two people. And we give them that freedom to be able to -uh- do that. And then they can even come to us and say maybe they want to change it because [this is what happened] for scoring. For our sports, we always did the scoring on a page on sports day, and we have this new person – an admin person who came in and she’s like: ‘Well, why then don’t I put it on Excel, and I’ll sit on my computer

there' and I'm like: 'Oh, that's great, like you don't have to add.' So, we do allow for that. We do allow for them, yeah.

(Deputy principal 1)

HOD 2 stated:

Yes, I think we do. Um, you know, uh, there's so many different aspects to -um- managing a school. Um, we very much depend on-um- our staff to be able to step up into positions where they are very strong, where they have abilities. Um, so teachers are given that -um- responsibility and they are given the opportunity to be able to - um- run activities like that and to plan things like that. So, I think it's definitely something that does happen within the school. Um, I can't see any school operating where other people aren't given positions where they need to lead. It has to be done in order to be able to have an effective system in place.

(HOD 2)

Furthermore, Teacher 1 had the following to say:

Uh, yes, they do, at times. Um, at times, they don't. Uh, depends on what - what it is that needs to be done, you know, uh. When it comes to – to dealing with learner issues, they will at times -uh- allocate or delegate that to – to post-level one teachers. Dealing with parents, that is something that they will do themselves, you know. So, it all depends on -on what the task is that they – that they need and the – the sensitivity around it. If it something that can be delegated, they will. If it is something that shouldn't be delegated, they don't. It's all relative to what the task it is.

(Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 agreed that their school empowered them:

Um, I do think so. I do think so. We do allow for opportunities of growth and being part of decisions, yeah.

(Teacher 2)

It was important to ask the participants if they felt that their school management empowered them, given that empowerment is a key component in teacher leadership (Hlatywayo, 2010). Deputy principal 1 believed that they did empower their staff and reiterated the fact that they offered and encouraged taking courses to develop themselves and learn. Furthermore, the Deputy principal narrated a situation where a staff member offered to do something new, and how this was encouraged. A common word used throughout all the interviews with the participants was ‘delegate’, and this word was used with a positive connotation amongst all the participants. Teacher 1 gave an insightful and honest answer about how not all staff members would be allocated certain tasks but noted that this may be because a certain task was not particularly within their skill set or in their jurisdiction as a post-level one teacher. Teacher 1 did not necessarily feel disempowered by this, but instead understood why and how this occurred in certain situations as teacher have their certain roles and responsibilities which may change over time (Portin, Alejano, Knapp & Marzolf, 2006). HOD 2 relayed that they definitely empowered their staff to take up opportunities that they felt were suited to the individual staff member’s strengths. The management believed that no school could run effectively without distributed leadership – the sharing of power and taking up different tasks and responsibilities, which is a step towards teacher leadership (Williams, 2010; Makoelle & Makhalemele, 2020).

It must be clarified again that it was important for this study to try to investigate how the higher management structures in the school, such as the SMT, assisted in encouraging and promoting teacher leadership as shown from the deputy principal’s response. While conventional teacher leadership can be understood as focused on teachers specifically (and on what the teacher feels they can do within their classroom to go the extra the mile), an important aspect of this study is focused on the support teacher leaders may receive and how interactions with other teacher leaders/staff members can be integral to teacher leadership, as found within different zones from the model of teacher leadership (Grant, 2019).

4.2.5 Challenges faced by teacher- leaders

The next theme that will be discussed is the theme of investigating what challenges teacher leaders have to deal with within their school. This theme can offer insight into the challenges that teacher leaders face. It must be clarified that challenges or issues serve as obstacles when teachers are

trying to fulfil their roles and duties. As such they may hinder the teachers' professional and personal development as teacher leaders. Therefore, the participants were asked the following question:

What do you believe are some of the challenges school leaders faces (if any) relating to teacher leaders in your school? How do you overcome them?

I think, at the moment, with Covid being the way it is. Teachers are – number one – they're scared. Um, you know, they- you must know they go home to their families, and they're worried about what they may carry from the kids here. Especially now that we're full time back, we've been full time the entire year, actually. We've haven't – uh- gone on rotation at all because we've managed to social distance them in class. Um so, it's just a lot of- you must know they come from other pressures as well and they've just got to bury this and keep working here. And we deal with a lot of social issues that our children go through, and teachers have to deal with that. I mean they don't have food when they come from home, or they have other psychological or socio-economic problems. So, all that-all that is basically put onto the shoulders of teachers who have to pick up on it, have to look at the behaviour of children that have changed. And secondly, there's a lot of administrative work that teachers are expected to do by the department. And they just find that they- they just find that they've lost touch with teaching because there's so much of paperwork that has to be done. Uh so, it takes up a lot of their time as well. And then, as a leader: the challenges are basically looking at a lot of resistance to change, you know. You come in as a new person and you must know they're set in their ways; this is how they've done it and they're very resistant to change. So, it's-it's a lot – challenges- dealing with different personalities.

(Deputy principal)

HOD 1 listed two challenges:

It's just the factor of time. Time constraints is a big factor that does influence us. And then the -uh- admin part that comes onto teachers. So, for me, those two are big factors that affect us from getting where we need to get. Ok, as a manager, I do notice that we have time constraints, but also -uh- teachers need to develop in how to manage their

time. So, there are ways to overcome it where we need to develop people into efficient ways of -um- dealing with tasks.

(HOD 1)

Teacher 1 also listed administration as a challenge but also mentioned teacher resistance:

The challenges they face are so vast in that -uh- the admin they have to do is overwhelming at times. They are so overwhelmed at times that they- that they -at times- forget to- to pass on certain information, you know. The department demands so much information from them and sometimes things slip through the cracks, you know. Uh, but eventually they catch up and it gets done. Uh, the other challenge they face is- ugh - pushback from- from teachers, also. In that, uh, they - they're not open to- to change and, you know, especially the older teachers where they are stuck in the mentality that this is the way I used to do things, and this is the way I want continue doing things and not- not evolve with the times.

(Teacher 1)

Furthermore, the participants elaborated on the challenges that staff members/teacher leaders may face:

I think we've just discussed more or less that problems are – that they have issues and problems at home. They have financial crisis, they may [be] going through depression, they may be going through other personal issues and uh, coming to school – there's absolutely no time for them – you know – you know – periods are so short, they're so – there's so much to cover in a short period of time. And they have to be completely focused and sometimes they do reach burnout -um- but not if you plan. Not if you plan ahead. And that's what I always say to the teachers: don't wait and leave anything to the end. Because when you – when you plan, you're actually more in control of what you're doing, of your time and you -you're not so stressed. Stressed levels are lower.

(Deputy principal)

HOD 1 elaborated on another challenge:

One challenge I find in schools is people are no more -um- they're losing that professionalism. They're being too personal. People are more empowered and that, but there's also - I believe the professionalism in the school environment is very important. And there needs to be a respect for authority as well.

(HOD 1)

HOD 2 had this to say:

We always have people with different personalities -um- that you'll have to obviously manage. Each one comes with different personalities, different ways of doing things, different methods in how they approach they work. I have to lead people who are older than me, who have a lot more experience, so I have to be very open to working with them rather than just giving them information. Even though they're post level one positions, they still have a lot to offer. You have to also approach it with a very open mind and then know that your team can teach you as much as you can teach them.

(HOD 2)

Teacher 1 also elaborated on another challenge they felt teacher leaders faced:

Uh, the other biggest challenge is, you know, parents. Parents have become -uh- entitled, you know. They demand time of, or time from, uh, the SMT members, you know. If they pick up the phone and they phone, you need to be available when I want to speak to you -uh- regardless of what you are doing at school and what your plan is at school. Uh, if the parents' phones, you must be available at all times. So, that is one of the biggest challenges that they face is that our parents are so demanding and entitled to- to what they want and when they want it. Some learners also have the same habits as their parents.

(Teacher 1)

Teacher 2 focused on the impact of individual decision making:

I think it's – the decision-making mostly and if others are going to be happy with the decisions you make or if others are going to be okay with what you have decided on a certain something. Whether it's not what something else wants. So, I think that's the biggest challenge. And I also think as a teacher, the biggest challenge is making sure you know what you have to do from beginning to end. Especially in your class or if you get the hard questions, you know how to answer them and how to deal with conflict especially with younger kids, it happens quite often. So, how to deal with conflict and not be being able to pick sides about it. I do think communication would help with leadership and just talking to other teachers about why they're unhappy about something that you've decided. And then as a teacher, it's mostly just going with your gut and what you think is right, especially in class.

(Teacher 2)

When asked about the challenges within the education field (and schools) particularly those pertaining to teacher leaders, many participants responded by referring to the initial problem statement highlighting the effects of Covid-19, teacher burnout and how overwhelming the job of a teacher, HOD and a deputy principal – respectively – can be (Du Plessis, 2020; Paddock, 2021). Deputy principal 1 confirmed that COVID-19 was difficult in that it increased the workload – such as online teaching and providing extra worksheets for learners who were infected or quarantined. HOD 1 agreed that COVID-19 definitely impacted the way schools operated and in an earlier response, Teacher 1 mentioned that COVID-19 changed the way teachers taught and operated within their classrooms. There was no mention of how they overcame this challenge, only that they collectively managed it as a school. They simply tried to adapt as best as they could and exposed themselves to new methods of teaching, learning and operating within the school.

Furthermore, regarding the additional challenges, the responses were summarised as the following: Firstly, most of the participants agreed that teaching could be an overwhelming profession with lots of roles and responsibilities to fulfil (Robinson, 2020; Paddock, 2021). Regarding teacher burnout, while the deputy principal acknowledged that burnout happened and that time-constraints were a big challenge, the deputy principal believed that planning well could possibly avoid teacher burnout. Additionally, HOD 2 believed that loving one's job gives you the energy you need to fulfil your duties. Teacher 2 believed that every job had its specific duties that are necessary and

thus, it is important to accept and overcome these challenges even though they may be difficult. Most of the participants listed administrative work and time constraints as two challenges that may hinder teachers and their professional development (The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2005).

Regarding the more personal challenges listed by the teachers, all the participants listed dealing with different personalities within the work environment as a challenge. This aspect of different personalities can manifest as a lack of professionalism, staff members disagreeing with other people's decisions, resistance to change, pushback from teachers, and finally, trying to manage and co-ordinate between these different personalities. Teacher 1 identified dealing with difficult parents and learners as another challenge. The deputy principal also mentioned that teachers had their own personal problems (for example, mental health struggles), which affected their professional lives. This suggests that teachers' professional lives may have further stressed their personal lives. These stories that were narrated by the participants encapsulate some of the internal and external difficulties that teacher leaders faced. These issues affected both their personal and professional lives.

It must be clarified that some of the aforementioned issues motivated the researcher's interest regarding this study. These were the challenges listed by the participants that they felt interfered with their ability to perform their jobs appropriately or that may have led to low teacher morale which may impact teacher leadership. These challenges were listed by the participants when they were asked to identify the obstacles the teacher leaders faced. Therefore, while these challenges may not be the exact conventional challenges that may be listed in teacher leadership literature, they have emerged from the study as new challenges teacher leaders have faced.

4.2.6 Further issues in South African schools

It was important to enquire about recent allegations of racism and discrimination in South African schools and how this has been an alleged challenge. As previously mentioned, this falls under the aspect of being a teacher leader within the larger community context and how teacher leadership extends beyond the classroom (Hamzah et al., 2016; Grant, 2019). Furthermore, social injustice can impact all learners and their education (Grant, 2020). As South African educators and schools were faced with these allegations, the researcher wanted to gauge the reactions of the participants - to reflect on if and how they were truly South African educators could truly be teacher leaders who

upheld the necessary values. As mentioned in chapters one and two, as much as teachers may face these challenges, they also need to uphold the South African constitution and have the power to do so, as teacher leaders (Atsango, 2020). This final theme is therefore an extension of the possible challenges teacher leaders may face within their schools and in the larger social, cultural, and political context.

Therefore, the following question was asked:

Please share your opinion regarding the recent allegations regarding bigotry (racism etc) in various South African schools and do you believe this points to teacher leaders and school staff members who are generally not doing enough to combat these issues?

The deputy principal responded to this question by offering two solutions regarding what schools could do to try combat these issues:

The school itself needs to have a clear no negotiation policy on racism and bigotry and anything to do with not accepting anybody that's different. Um, you need to be clear that it's a no tolerance – a zero tolerance for anyone [who is different]. And number two, we are putting people into categories and boxes. And I think if the school -um- teachers or has workshops with the teachers regarding that, teachers will understand that this is my job environment and that is not negotiable. Um so, I think it very much comes – number one- from the school culture itself. So, we need to promote the right culture at the school. And number two, it's - we don't know what children come home- come from home with. That's the problem, you know. We need to promote that in class as well, as much as we can because we need to undo anything that is at home, if they do come with such things from home, you know, um. And um, you know, it's just such a difficult thing because everyone has a personal view, and everyone has a personal –um- belief system. But, at school, we have to ensure that we make it clear to our teachers, to our children that there's a zero tolerance for non-acceptance of [differences]: if you want to call it [that].

The participants also felt that their school was diverse and that they experienced no issues with discrimination. According to HOD 2:

I think -um- you know- different schools are in different -um- are run differently. With regards to – I can only speak for our school. We've never had issues of -um- teachers being accused of racism or -um- any sort of -uh- any sort of discrimination within the classroom. You know, very rarely do we get a parent who - who feels that a teacher is being discriminatory to their child. Um, we do – we have – a class that is -um- our classrooms are all extremely diverse – racially, uh, religiously - it's a very -um- diverse environments that we have within the classroom. And I think that within the staff as well and I think that's important for the children to see is that the staff is diverse and therefore -um- the classrooms are always going to very diverse. Our parent body is diverse, our SGB is diverse. Um, and that teaches children that diversity is the -um- is the norm, you know.

Teacher 1 emphasised how school management does have a responsibility in combatting these issues:

We should all be more cognizant of the things that's happening. Our school has taken that stance of being cognizant [of] cultural values and your heritage and the values that children come to school with. We are here -uh- to teach a learner. You are here to teach a child and a child is a child regardless of where they come from, what their circumstances are. We see this happening in all schools where certain groups feel undervalued or not heard. Diversity is very important in a school. And management is at the core of this, they are supposed to drive this diversity within the school.

Furthermore, Teacher 2 also elaborated on other issues:

Um, okay, so I don't think I might know too much about it in the sense of other schools and stuff. But I did hear [about] racism in schools. But – I don't – I don't know in my opinion, I don't, maybe in my school, I think that we have a diverse school. I do hear -when I hear a lot- especially with the news – even when it has to be about sexual harassment with learners or where teachers are hitting the learners – it does make me feel a certain way. Confused in the sense of why would you do that?

Teacher 2 also listed some solutions:

Have a [counsellor] at your school for you to talk about things. Or having psychologists available for teachers. They need an outlet – so they need an outlet on how to deal or how to get through something. And I think that’s how schools should do it: having a space to talk about – to talk to or knowing that you’re safe enough to go talk to someone – this is how you’re feeling.

All the participants believed that while they could not comment specifically on other schools or general issues, the way to combat this issue was to have a zero-tolerance policy for any bullying or discrimination of any kind (Atsango, 2020). Participants such as the deputy principal and Teacher 1 believed that having an equity plan and adhering to policies were the way to avoid or manage issues. HoD 2 and Teacher 1 believe in embracing diversity and deputy principal one emphasised that being an example of how to treat others is how they can deal with such issues which link to the first and fourth elements of the Teachers as Leaders framework: relaying a positive mindset and confronting the school’s cultural and structural barriers (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009). Furthermore, Teacher 1 agreed with the researcher’s follow up statement that these issues were very complex, and that while management can set the tone to be more inclusive within the school, there is still a larger, societal issue at hand.

To conclude, many problems and challenges that were listed within the literature and problem statement (such as teacher burnout and the effects of Covid-19) have been found in the responses. The participating school had its own sets of possibilities and ways of promoting and practising teacher leadership, as shown through the abridged quotes and summaries of the interviews.

The participating school seems to be a self-aware school with different personalities but all of whom have a good understanding of how to do their jobs to the best of their ability and to be leaders in their respective fields. These participants are certainly empowered and encouraged within their particular school but also limited, due to some of the challenges (specifically external challenges) that were cited and relayed in the participants’ stories.

4.3 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the empirical data that was collected. Furthermore, this data was set out in relation to answering the key research questions of this study through the interview questions that

were asked, presented, analysed, and interpreted. The inclusion of all five participants has been shown through the narrative method: through abridged quotes and summaries of the stories relayed by the participants and the themes that were found within the data. The inclusion of the interview quotes demonstrates how and why the data analysis and interpretations were made. The next chapter contains the study summary, conclusions, recommendations, and implications for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE: STUDY SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on the concept of teacher leadership and all it entails, how it is effectively implemented, and how it links to concepts such as teacher empowerment, distributed leadership, and democratic leadership. This study's aim was to investigate how teacher leaders may be empowered and/or limited due to the various challenges and possibilities that they face. Through the collection of empirical data and the data analysis, the participants relayed their experiences of how they both experienced and practised teacher leadership in their schools. They also communicated the possibilities and challenges that either further developed or hindered them. The previous chapter dealt with the presentation and discussion of the findings from the field. In this chapter, a reflective summary of the study is presented. The conclusions drawn from the findings and the recommendations informed by the study conclusions are also presented. Furthermore, suggestions for further research are made.

5.2 Study summary

Chapter One introduced the study: it outlined the purpose, aims, objectives and key research questions to guide the study. The purpose and rationale were explained and the definitions of terms, and limitations and delimitations of the study were also discussed. The rationale for investigating teacher leadership was provided and it was explained why it is a relevant topic. Chapter One provided the groundwork on which this study was based on.

Chapter Two provided relevant supporting literature that guided and shaped this study. This includes a discussion of the importance of leadership, teacher leadership, distributed leadership and the link to democracy and the role of teacher leaders. Chapter Two also provided the conceptual frameworks for this study: the Teachers as leaders framework (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009) and Grant's model of teacher leadership (2019).

Chapter three outlined the selected research design, methodology and paradigm and explained why these choices were made: the critical paradigm, the qualitative approach and narrative research design were outlined in relation to the study's aims and methodology. The narrative analysis and

method were also explained. All information regarding the methodology and research participants are included in this chapter.

Chapter Four presented the empirical data that was collected. Furthermore, this data in relation to answering the research questions was presented, analysed, and interpreted. The narrative method was clearly applied through abridged quotations, summaries of the narrated responses and the themes generated within the data. The inclusion of participants' quotations confirms accuracy and provides evidence of why certain interpretations and analysis of the data were made.

Chapter Five presented a brief summary of the all the chapters in the study, specifically the findings related to the research questions. In this chapter, conclusions were drawn from the findings. In particular, the recommendations encourage researchers to investigate teacher leadership further. It is also recommended that schools engage in ways that will empower their staff to advocate teacher leadership and implement it. In this way astute leaders will be developed to improve student learning and school performance.

5.3 Conclusions

The findings of the study arrived at the following conclusions:

5.3.1 Findings related to understanding leadership and teacher leadership

Teacher leadership can entail many things: it can entail a teacher's self-development in the pedagogical sense and providing innovative pedagogical practises to being promoted to a new role within the school. However, for teacher leadership to be understood and implemented effectively, it must be introduced to teachers. There is potential to develop and achieve goals when the Teacher as Leaders Framework is implemented, such as the emphasis on pedagogy (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009).

Teacher leadership can be formally and purposefully implemented (Msila, 2014). However, for this to be introduced effectively, school management must first have good leadership styles themselves, to be able to lead by example and be able to practice distributed and democratic leadership in a fair and balanced manner (Ghamrawi, 2010). There must be trust and a level of flexibility before any of these concepts can be introduced, furthermore NAPTOSA and department courses can assist in improving the staff's leadership styles. This in turn leads to teacher-empowerment and an environment that encourages collaboration and professional development.

The participants had an interesting viewpoint regarding traditional hierarchal structures and the debate regarding the concept of delegation. The participants subverted the traditional notions found in literature and maintained a positive viewpoint on how these concepts can be used to actually develop teacher leadership.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, this study took what may be perceived to a more unconventional approach regarding teacher leadership. The participants therefore included HODs and a deputy principal alongside the teachers. This was done for two reasons: firstly, the HODs and deputy principal all teach in addition to their respective responsibilities. Secondly, this study wanted to understand how teacher leadership may be understood at different levels. For instance, understanding teacher leadership at a post level one, post level two, and so forth. However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, all of the participants teach in the selected school and have post-level one experience.

5.3.2 Findings related to the qualities of a leader

When staff members feel supported, this leads to a trusting peer network and a school culture that enables honesty and teamwork, which essentially characterises effective leadership (Ghamrawi, 2010). In terms of what constitutes as an effective leader the participants felt that the right characteristics lead to an astute leader who nurtures improvement, which, in turn, encourages and motivates students and staff alike (Chen, 2020).

5.3.3 Findings related to the possibilities for teacher leaders

Regarding teacher leadership and teacher empowerment, if teachers are not encouraged and developed then it is a disservice to the organisation itself, the learners, and the South African education system. Good, democratic leadership encourages collaboration and further empowerment (Makoelle & Makhlemele, 2020). This can create further innovation and problem solving due to a working environment that encourages growth and provides support for this growth.

5.3.4 Findings related to challenges faced by teacher leaders

Numerous challenges have been cited in both the relevant literature and the participants' stories. The Covid-19 pandemic affected and changed how schools operate, yet the only way to work with an unpredictable global health crisis is to ensure a culture of communication, support, and good

planning within the school environment, amongst the staff. Burnout and challenges such as personal issues and administration are easier dealt with in such an environment.

5.3.5 Findings related to further issues in South African schools

School management and staff can deal with any serious issues pertaining to bullying, discrimination, and racism by ensuring a zero-tolerance policy for such matters. There must be school rules, a code of conduct, and staff behaviour that sets a precedent for leaders and is informed by the spirit of Ubuntu and is constitutional (Msila, 2014; Atsango, 2020).

5.3.6 A summary of the findings

Ultimately, the conclusions of the findings show how the participating school conceptualised school leadership at different levels. The focus is on how the practices of a teacher leader at post level one, post level two or post level 3 can occur. The findings demonstrate possible reasons for the various challenges and possibilities that teacher leaders may face this could be a lack of support, a culture in where teacher leadership is not sustained, external issues that affect teachers' jobs or jobs that may be overwhelming.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Recommendations to school principals and deputy principals

The deputy principal in this study was open-minded towards and supportive of their staff. Generally, school leadership, including school principals and deputy principals are encouraged to reflect on their understanding of teacher leadership. They must investigate where and what they can improve on. Furthermore, school and deputy principals must understand the value of teacher leadership and empowering their staff. School principals must encourage teacher leadership and development amongst their staff. There should be clear boundaries and a plan in place to ensure a collegial work environment and that the staff feel confident that the school is a place that encourages personal and professional development. This can be done through distributed and democratic leadership practices, through encouraging, by funding courses and implementing teacher leadership frameworks such as Grant's model, which actually encourages peer assessment (Ghamrawi, 2010; Grant, 2019; Lee, 2020). Furthermore, school management and leadership must ensure that their codes of conduct are constitutional and inclusive (Atsango, 2020). Furthermore,

even though there may be challenges, the school management has the responsibility to still encourage and empower their teachers in whichever aspects they possibly can.

5.4.2 Recommendations to HODs

The HODs participating in this study seemed to be very encouraging regarding the concept of teacher leadership. Generally, HODs are encouraged to communicate well between higher management such as the school and deputy principals and the teachers. They are the middle managers and have a responsibility as teacher leaders to set an example for teachers and be a line of communication to the higher management structures.

HODs must understand that their responsibilities do not only pertain to teaching and marking, but also to working as a team, to improve their pedagogy and practices, in order to develop themselves and contribute to a safe working and school environment. This environment is created with integrity and empathy, for both their colleagues and learners. This can be done through implementing the implementing the teacher leadership frameworks (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009; Grant, 2019).

5.4.3 Recommendations to teachers

The teachers who participated in this study offered interesting insights as to what it means to be a post-level one teacher. Generally, teachers must first have the desire to do more and develop so that they can become teacher leaders and grow in this aspect (Consenza, 2015). They must also adhere to the policies implemented in guiding them to be better teachers and educational professionals such as the Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) national policy and through implementing various teacher leadership frameworks (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009; Grant, 2019).

5.5 The implications of the study

The study participants do not and cannot represent all teacher leaders and schools in South Africa. This therefore means that there are more schools that can serve as research participants to contribute to understanding teacher leadership in South African schools and to represent different types of schools. The participating school in this study was arguably more resourced than many other schools in the country. This shows that the concept of teacher leadership and teacher leaders in schools must be further investigated, so that the conceptualisations and leadership practises

within school's leadership can be properly understood, analysed, practised in different contexts in different schools and improved. Every school is different, therefore teacher leadership and leadership must be understood and investigated within these different contexts.

The researcher believes that more participating schools could have contributed to a more informed understanding of teacher leadership in different contexts and circumstances. It was difficult to gain additional participants due to a lack of interest or low teacher morale (due to the challenges of the school staff). These challenges formed the incentive for conducting the study. However, the participating school provided several valuable insights. Ultimately, the study participants were both limited and empowered to some extent due to certain internal and external factors. There is scope to investigate further in order to understand the nature of how they have been both limited and empowered, and how teacher leaders in the South African context can possibly be empowered to be teacher leaders.

5.6 Concluding remarks

This chapter presented a reflective summary of the study findings related to the research questions, and the conclusions that were drawn from the findings. In particular, the recommendations and findings are made to encourage further research on teacher leadership. Likewise, the recommendations and findings encourage schools to learn more and engage with teacher leadership.

It is trusted that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations presented in this research report may draw the attention of other researchers to explore potential areas for further research, as suggested above.

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Appendices:

The following sections contain the appendices for this study: permission letters, consent forms and interview question templates.

Appendix 1.0 Permission letter to the principal to conduct the study in the school

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Dehmishka Moodley, and I am a Master of Education student at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am conducting research about teacher leadership in public primary schools in the Johannesburg North district. The aim of my project is to investigate and explore the conceptualisations, practices, challenges, possibilities, and insights that exist within the schools on teacher leadership.

Your school is invited to participate in this study. If the invitation is accepted, I would like to interview five staff members in your school. These will include either yourself or the deputy principal, two HODs and two teachers. All participation is voluntary with interviews being between 30 to 45 minutes and conducted via Zoom due to COVID-19 and GDE restrictions.

All interviews will be conducted at a time acceptable to the research participant, either during or after school hours subject to their availability. I also seek permission to audio record all participants during the interviews to ensure validity, accuracy and to adhere to time constraints. Participation and the data collected in this study will be completely confidential and anonymous. All information will be protected and secured.

I hope you will agree to participate in this study, and you may respond to this email address to enquire further details and confirm if the staff would like to participate in the study. If you need further information on this study, you may contact my supervisor, Dr SE Mthiyane whose email is: Sphiwe.Mthiyane@wits.ac.za.

Yours faithfully,

Dehmishka Moodley (Student number: 1348985)

Appendix 1.1 Information sheet for participants (Principals/Deputy principals)

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Dehmishka Moodley, and I am a Master of Education Student at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am conducting research about teacher leadership in public primary schools in the Johannesburg North district. The aim of my project is to investigate and explore the conceptualisations, practices, challenges, possibilities, and insights that exist within the schools on teacher leadership.

Your school is invited to participate in this study. If the invitation is accepted, I would like to interview five staff members in your school. These will be the school principal or the deputy principal, two HODs and two teachers. I also seek your permission to audio record all participants during the interviews. Recording will allow me to focus on the actual interview rather than being busy with writing copious notes. The information, names and data will be protected in this study. The interview will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be asking for your name or any identifying information, and the information you give will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else. I will be using pseudonyms to represent participants in my final research report. The interviews will be conducted either during or after school hours via Zoom where the research participant can attend the online meeting from their classroom or office in a free period/when they are available. The possible duration of the interview will be between 30 and 45 minutes.

I hope you will agree to participate in this study, and you may respond to this email address to enquire further details and confirm if the staff would like to participate in the study. If you need further information on this study, you may contact my supervisor, Dr SE Mthiyane whose email is: Sipiwe.Mthiyane@wits.ac.za.

Yours faithfully,

Dehmishka Moodley (Student number: 1348985)

Appendix 1.2 Information sheet for participants (HODs)

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Dehmishka Moodley, and I am a Master of Education student at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am conducting research about teacher leadership in public primary schools in the Johannesburg North district. The aim of my project is to investigate and explore the conceptualizations, practices, challenges possibilities and insights that exist within the schools on teacher leadership.

Your school is invited to participate in this study. If the invitation is accepted, I would like to interview five staff members in your school. These will be: the school principal or the deputy principal, two HODs and two teachers. I also seek your permission to audio record all participants during the interviews. Recording will allow me to focus on the actual interview rather than being busy with writing copious notes. The information, names and data will be protected in this study. The interview will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be asking for your name or any identifying information, and the information you give will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else. I will be using pseudonyms to represent participants in my final research report. The interviews will be conducted either during or after school hours via Zoom where the research participant can attend the online meeting from their classroom or office in a free period/when they are available. The possible duration of the interview will be between 30 and 45 minutes.

I hope you will agree to participate in this study, and you may respond to this email address to enquire further details and confirm if the staff would like to participate in the study. If you need further information on this study, you may contact my supervisor, Dr SE Mthiyane whose email is: Sipiwe.Mthiyane@wits.ac.za.

Yours faithfully

Dehmishka Moodley (Student number: 1348985)

Appendix 1.3 Information sheet for participants (Teachers)

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Dehmishka Moodley, and I am a Master of Education student at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am conducting research about teacher leadership in public primary schools in the Johannesburg North district. The aim of my project is to investigate and explore the conceptualisations, practices, challenges possibilities and insights that exist within the schools on teacher leadership.

Your school is invited to participate in this study. If the invitation is accepted, I would like to interview five staff members in your school. These will be: either the school principal or the deputy principal, two HODs and two teachers. I also seek your permission to audio record all participants during the interviews. Recording will allow me to focus on the actual interview rather than being busy with writing copious notes. The information, names and data will be protected in this study. The interview will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be asking for your name or any identifying information, and the information you give will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else. I will be using pseudonyms to represent participants in my final research report. The interviews will be conducted either during or after school hours via Zoom where the research participant can attend the online meeting from their classroom or office in a free period/when they are available. The possible duration of the interview will be between 30 and 45 minutes.

I hope you will agree to participate in this study and you may respond to this email address to enquire further details and confirm if the staff would like to participate in the study. If you need further information on this study, you may contact my supervisor, Dr SE Mthiyane whose email is: Sipiwe.Mthiyane@wits.ac.za.

Yours faithfully

Dehmishka Moodley (Student number: 1348985)

APPENDIX 2.1: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS/DEPUTY PRINCIPALS:

Title of project: Exploring teacher leadership in select Gauteng schools: Challenges and possibilities.

Name of researcher: Dehmishka Moodley

I,, agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

I give my consent to participate in this study and to be interviewed by the researcher. YES NO

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous. YES NO

I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report. YES NO

I agree that the interview may be audio recorded. YES NO

I agree that the information I provide may YES NO
be used anonymously after this project has
ended, for academic purposes by other
researchers, subject to their own ethics
clearance being obtained.

..... (signature)

..... (name of participant)

..... (date)

APPENDIX 2.2: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR SCHOOL HODs

Title of project: Exploring teacher leadership in select Gauteng schools: Challenges and possibilities.

Name of researcher: Dehmishka Moodley

I,, agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

I give my consent to participate in this study and to be interviewed by the researcher. YES NO

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous. YES NO

I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report. YES NO

I agree that the interview may be audio recorded. YES NO

I agree that the information I provide may be used anonymously after this project has

ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained.

..... (signature)

..... (name of participant)

..... (date)

APPENDIX 2.3: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS

Title of project: Exploring teacher leadership in select Gauteng schools: Challenges and possibilities.

Name of researcher: Dehmishka Moodley

I,, agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

I give my consent to participate in this study and to be interviewed by the researcher. YES NO

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous. YES NO

I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report. YES NO

I agree that the interview may be audio recorded. YES NO

I agree that the information I provide may be used anonymously after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained. YES NO

..... (signature)

..... (name of participant)

..... (date)

APPENDIX 3.1: INTERVIEW WITH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS/DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

Section A: Biographical Information:

(1) **Gender:** Male Female

(2) **Age group:** 20-25 25-30 30-35 35-40 40-45 50 +

(3) **Highest qualification:**

(4) **Experience (in years) at different levels:**

(i) **As a Post Level 1 Teacher:**

(ii) **As a Post Level 2 Teacher (HOD):**

(iii) **(i) As a Post Level 3 Teacher (Deputy Principal):**

(iv) **(i) As a Post Level 4 Teacher (Principal) in the current school:**

Section B: Leadership, Teaching and teacher leadership experience:

- 1) What is your understanding of the term 'leadership'?
- 2) Are you familiar with term 'teacher leadership' and if so, what do you believe it entails?
If "No", what do you think it could mean?
- 3) Could you please share with me how you practise teacher leadership in your school?
Please elaborate.
- 4) Please share with me how your school encourages and promotes teacher leadership.
Please elaborate on what you actually do.
- 5) What do you believe are some of the challenges school leaders faces (if any) relating to teacher leaders in your school? How do you overcome them?
- 6) What are the possibilities that teacher leaders face in their schools?
- 7) What are the school management structures doing to empower teachers to take more leadership roles in the schools and how do they do this?
- 8) What important qualities do you think school leaders should possess and how do these qualities contribute to a culture to success within your school?
- 9) What are your responsibilities as a school principal/deputy principal and how have these responsibilities changed or increased since the Covid-19 pandemic?

- 10) Do you think teaching is a profession with too many responsibilities, too many roles to fulfil and an overwhelming schedule? Please elaborate.
- 11) As a school leader, please share what expectations you have of your staff members in terms of leadership?
- 12) Please share your opinion regarding the recent allegations regarding bigotry (racism etc) in various South African schools and do you believe this links to teacher leaders and school staff members generally not doing enough to combat these issues?
- 13) What do you believe are some of the challenges and possibilities teacher leaders face in their schools?
- 14) Do you think you empower teachers to take more leadership roles in your school?
- 15) Do you feel that there is more pressure on a school principal/deputy principal in terms of leadership?

APPENDIX 3.2: INTERVIEW WITH HODs

Section A: Biographical Information:

Gender: Male Female

Age: 20-25 25-30 30-35 35-40 40-45 50 +

Highest qualification:

Experience (in years) at different levels:

- (v) As a Post Level 1 Teacher:
- (vi) As a Post Level 2 Teacher (HOD)

Section B: Leadership, Teaching and teacher leadership experience:

- 1) What is your understanding of the term ‘leadership’?
- 2) Are you familiar with term ‘teacher leadership’ and if so, what do you believe it entails?
If “No”, what do you think it could mean?
- 3) Could you please share with me how you practise teacher leadership in your school?
Please elaborate.
- 4) Please share with me how your school encourages and promotes teacher leadership.
Please elaborate on what you actually do.
- 5) What do you believe are some of the challenges school leaders faces (if any) relating to teacher leaders in your school? How do you overcome them?
- 6) What are the possibilities that teacher leaders face in their schools?
- 7) What are the school management structures doing to empower teachers to take more leadership roles in the schools and how do they do this?
- 8) What important qualities do you think school leaders should possess and how do these qualities contribute to a culture to success within your school?
- 9) What are your responsibilities as an HOD and how have these responsibilities changed or increased since the Covid-19 pandemic?
- 10) Do you think teaching is a profession with too many responsibilities, too many roles to fulfil and an overwhelming schedule? Please elaborate.

- 11) As a school leader, please share what expectations you have of your colleagues in terms of leadership?
- 12) Please share your opinion regarding the recent allegations regarding bigotry (racism etc) in various South African schools and do you believe this links to teacher leaders and school staff members generally not doing enough to combat these issues?
- 13) What do you believe are some of the challenges and possibilities teacher leaders face in their schools?
- 14) Do you think you empower teachers to take more leadership roles in your school and that the school and higher management power structures do this too?
- 15) Do you feel that there is more pressure on an HOD in terms of leadership?

APPENDIX 3.3: INTERVIEW WITH TEACHERS

Section A: Biographical Information:

Gender: Male Female

Age: 20-25 25-30 30-35 35-40 40-45 50 +

Highest qualification:

Experience (in years) at different levels:

(vii) As a Post Level 1 Teacher:

Section B: Leadership, Teaching and teacher leadership experience:

- 1) What is your understanding of the term ‘leadership’?
- 2) Are you familiar with term ‘teacher leadership’ and if so, what do you believe it entails?
If “No”, what do you think it could mean?
- 3) Could you please share with me how you practise teacher leadership in your school?
Please elaborate.
- 4) Please share with me how your school encourages and promotes teacher leadership.
Please elaborate on what you actually do.
- 5) What do you believe are some of the challenges school leaders faces (if any) relating to teacher leaders in your school? How do you overcome them?
- 6) What are the possibilities that teacher leaders face in their schools?
- 7) What are the school management structures doing to empower teachers to take more leadership roles in the schools and how do they do this?
- 8) What important qualities do you think school leaders should possess and how do these qualities contribute to a culture to success within your school?
- 9) What are your responsibilities as a teacher and how have these responsibilities changed or increased since the Covid-19 pandemic?
- 10) Do you think teaching is a profession with too many responsibilities, too many roles to fulfil and an overwhelming schedule? Please elaborate.
- 11) As a school leader, please share what expectations you of yourself and your colleagues?

- 12) Please share your opinion regarding the recent allegations regarding bigotry (racism etc) in various South African schools and do you believe this links to teacher leaders and school staff members generally not doing enough to combat these issues?
- 13) What do you believe are some of the challenges and possibilities teacher leaders face in their schools?
- 14) Do you think your school and higher-management power structures empower teachers to take on more leadership roles in your school?
- 15) Do you feel that there is more pressure on a teacher in terms of leadership?