

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN DEVELOPING TEACHER EMPOWERMENT  
THROUGH DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP: TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES

By

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Sarah July Saunders, declare that the contents of this thesis is my own work. My thesis has not been previously submitted for academic examination towards my qualification. It represents my opinions and not those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). I therefore declare that the citations have been duly referenced.

## **ABSTRACT**

Before the democratic dispensation in South Africa, school principals led schools single-handedly without the support of lead teachers. At the start of democracy in 1994 policy documents were implemented by the Department of Basic Education to provide a framework for democratic and distributed leadership in South African schools. This study on distributed leadership identifies the gaps in school leadership which have evolved significantly over the decades since democracy. The aim of this research was to expand on teachers' lived perceptions and experiences of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership. This study uses a qualitative approach with an interpretative research paradigm and a case study design. The key findings of the semi-structured interviews and analysis of this study indicate the emerging of shared leadership roles implemented by principals. The findings of this study on distributed leadership are related to one public school in the Western Cape district of Cape Town. The findings and results therefore provide a limited in-depth study for further research to define teachers' perceptions and experiences of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership.

**Keywords:** Principal; Leadership; Distributed leadership; Empowerment; teacher empowerment

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated firstly to my late dad and mother, Samuel and Helena Basson, who played a vital role in my life and my studies. Secondly, to my late siblings Daniel, Marie, Rose Peter and Neville, who always supported and motivated me to achieve in my studies, goals and dreams. Thank very much for your love, dedication and prayers.

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

DBE	Department of Basic Education
DOE	Department of Education
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
LMX	Leader-member exchange theory
SASP	South African Standard for Principalship
SBST	School based support team

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION, AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this interpretative, qualitative study was to describe and investigate teachers' experiences and perceptions of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership.

Chapter One discusses the introduction, background of the research, rationale, problem statement, research aims, the research questions, theoretical framework, research methodology, the keywords and the layout of the thesis.

#### 1.2. BACKGROUND

This research focuses on teachers' perceptions and experiences of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership at a primary school in the Cape Town area of the Western Cape.

The South African education system has undergone a degree of change and transformation in terms of accepted and preferred leadership styles (Sibanda, 2017:567). This transformation fostered a change in the leadership duties of the school principal (Sibanda, 2017:567). The hierarchical and bureaucratic leadership styles have become inadequate because of the transformation in the educational environment (Naicker and Mestry, 2011). The traditional command and control approaches to leadership have proven to be unsuccessful in sustaining school and learner improvements (Harris, 2005).

Before 1994 schools were led and controlled by principals only (Grant, Gardner, Kajee, Moodly and Somaroo, 2010). The principal had to manage the school on his or her own with all decisions made externally by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). Leadership in South African schools was controlled by principals and teachers were not given opportunities to participate in leadership positions (Sibanda, 2017). As stated by Sibanda (2017:567), leadership in schools became a problem because the principal was the only person who controlled the school (Sibanda, 2017). Sibanda (2017) further argues that teachers could not develop their skills and potentials in their careers. The teachers did not participate in decision making about teaching and learning (Sibanda, 2017) Teachers did not have leadership roles, because all the responsibilities rested on the shoulders of the principal (Sibanda, 2017:571). According to Fullan (2007) leadership is defined as the action of leading a group of people in an organisation by a leader. Leadership is

the relationship among all stakeholders to participate in leadership roles in the school environment (Jackson and Mariot, 2012:233). Harris (2014) describes distributed leadership as shared, collective and extended leadership that develops the capacity for change and improvement in schools.

Grant and Singh (2009:291-292) distinguished between the following types of distributed leadership. When a principal executes different duties to the teachers it is called authorised distributed leadership. Distributed leadership is more acceptable because teachers feel that they capable of doing the delegated tasks (Grant and Singh, 2009:291). Dispersed distributed leadership gives teachers more power to perform their tasks and this empowers them. This type of leadership operates from the subordinates to the senior leaders of the school (Grant and Singh, 2009). Democratic distributed leadership is more concerned with the performances and responsibilities of duties at hand (Grant and Singh, 2009).

According to the South African Schools Act 84 (1996) the principal is the head teacher and leader of a school. A principal is the head leader in charge of a school (Oxford South African Illustrated Sc The Department of Basic Education's policy on the South African Standard for Principalship (SASP, 2015) encourages principals to empower teachers by creating leadership roles for them. Empowerment is a development process that empowers and motivates an individual to make decisions and to share his or her opinions (Carl, 2012:7). This process merges with the development of skills, attitudes and knowledge within a positive and democratic climate (Carl, 2012:7). Teacher empowerment is described as a form of professionalisation which provides teachers with more authority and individual growth (Carl, 2012).

### **1.3. RATIONALE**

The motivation for undertaking this study comes firstly from an interest in understanding the roles of school principals, in particular as a teacher who has personal experience working with principals who refrain from implementing distributed or shared leadership in their schools. Harris (2009:11) suggests that principals should lead in a democratic manner by undertaking a new role in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership. This research, therefore, focuses on the perceptions of teachers in this school and how they experience the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership.

### **1.4. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

As previously discussed, after 1994 the leadership role of the school principal in South African schools changed (Spillane, 2005). The previous hierarchical and authoritarian leadership style was substituted with an inclusive, participative and consultative democratic approach (Van der Merscht and Tyala, 2008). Principals were no longer able to single-handedly lead schools to high

expectations, because of the great demands and the extensive workloads placed on them (Spillane, 2005). In order to implement particular changes, improvements, growth and development principals must influence and empower teachers within their organisations (Spillane, 2005, 2006). Sherer (2008) suggests that principals distribute their leadership to empower the teachers to become teacher leaders. Leadership in the democratic age is no longer about instructing or controlling teachers, but to work co-operatively and collaboratively to encourage teamwork, active participation and enhance empowerment (Oduro, 2004). Naicker and Mestry (2011:99) suggest that after 1994 the hierarchical leadership in South African schools was substituted by a collective leadership approach in order to cope with the new trends in education, such as school improvement and teacher empowerment. According to Naicker and Mestry (2012), the leadership by some South African principals was hierarchical because they were afraid that teachers would take control of their leadership authority. November, Alexander and Van Wyk (2010) argue that principals hold on to their power which make them hierarchical and undemocratic, and therefore a problem existed on the implementation of distributed leadership and its existence in many schools.

The South African Standard for Principalship (SASP, 2015) policy counter this historical standpoint by suggesting new and revised roles for principals in South African schools. This new and revised approach attempts to replace the hierarchical and authoritarian structures and cultures of the leadership styles embedded in South African schools. SASP, implemented by the DBE in 2015, suggests that principals work alongside all stakeholders to create shared leadership, teamwork, participation in decision making and to promote empowerment in schools. The SASP (2015) further suggests that the main task of the principal is to develop and empower himself or herself as well as the teachers by implementing distributed or shared leadership, which is discussed later in this chapter.

After teaching for more than thirty years, the researcher is still experiencing principals who continue to lead their schools undemocratically and fail to share their leadership with their teachers, creating internal problems. In the researcher's experience, principals often feel threatened that teachers will take over their leadership role and undermine their authority (Harris, 2013). A key problem area exists as to why some principal's fail to implement distributed leadership to empower their teachers. This problem does not create chances for teachers to work collectively with their principals nor to develop their own empowerment. Empowerment is an element of distributed leadership and is defined as giving subordinates the power to make decisions, which is in opposition to the traditional single, heroic leader (Camburn and Han, 2009). Studies based on distributed leadership reveal some of the main causes and obstacles in why principals fail to share their leadership with their teachers (Sibanda, 2017; Bolden, 2007; Harris, 2013). Two obstacles in the problem of distributed leadership are firstly, principals hold onto their

power (Bolden, 2007) and secondly, principals do not choose to work collectively and collaboratively with their teachers (Sibanda, 2017:571).

Elmore (2000), Gronn (2000), Mayrowetz, Murphy and Smylie (2007) all suggest that principals should share their leadership and encourage participative decision making for development in teacher empowerment, as principals cannot lead schools alone. Further research in this area is needed to contribute to the distributed role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment.

## **1.5. RESEARCH AIMS**

The aim of this research was to systematically investigate and accurately describe teachers' experiences of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership, as recommended in the SASP (2015) policy document.

### **Sub-Aims**

The following sub-aims are also described in the study.

- a. The teachers' understanding of distributed leadership and empowerment.
- b. How the teachers' experience the principal's distributed leadership role.
- c. How the teachers contribute to their own teacher empowerment.
- d. The challenges the teachers experience.
- e. The principal's role of implementing distributed leadership.

## **1.6. RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS**

This study answers the following research question and sub-questions. The key research question is stated below:

What are the teachers' experiences of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership?

The following sub-questions are also discussed:

- What are teachers' understandings of distributed leadership and teacher empowerment?
- How do the teachers' perceive and experience the principal's distributed leadership?
- What are the teachers' possible contribution to their own teacher empowerment?
- What are the challenges the teachers' perceive and experience of the principal's distributed leadership?
- What is the principal's role in developing teacher empowerment and distributed leadership?

## **1.7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The leader-member exchange theory (LMX) developed by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) is discussed in this study. Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1995) theory is a relationship-based approach to leadership. The theory suggests that leaders develop exchange relationships, influence subordinate's responsibilities and increases member work performances (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). This theory is further discussed in Chapter Two.

## **1.8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study is a qualitative interpretative paradigm approach with a case study design. An interpretative paradigm is best suited because people can describe how they experience and perceive situations (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). The research was conducted in a public primary school in the northern suburbs of the Western Cape, South Africa. The school and the participants were selected because they were easily accessible and because the school is situated in close to the researcher's home. The participants were the principal and the nine teachers. The research instruments used were individual semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Rossman and Rallis (2012) point out that coding organises the data into themes and labelling it with a term or a heading. Details of the research methodology will be discussed in Chapter Three.

## **1.9. STRUCTURE OF THESIS**

This thesis is organised into five chapters.

Chapter One is the introductory chapter in which the research is introduced by explaining the background, rationale, problem statement, research aims, research questions and structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two contains the literature review in which a theoretical framework is used to discuss the theory guiding this research. The Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) is described and underpins the study of the teachers' perceptions and experiences of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology. This chapter includes the qualitative interpretative paradigm, the site selection, the participants, methods of data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, the researcher's position and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four presents and discusses the empirical results and discussion of the qualitative data analysis.



Chapter Five presents the summary of results, recommendations and the conclusion of the research.

### **1.10. CONCLUSION**

This chapter highlights the introduction, rationale, problem statement, research aims, the theoretical framework, the research methodology and the structure of the chapters that follow. The research focuses on the teachers' perceptions and experiences of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership. In chapter two the Literature review and the Theoretical framework will be discussed.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter the background, research aims and rationale of this study were discussed. The hierarchical leadership role of school principals in South Africa was described. After 1994 the leadership role of the principal changed to a democratic and distributed leadership approach.

In the literature review the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership is described.

The literature review helps the researcher to understand the research topic of teacher empowerment through distributed leadership in schools (Athanason, Mpofu, Gitchel and Elias 2012:50) The main aim of the literature review is to assist the researcher to read and gain more information of what other authors or researchers wrote about the teachers' experiences and perceptions of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment (Creswell, 2014:27).

The following key concepts are discussed in the literature review: principal's role, empowerment, teacher empowerment, leadership as well as distributed leadership. The theoretical framework for the research is grounded in the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of Graen and Uhl-Biel (1995).

#### **2.2. THE PRINCIPAL AND HIS OR HER ROLE**

The South African Schools Act 84 (1996) describes the principal as the head teacher and leader of a school. The SASP policy (2015) suggests specific tasks for principals to develop teacher empowerment. These tasks include engaging teachers in continuous professional development to ensure school improvement, creating positive working conditions, improving teacher morale and ensuring effective communication (SASP, 2015). It is also suggested that principals be reflective and build a good personal relationship with his or her staff members (SASP, 2015). The principal should show commitment to empowering themselves as well as the teachers (SASP, 2015).

Furthermore, the principal should embrace the philosophy of Ubuntu and humanness and work alongside with all stakeholders, with the overall responsibility to build a professional learning community in the school (SASP, 2015). The SASP (2015) responded to the demands for the provision of support to school principals as a key aspect of improving effectiveness in leadership in the education system. The SASP (2015) prepares principals to deal with these changing processes and to improve the quality of education in the restructured education system. Grant et

al. (2010) point out that after 1994 there has been a change in South African school leadership. A more distributive and collaborative practice of leadership need to be implemented to encourage principals to lead schools effectively (Grant et al, 2010).

The role of the principal involves organising, planning of effective teaching and learning in schools (Huber, 2004:670; McBeath, Oduro and Waterhouse, 2004:377). Leithwood and Riehl (2003) suggest that principals should provide opportunities for teachers to participate in shared and democratic decision making of school development issues and to develop collaborative leadership roles.

### **2.3. EMPOWERMENT AND TEACHER EMPOWERMENT**

Empowerment is a development and growth process that empowers and motivates a person to make decisions and to share his or her opinions (Carl, 2012: 7). Gore (1989:5-6), cited in Carl (2012:7), defines teacher empowerment as a form of professionalisation which provides teachers with more authority and individual growth. Empowerment is an element of distributed leadership and is defined as giving subordinates the power to make decisions, which is in opposition to the traditional single heroic leader” (Camburn and Han, 2009). Teacher empowerment supports and encourages liberal humanism which enables an individual to have a vision and goal to change and improve the school environment they are in (Carl 2012: 7). This process of empowerment merges with the development of skills, attitudes and knowledge within a positive and democratic environment (Carl, 2012: 7). Keiser and Shen (2000) state that teacher empowerment increases the job performance, productivity and morale of teachers as well as learner motivation and performance.

Empowered teachers believe their involvement is genuine and their opinions are considered and as a result they grow professionally (Heck and Hallinger, 2009). Teacher empowerment occurs when teachers work collectively with the principal and engage in leadership roles (Hatcher, 2005).

Bogler and Nir (2012) claim that when principals empower his or her teachers and build a supportive and democratic environment it leads to school successes and good learner performances. Empowerment makes real change in teacher professional expertise, enhance teacher morale and encourages greater involvement in decision making in schools (Boger and Nir, 2012). Kimwarey, Chirure and Omondi (2014) argue that an empowered person is able to develop and improve his or her skills, potential and knowledge. Teacher empowerment enhances the professional development of all teachers (Kimwarey et al., 2014).

According to Moye, Henkin and Egley (2005) good communication skills is essential in a school and the principal must encourage trusting relationships to empower teachers and develop a communal school environment.

## 2.4. LEADERSHIP

According to Fullan (2007) leadership is defined as the action of leading a group of people in an organisation by a leader. Jackson and Mariot (2012:233) indicate that leadership is the relationship among all members in a school and everyone has a part to play. Hoadly, Christie and Ward (2009:377) point out that leadership allows all stakeholders to participate in the organisational structures within a school. Artifacts include the school's vision, goals and expectations (Spillane, 2007). A leader needs to encourage good communication between himself or herself and his or her followers to achieve the vision, mission and culture of the school (Van De Venter and Kruger, 2010:75). Fullan (2007) emphasises that good leaders require flexibility and a willingness to change their style to handle complex situations as they arise.

According to Meador (2019) the successes of great school leadership are: Leaders need to lead by example and carry themselves inside and outside of the school with professionalism and dignity. Leaders need to have a shared vision for continuous improvement that guides his or her followers on how they operate and be passionate about what they do, be well respected, and be problem solvers (Meador, 2019). An effective school leader, therefore, is selfless because he or she puts others first. A leader makes decisions that may not necessarily benefit themselves, but instead encourages others to also be part of decision making in teaching and learning (Meador, 2019). Furthermore, leaders are extraordinary listeners, who have an open-door policy, and understand what ideas others have, which can be shared (Meador, 2019). Leaders need to adapt to change and should not be afraid to understand individual strengths and weaknesses and provide professional development and training in areas where improvement and growth are needed to make those around them better (Meador, 2019). Finally, good leaders create goals and give teachers ongoing guidance and support (Meador, 2019).

Spillane and Healey (2010) view leadership as continuous change and improvement in schools. Cook (2014) argues that a good school is controlled by an outstanding leader who promotes all stakeholders to perceive their skills and strengths in teaching and learning. Harris and Spillane (2008) therefore share that leadership is the interaction of all members in an organisation. The principal's role is no longer simply about being the leader, but to focus on building teams that include teachers, support staff and even student leaders (Harris and Spillane, 2008). Hermann (2016:17) contends that the responsibility of a leader should not fall on one person but on the interconnection of all stakeholders in an organisation. Successful leaders accept a collaborative culture and delegate both responsibility and authority (Copland, 2003). Hermann (2016:18) further emphasises that leaders develop the leadership of others by giving their followers opportunities to grow and develop through the process of leading and empowerment. Constructive leaders develop a network of leadership roles to all and constantly check and monitor that the roles are

performed effectively (Leithwood, Mascall and Strauss, 2009). Leaders influence the actions of followers and followers in return influence the leaders' actions. (Spillane and Diamond, 2007).

## **2.5. DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP**

Distributed leadership is described as interdependent interaction among all stakeholders in an organisation (Harris, 2014). Distributed leadership is not concerned about independent leadership relationship practices (Harris, 2014). Furthermore, distributed leadership is about the practice of leadership rather than specific leadership roles and responsibilities (Harris, 2014). Harris (2013) and Spillane (2005:143) both describe distributed leadership as shared leadership among other stakeholders and not by a single person. Distributed leadership encourages leadership skills and to bring about and create opportunities for change and improvement in schools (Harris, 2014). Harris (2014:12) furthermore views distributed leadership as expertise, knowledge and skills rather than leadership by role or years of experience.

Distributed leadership is practiced at schools when all teachers take up leadership roles (Spillane, 2006; Grant et al., 2010:57; Jackson and Mariot, 2012:237). Distributed leadership should therefore, involve every staff member in a school situation and teamwork should be encouraged (Grant et al., 2010:401). Distributed leadership should be collective and everyone should participate in a leadership role in the school (Naicker and Mestry, 2011:99; Muronga, 2011:20).

In addition, distributed leadership highlights the interdependence and interconnectedness of stakeholders (Harris, 2005; Spillane, 2006). This interconnectedness shifts the focus from individual to the interaction and collective activities between leaders and followers in a school environment (Harris, 2005; Spillane, 2006).

Distributed leadership practice is the collective involvement and participation of the multitude and Spillane (2006) called it the "leader plus perspective." According to Spillane (2006) the "leader plus perspective" is the cooperation of all and everyone who has a hand in leadership practice. Spillane (2006) further explained that the "leader plus" aspect indicates that all individuals have a leadership role. By adopting these leadership practices working relationships are substantial and more effective than working as an individual (Spillane, 2006). Harris (2008:47) notes the following, "While many people have the proficiency, skills and potential to employ leadership the main objective will be the way that leadership is executed in an organisation." According to Spillane (2006) leadership is spread and shared in different ways but most importantly the main focus is on how leadership is conducted and performed in the situation. Furthermore, Spillane (2006:126) argues "that it is essential to understand that leadership practice embraces interacting and interdependence relationships which is more constructive and productive than individual

relationships.” Harris (2009) takes a similar view when she argues that the impact of distributed leadership on the organisation depends on the performances and responsibilities of leadership roles. Drawing on the research findings of Leithwood and Mascall (2008), Harris (2009) suggests essential conditions for the distribution of leadership responsibilities. Firstly, leadership needs to be distributed to those who have, or can develop, the knowledge or skill required to carry out the leadership tasks expected of them’ and secondly, that those with leadership roles conduct their duties with enthusiasm and proficiency (Harris, 2009:26).

Principals need to be aware of his or her teachers’ skills, talents, strengths and knowledge and empower them to be involved in school leadership roles (Harris, 2004: 13). The teachers should thus be given opportunities to be teacher leaders (Grant & Singh, 2009; Grant et al.,2010). Choi and Schurr (2014) suggest that teachers’ morale and teacher leadership are enhanced when distributed leadership is practiced in schools. Distributed leadership, therefore, motivates all stakeholders to feel empowered and make them feel worthy members of the school environment (Hughes and Pickeral, 2013). According to Harris (2008) benefits of distributed leadership include strengthening individual skills, leadership development, self-determination and interdependence. Litner (2008) stresses that” principals should encourage teachers to participate in all teaching and learning decisions to promote empowerment through distributed leadership.” Furthermore, distributed leadership involves activities and interactions across many groups or teams of people (Camburn, Rowan and Taylor, 2003; Copland, 2003; Spillane, Halverson and Diamond, 2004). A network of leaders within a school is described as an improvement and positive change in education practices (Scribner, Sawyer, Watson and Myers, 2007). Therefore, leaders perform a variety of functions that are spread across the organisation which are both formal and informal (Hermann, 2016).” Distributive leadership is described as the relationship that exists ‘between vertical and lateral leadership processes’ and the focus is on the interaction between these processes” (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins, 2006: 36).

Furthermore, distributed leadership requires principals who can establish and promote a collaborative school culture and encourage trust relationships (Glanz, 2006). According to Hopkins and Jackson (2003:100), Botha and Triegaardt (2014) and Barth (2001:85) teachers have the potential to contribute meaningfully and successfully towards leadership practices. Hopkins and Jackson (2003:100) suggest that “school leaders need to create a positive organisational condition and climate by providing support to unleash ‘the kinetic and potential’ energies of leadership”. Woods (2005:92) describes distributed leadership as the “structural support for democratic leadership, which is characterised by change and improvement in the school environment”. Woods (2005:88) further defines distributed leadership when principals create opportunities for all teaches to participate and be involved in leadership roles. Woods (2005:92) suggests that “these free spaces provide teachers with a chance to challenge the notion

that those higher up on the hierarchical ladder are the only acceptable carriers and producers of truth”.

Sibanda (2017:568) concludes that “distributed leadership occurs when everyone in a school situation is allocated a leadership role which is referred to as “social distribution of power and influence within a school.” Responsibilities and tasks are shared and distributed among all members and not managed by an individual (Harris, 2013). Every person is a leader and interdependent relationships are practised in the school culture (Sibanda, 2017:568). The application of distributed leadership improves teaching and learning in schools as well the empowerment of teachers (Sibanda, 2017:569). Teachers can learn new skills and knowledge of teaching and learning and develop in their profession (Sibanda, 2017:568).

According to Harris (2005a:169) “distributed leadership promotes the development of ‘collegial norms’ amongst teachers which contribute to school effectiveness and provide teachers with the source of authority.” There is, therefore, a definite connection between school improvement and distributed leadership (Harris, 2003a:7). Harris and Lambert (2003:10) describe how distributed leadership moves beyond limits of leadership and enhances higher levels of teacher involvement, utilising a wide variety of expertise, knowledge and skills. Leithwood et al. (2009) further argue that high performing schools use distributed leadership to motivate teacher involvement. In addition, Leithwood and Mascall (2008:546), Botha (2016) and Hallinger and Heck (2009) all contend that research evidence reveals that distributed leadership has a significant effect on learners’ achievements and results. Harris (2014) points out that real distributed leadership results in trust relationships, effective communication and respect among the teachers and the principal. Distributed leadership is therefore a focus on collective influence (Harris, 2014).” It is not an accidental by-product of high performing schools but rather contributes to school success and improved performances” (Hargreaves and Harris, 2010; Hargreaves, Boyle and Harris, 2014). Jones and Harris (2013) stress that when teachers and the principal work collectively together in a school it results in good learner achievements. Distributed leadership is achievable through careful planning, design and discipline (Collins and Hansen, 2011). Hermann (2016) contends that “distributed leadership not only focuses on the characteristics of the leader but also on how all the role players perform their tasks and how these tasks are shared in the organisation. Additionally, Hermann (2016) points out that leadership from a distributed perspective means viewing leadership activities as a situated and social process at the intersection of leaders, followers and the situation.

According to Harris (2009) “some leaders use distributed leadership for creating leadership roles, while others use it for organisational structure.” As a result of increased demands on leaders in schools and changes in demands on educational organisations the term “distributed leadership”

is being used more often (Harris, 2008). Distributed leadership happens when different individuals in a school system have varying skills, competencies, training and experiences and strengths that can potentially motivate teachers, improve instructional practice and positively influence student achievement (Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins, 2008). Botha and Triegaardt (2014) argue that distributed leadership empowers all to lead and encourage teamwork as everyone shares their opinions and views in various areas of leadership.

Sheppard, Hurley and Dibbon (2010) conclude that distributed leadership increases teacher enthusiasm, teacher morale and positively influences attitudes towards work. Harris (2013) highlights that distributed leadership includes strengthening individual skills, leadership development, self-determination and interdependence. Distributed leadership, therefore, encourages the teachers to become empowered in the school's decision-making processes. Job satisfaction and commitment to the school are likely to increase, which in turn leads to positive student behaviours and learning outcomes (Harris, 2013). According to Spillane (2006) both formal and informal groups in organisations need to connect and interact to encourage teamwork and shared communication. For Spillane (2006), distributed leadership is essential to the teaching and learning processes. "The distributed structure involves two main areas which are "principal-plus" and "practice" (Spillane, 2006)." Leadership does not involve only those in top leadership positions such as the traditional "leader-follower" dualism in which leaders lead "followers" but it motivates multiple persons to participate (Bolden, 2011)." "Spillane and Diamond's (2007) distributed leadership perspective is neither a top-down nor a bottom-up approach." Rather, it involves many different individuals to be involved in leadership roles (Spillane & Diamond, 2007).

Hermann (2016: 20) concludes that distributed leadership practice in the figure 2.1 below shows the three main factors that form the distributed leadership in organisations and schools. Situations are the day-to-day experiences and tasks completed by the principal and followers, who are the teachers (Hermann, 2016: 21).





Figure 2.1 The three basic factors that form the distributed leadership practice (Hermann, 2016:21).

Spillane, Hunt and Healy (2009) indicate that distributed leadership practice is the interaction of leaders, followers and the situations. Distributed leadership is the mutual relationship among all stakeholders in an organisation (Spillane and Diamond, 2007). Hermann (2016) reveals that the task of the principal is to identify and acknowledge teacher leadership roles and to support and guide them in their leadership responsibilities. In accordance, Gunter, Hall and Bragg (2013) state that it is the duty of a leader to share his or her leadership responsibilities and empower others to also participate in leadership roles. Implementing professional development and creating leadership opportunities to all stakeholders in an organisation are a few examples of how distributed leadership should occur (Leithwood et.al., 2009).

Hermann (2016) suggests that principals play a key role in distributed leadership within their schools because it is a team effort, rather than individual action. Bolden, Hawkins, Gosling and Taylor (2011: 36) observe that “distributed leadership is inclusive and collaborative in a school system, where the principal, teachers and parents work and learn together.” Distributed leadership focuses on the interactions between people in a team or at a collective level rather than individuals (Spillane, 2008). Furthermore, distributed leadership can contribute to improved student achievement if it is implemented correctly (Botha, 2016).

Research studies have shown positive results in organisations and schools where distributed leadership has been administered (Szeto and Cheng, 2017). The positive results of distributed leadership are the teachers are motivated and empowered to make decisions collectively about teaching and learning and the learners' achievements have improved (Szeto & Cheng, 2017). Konsolas, Asastasiou and Loukeri (2014) assert that the outcomes of distributed leadership increase the motivation and empowerment of teachers. This motivation leads to a connection, a strong union of trust and support between the principal and the teachers which then leads to change in leadership and improvements in schools (Konsolas et al., 2014). Distributed leadership encourages teachers and principal to feel appreciated and beneficial in the school (Hughes & Pickeral, 2013). Hughes and Pickeral (2013) further contend that distributed leadership gives rise to members and all stakeholders to work collectively and successfully to create change and improvements in schools.

The figure 2.2 below shows how distributed leadership is executed in an organisation (Hermann, 2016). The role of the principal in building relationships, leadership opportunities, teamwork and collaboration are shown in the figure (Hermann, 2016:21).

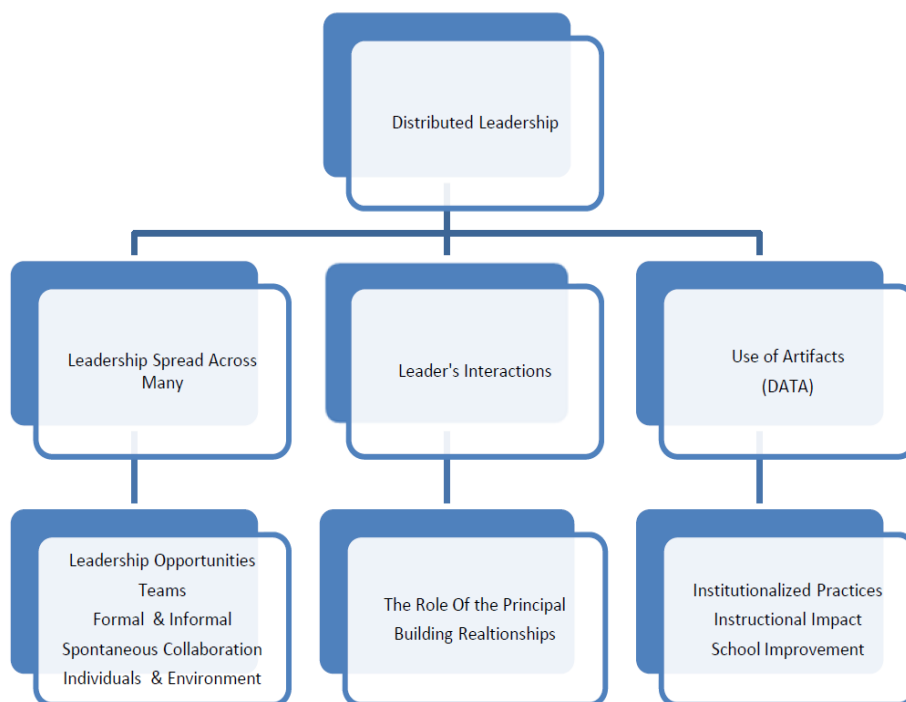


Figure 2.2 shows how leadership is spread across leader's, interactions of team members and the use of artifacts (Hermann, 2016: 21).

As previously mentioned, the artifacts include the school's vision, mission and goals (Spillane, 2007). Distributed leadership focuses on how the leader and followers work together to solve a

problem and to achieve their mission, vision and goals (Hermann, 2016). Hermann (2016) further contends that when distributed leadership is implemented in the school the principal has a better understanding of which tasks should be distributed and who should participate in leadership roles. “Furthermore, the use of artifacts ensure the smooth running of teaching and learning in the school.” (Hermann, 2016).”

Figure 2.3 below shows how distributed leadership is spread across many in organisations (Hermann, 2016).



Figure 2.3 The main ways in which distributed leadership is spread (Hermann, 2016:22).

“The principal is the initiator behind the distribution of leadership roles in schools (Gronn, 2002). Gronn (2002) refers to “this distribution as a collective leadership approach where many members are given opportunities to participate in leadership roles in the school.” Gronn’s (2002) belief of “concertive action fosters an environment where people work together for the good of the organisation rather than work in isolation.” “Three forms of concertive action can take place when distributed leadership occurs, namely spontaneous collaboration, intuitive working relations and institutionalised practice (Hermann, 2016:17).” A network of leaders and teamwork should be created to implement distributed leadership (Scribner et al., 2007). The research conducted by Scribner et al. (2007) reveals that the interactions between individuals on teams results in a better understanding of leadership. Volante (2012) suggests that the benefits of distributed leadership is that decisions and opinions are made collectively about teaching and learning in a school. Northhouse (2016:365) notes that “shared leadership encourages team effectiveness and create leadership roles in an organisation.”

Figure 2.4 below shows the responsibilities and tasks of the head leader who principal who is the principal of the school (Hermann, 2016). The figure 2.4 also shows the responsibilities of the team members (Hermann, 2016).

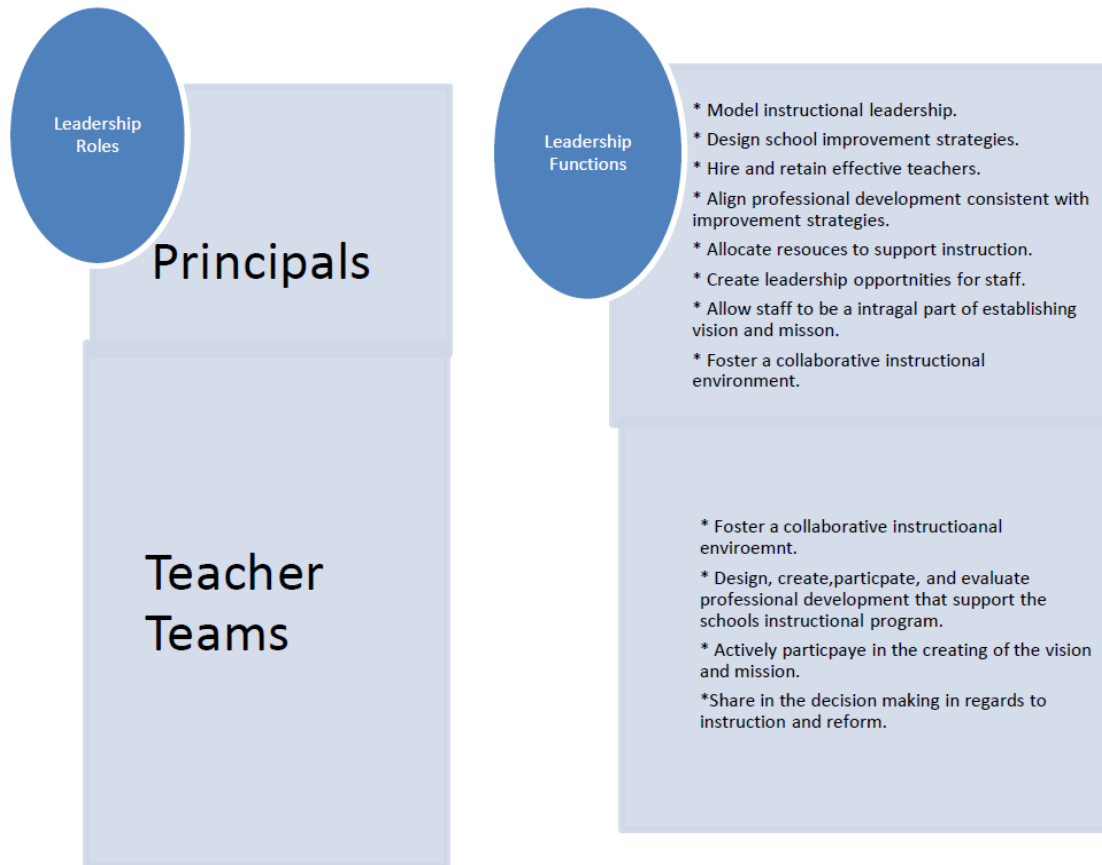


Figure 2.4 The leadership and distributed leadership roles and functions of the school principal and team members (Hermann, 2016:27).

Principals cannot lead alone (Spillane and Diamond, 2007) and therefore should encourage a collective school culture and delegate responsibilities to teachers (Copland, 2003). Principals must develop the leadership of others in making and creating leadership responsibilities and tasks to empower teachers (Hermann, 2016). Allowing others to be empowered the leader needs to be willing to share his or her power and authority (Hermann, 2016). “Decision making in organisations and schools should involve all stakeholders to solve problems and issues” (Northhouse, 2016). Distributed leadership is challenging and problematic and principals who do not begin with it will have difficulty in creating leadership roles for teachers (Murphy, Smylie, Mayrowetz and Louis, 2009). Distributed leadership focuses on how the leader and his or her followers work together to solve a problem collectively (Hermann, 2016). “When distributed leadership works well, individuals are accountable and responsible for their leadership actions, new leadership roles are created and teamwork becomes the *modus operandi* and inter-dependent working a cultural norm (Harris, 2014).”

## **2.5 TEACHERS' CHALLENGES OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP**

Distributed leadership can be devastating and harmful if it is not implemented correctly in organisations and schools (Harris, 2013). The outcomes of distributed leadership can be both positive and negative (Harris, 2013). Harris and De Fleminis (2016:143) note that distributed leadership is not a solution or panacea because it depends on how it is implemented and executed in organisations. In addition, Harris and De Fleminis (2016) as well as Lumby (2013) argue that some principals view distributed leadership as a way of exploiting teachers by giving them more work than what they are supposed to do. Harris and De Fleminis (2016) further argue that distributed leadership does not mean that everyone is capable of a leadership role, but it is for those members who are knowledgeable and skilled in leadership responsibilities. In many schools distributed leadership is not implemented because principals do not want to work collectively with the teachers and hold onto their power (Bolden, 2007). Harris (2013) further emphasises that some teachers compromise the power of the principal." In distributed leadership a balance of control is needed so no person can impair and compromise the responsibilities and role of formal leaders" (Harris, 2013). Williams (2011:198) notes that distributed leadership can be problematic because some principals do not practice democratic leadership in their schools.

## **2.6. INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP**

In the United Kingdom, United States of America, Australia, parts of Europe and New Zealand, distributed leadership has been put into practice at many schools (Harris, 2013). "Distributed leadership is described as an organisational principal which includes shared, team and democratic leadership" (Harris, 2013). Distributed leadership has been implemented in Wales and school performances have improved (Harris, 2014). Distributed leadership has been attributed to education reform occurring in these countries (Harris, 2013). "In the United Kingdom distributed leadership has been reformed into new models of schooling such as federations, partnerships, networking and multi-agency working" (Harris, 2013). "Distributed leadership is also associated with democratic and equitable forms of schooling in the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries" (Harris, 2013).

## **2.7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1995) the leader-member (LMX) theory is used to underpin this research. The LMX theory was chosen due to its relevance to the leadership role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership. The theory is relevant to my study of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership because it explains the effects of leadership and relationships on team members in an organisation (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1995:219) LMX theory is a relationship-based approach to leadership that focuses on the two-way (dyadic relationship) between leaders and team members. The theory suggests that leaders develop exchange relationships, influence subordinates' responsibilities and decision making and increase work performances (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995).

The figure 2.5 below shows the relationship that develops between the leader and team members.

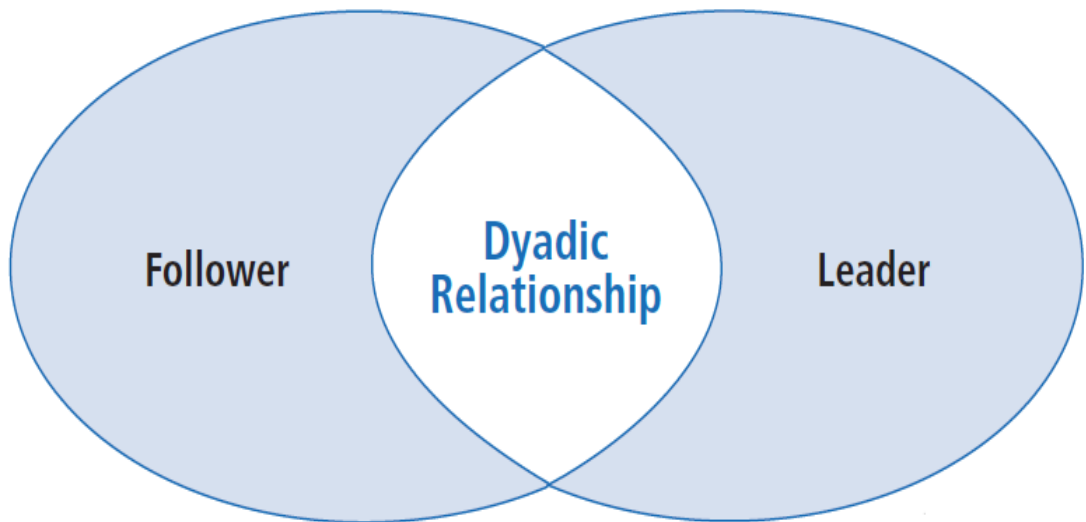


Figure 2.5 This figure indicates how the leader forms dyadic relationships with the members of an organisation (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995).

The figure 2.6 below also shows the vertical dyadic relationships of leaders and team members.

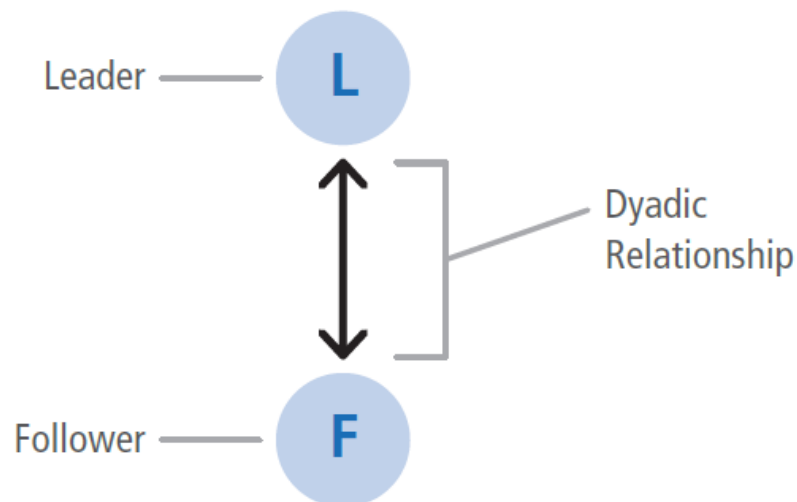


Figure 2.6 A vertical dyadic indicates the leader forming a relationship the (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995).

The theory was first developed by Dansereau, Graen and Haga (1975). The authors called the theory the vertical dyad linkage theory (Dansereau et al., 1975). The vertical dyad linkage theory has evolved over time and has changed to the LMX theory by (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995:222) use four stages to explain how their LMX theory has developed over time. The four stages of Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1995) LMX theory are as follows: stage one covers work socialisation and the vertical dyadic linkage, with the main focus on "in-groups" and "out-groups"; stage two focuses on the quality of the leader-member relationship and its

outcomes; stage three is building dyadic relationships, and stage four moves beyond the dyad level with researchers assessing it at group and network levels with leaders and team members.

### **Stage One: The vertical dyadic linkage**

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) reveal that research into issues relating to leader-member theory started with studies on socialisation and vertical dyadic linkage found that many leadership processes in organisations occur on a dyadic basis. Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1995) LMX theory relates to the mutual relationship of respect and trust that develops between the leader who is the principal and teachers at the school. Longitudinal studies of leadership teams were conducted and leaders and their followers were asked to describe their leader's behaviour and leadership styles (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). The team members describe "high-quality exchanges" or "in-groups" by showing mutual trust and respect towards the leader. "Low-quality exchanges" or the "out-group" is characterised by showing low trust and low respect towards the leader (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). According to Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) early vertical dyadic research shows that relationships were a result of the leader's limited time and social resources which allowed him or her to form only a few "high-quality exchange" relationships.

### **Stage Two: Leader-member exchange**

In the second stage the vertical dyadic linkage shifted to the leader-member theory (LMX). Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). The mutual relationships have moved to the roles and responsibilities played by the principal and the teachers to develop leadership and teacher empowerment Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) define the central concepts of LMX research which reveals how the development of LMX relationships are influenced by how leaders and members play their role in the organisation. This then develops high-quality relationships with positive outcomes for leaders, members and the organisation Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995)

### **Stage Three: Leadership-making**

Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1995) research into the third stage moved beyond the "in-group" and "out-group" and focused on producing effective leadership processes through the development of leadership relationships. In the third stage shows support and encouragement to empower the teachers to execute their duties and roles effectively (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). According to Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) the main aim of the LMX theory is that leaders should make high-quality leader-member relationships available to all members. This stage uses the leadership making model to provide leadership roles and create leadership development. The leadership making model analysed that leaders need to be trained to give all their subordinates the opportunity to develop a high-quality relationships (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). The results revealed that the performance of subordinates who took advantage of the opportunity to develop



high quality relationships reinforced how the LMX improved. The third stage is characterised by loyalty, support and encouragement, trust and empowerment from the leader.

#### **Stage Four: Team-making**

In the fourth stage Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) propose using a systems-level perspective to investigate how dyadic relationships combine to form larger, network systems. “These networks make up the “leadership structure” or the “pattern of leadership” relationships among individuals throughout the organisation.” Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) further emphasise that leadership structures start from the network of relationships and mutual dependencies and develop when members fulfil roles and complete tasks. This stage analyses task interdependencies of team work between the principal and the teachers to develop teacher empowerment to create task performances in the school (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). Graen and Uhl-Bien’s (1995) research therefore indicates that effective leadership relationships have a large impact on the task performances of members.

The original work done by Graen and Uhl- Bien, (1995) based on role-making and role-taking processes, was further developed by Graen, Uhl-Bien and Scandura (2000) which showed how leader-follower dyads transform from individual interest to shared interest based on the development of trust, respect and obligations to each other. Graen and Uhl-Bien (2006) view organisations as systems of interdependent relationships, with the importance of formal and informal influences on individuals, teamwork and network flows of behaviour. Shared or distributed leadership focuses on groups whereas leader-member exchange theory (LMX) focuses on the relationship between the leader and the follower (Coglise and Schriesheim, 2000). Leadership happens when leaders and followers develop effective relationships and the results have shown higher levels of performance and organisational behaviours (Sparrowe, Soetjijpto and Kraimer, 2006). Uhl-Bien (2003) describes that “how high-quality dyadic relationships enable the leader to recognise the skills and talents of his or her followers”. “The relational focus of the LMX theory can help in identifying the correct people to perform leadership roles in an organisation” (Uhl-Bien, 2003). “The LMX theory acknowledges leadership and is not restricted to a single or even small set of formal or informal leaders” (Uhl-Bien, 2003).

Furthermore, Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) point out that the LMX theory creates a transformative collaboration between leaders and their followers. The theory of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) has been described as both transactional and transformational, creating effective relationship behaviours in both parties (Power, 2013). Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang and Chen (2005) describe their study of transformational leadership in organisations throughout China as high quality dyadic relationships. High-quality LMX relationships are associated with transformational leaders, effective task performances, increased organisational citizenship behaviours and increased

willingness amongst followers to take on extra roles and become more motivated to do their jobs (Wang et al., 2005). According to Wang et al. (2005) “the LMX theory makes transformational leadership more personally meaningful for the follower.” Power (2013) concludes that “high quality LMX relationships can enable leaders to identify passions of individual academic faculty and thereafter draw upon these passions to foster a sense of organisational citizenship and transformational collaboration.”

Masllyn, Schyns and Farmer (2017) note that within an organisation, followers become part of the “in-group” or “out-group” based on how well they worked with the leader and how well the leader works with his or her team members. Graen and Uhl-Bien’s (1995) LMX theory is based on relationships which are different with each member. High quality relationships are part of the “in group” while those experiencing lower quality relationships are “out group” members (Lunenburg, 2010). Lunenburg (2010:12) argues that the “in group” followers enjoy increased job satisfaction, open communication and greater confidence from leaders, whereas relationships with “out-group” followers are opposite in comparison to those who are part of the group. Therefore, leaders should develop high-quality relationships to empower many team members (Lunenburg, 2010).

Furthermore, researchers found that Graen and Uhl-Bien’s (1995) LMX theory on high-quality leader-member exchanges produced less employee turnover, more positive job performance, promotions, greater organisational commitment, better work attitudes, more attention and support from the leaders, greater participation in work performances and faster career progress (Buch, Kuvaas, Dysvik and Schyns, 2014; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden, Wayne and Stilwell, 1993; Malik, Wan, Ahmad, Naseem and Rehman, 2015).

Lunenburg (2010) cites some suggestions from Krietner and Keninki (2010) on how leaders can develop high-quality relationships with their followers. Building mutual trust between leaders and followers is important in creating high- quality relationships (Lunenburg, 2010). Through trust followers show shared commitment to the vision, mission and culture of the organisation. (Lunenburg, 2010). The vision, mission and objectives adopt transformation, which is meaningful for leaders and followers in the organisation (Wang et al., 2005). In a meta-analysis of 164 LMX studies, Gertner and Day (1997) found that leader-member exchange is closely related to work satisfaction, professional growth and work commitment.

Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (2011) share ideas on how to help build high-quality leader-member exchange relationships with Graen and Uhl- Bien’s (1995) LMX theory. In stage one the leader meets with the follower. The leader allows the team member to evaluate his or her own potential and skills to establish their role in the organisation (Schermerhorn et al., 2011). In stage two mutual respect and trust relationships develop between the leader and the follower. In stage three followers show mutual commitment to the vision, mission and objectives of the organisation

(Schermerhorn et al., 2011). The followers show more commitment, trust, respect and persuasion towards the leader (Schermerhorn et al., 2011). Stage five includes the day-to-day observations, discussions and work towards increasing the number of “in-group” members. (Schermerhorn et al., 2011). The authors emphasise the mutual trust and relationships that develop between the principal and the teachers (Schermerhorn et al., 2011). The principal empowers the teachers to develop their skills and knowledge in the different roles and duties they perform at the school (Schermerhorn et al., 2011).

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1991) further suggest that leadership-making develops in three phases. These are:

Phase One – “The stranger phase. Leaders and team members relate to each other within prescribed organisational roles and the motives of the team members are directed more towards self-interest than for the good of the group” (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1991).

Phase Two – “The acquaintance phase. The leader or the team member encourages career-orientated social exchanges, which involves sharing resources and work-related information” (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1991).

Phase Three – “The mature partnership phase. This phase is marked by high quality leader-member exchanges, and a high degree of mutual trust, respect and obligation towards each other.” “The leader and the members tested their relationship and found that they can depend on each other” (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1991). Graen and Uhl-Bien (1991) explains how the principal has to empower the teachers in power sharing leadership relationships to become interdependent upon each other.

Researchers Kreitner and Kinicki (2010:76) suggest the following ways to improve the quality of the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, as stated below:

Remain focused and positive on your goals and how to achieve them. Do not fall prey to feeling powerless and empower yourself and your followers. Focus on circumstances you can control and avoid dwelling on circumstances you cannot control (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2010). Work on improving your relationship with your team members through trust and effective communication. You can increase trust by following through on your commitments and achieving your goals. Use an authentic, respectful and assertive approach to resolve differences. This is useful to a problem-solving approach when disagreements arise (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2010:76).

Kreitner and Kinicki (2010) describe how the teachers and the principal need to communicate effectively to achieve their goals and responsibilities to develop teacher empowerment.

Hill, Kang and Seo (2014) suggest that the importance of communication between leaders and followers enhances employee empowerment. Stronger communication between leaders and followers resulted in positive leader-member relationships (Hill et al., 2014). Omilion-Hodges and Baker (2017) analysed leader communication behaviours and developed scales to evaluate how these behaviours can affect the growth or stagnation of leader-member relationships. Ilies, Nahrgang and Morgeson (2007) completed a meta-analysis of 51 research studies to explore the relationships between leader-member exchange and employee citizenship behaviours. They also found a positive relationship between the leaders and members (Ilies, Nahrgang and Morgeson, 2007). Malik et al. (2015) reveal that researchers also studied how the LMX theory of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) relate to the empowerment of staff members. Harris, Wheeler and Kacmar (2009) explored how empowerment and professional development influence the impact of leader-member exchange on job satisfaction, job performance, organisational behaviours. Furthermore, Herman and Troth's (2013) empirical findings of the emotional experiences described by followers in high and low quality LMX relationships showed that positive relationships benefit organisational and personal leadership goals.

Ilies et al. (2007) conducted a leader-member relationship study and found that leaders look for followers who show enthusiasm and participation in a group. In turn followers look for leaders who are pleasant, trusting, co-operative and agreeable (Ilies et al., 2007). Sheer (2009) and Baker and Sheer (2013) suggest the importance of social interaction and communication between leaders and followers to ensure positive working relationships.

As has been shown, Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1995) LMX theory can, therefore, make a positive contribution to the way leaders interact with their team members in organisations. There are, however, some principals who refrain from implementing distributed leadership in their schools, as they prefer to hold onto their power (Bolden, 2007) and feel that teachers will undermine their authority (Harris, 2013). Principals should, however, implement distributed leadership relationship to empower their teachers.

## **2.8. CRITIQUE OF THE LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE THEORY**

Over the years, Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1995) LMX theory and research has been a target of criticism due to the different forms of measures used to assess the theory since it was first proposed (Yukl, 2006). Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) and Schriesheim, Castro and Cogliser (1999) agree that many questions have been raised about the way leader-member exchanges in LMX theory are measured. There have been no empirical studies conducted which measure the dyadic relationships and analyse the LMX process accurately (Schriesheim, Castro, Zhou and

Yammarino, 2001). Furthermore, the content validity of the scales used in different research conducted have come into question (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Schriesheim et al., 2001).

The LMX theory has also been criticised for failing to conceptualise the social context in which leaders and followers are embedded (Hogg, Martin & Weeden, 2004:22). The LMX theory focuses on the relationships between the leader-follower without acknowledging that each dyadic relationship occurs within a system of other relationships (Cogliser and Schriesheim, 2000; Yukl, 2006). Another criticism is that most of the LMX research uses correlation designs which lack causal results (Cogliser and Schriesheim, 2000).

The LMX theory has also been criticised for not accurately measuring and assessing the performances of leaders and followers (Erdogan and Liden, 2002). Chen, Tjosvold and Liv (2006) suggest that the LMX theory needs to extend to more work on national cultures to implement co-operative goal setting and interdependence in organisations. The theory does not fully explain how high-quality leader-member exchanges are created (Anand, Hu, Liden & Vidyarathi, 2011). Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien (2012) have carried out research into the construction of the LMX relationship, but more work needs to be done to substantiate and clarify guidelines.

“Based on an examination of 147 studies of leader-member exchange, Schriesheim et al. (1999) and Cogliser (1999) conclude that improved theorisation on leader-member exchange and its basic processes are still needed.”Uhl-Bien, Maslyn and Ospina (2012) suggest the need for further understanding of how high and low-quality relationships develop in leader-member exchanges. Lunenburg (2010) acknowledges that low-quality dyadic relationships lead to conflict and resentment between leaders and followers. Most researchers have not adequately explained the contextual factors that may have an impact on LMX relationships (Anand et al., 2011).

According to Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber (2009) there is no well-defined, unified leadership theory as different leadership theories have been used and have all been criticised. Avolio et al., (2009) further state that there is no single leadership theory that is perfect and that has remained unchallenged. The shortcomings and the critique of the LMX theory can be addressed when further studies are done in this area.

## **2.9. CONCLUSION**

In the literature review the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment has been fully described. The literature was drawn from national and international sources which included books and research journals. The following keywords were discussed, namely principal, empowerment, leadership and distributed leadership. The LMX theory which underpins the research is also described. In chapter three the Research design and Methodology will be discussed.

## **CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

In chapter 2 the literature review and theoretical framework were fully discussed and described. In the theoretical framework the leader-member exchange theory (LMX), developed by Graen and Uhl Bien (1995:219), was used to underpin this research. This theory is a relationship-based leadership theory that focuses on the two-way relationship between leaders and followers.

The research methodology is discussed in this chapter. The researcher will use a qualitative research approach. The interpretative paradigm with a case study design will also be described. The site, the participants and the research instruments are described in the data collection. The researcher used individual semi-structured interviews and document analysis for the research instruments. Finally, the data analysis, trustworthiness, the credibility, triangulation, member checking and the ethical considerations are described.

### **3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH, PARADIGM AND DESIGN**

#### **3.2.1. Research Approach**

This study is a qualitative research approach. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) describe that qualitative research is a naturalistic approach that investigates and describes the problem or issue that is happening at a particular site. The researcher chose the qualitative approach because the participants can describe their experiences in their own words the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment. In qualitative research the researcher goes to the participants to collect and interpret the data (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). During qualitative research the data is collected at the site by the researcher (Creswell, 2014:185). Drew, Hardman and Hosp (2008) indicate that qualitative researchers do not interfere or tamper with the site where the data is collected. In qualitative research many sources of data can be used namely interviews, observations and document analysis (Creswell, 2014:185). In qualitative research the data is collected through the spoken words of the participants and not by numbers or figures (Elliot and Timulak, 2005:147). According to Silverman (2006) the data collected in qualitative research was not controlled or manipulated by the researcher so the data is reliable and dependable. Qualitative researchers have to gain a thorough understanding of the problem or issue that the participants are experiencing at the site (Cooper, Flescher and Cotton, 2012; QRCA, 2013). Furthermore, qualitative research involves a thorough study of a group of people to guide and support the findings and the results of the research (Frederick, 2013). The results of qualitative research are the descriptive spoken words and explanations of the teachers and the principal and not numbers (QRCA, 2013:1).

Qualitative researchers use inductive and deductive analysis to create patterns, categories and themes by organising the data into abstract information (Creswell, 2014:186). The inductive data analysis process involves working through the data to establish understandable and meaningful themes (Creswell, 2013, Creswell, 2017:186). Qualitative researchers, can therefore, develop a holistic meaning of the problem or the issue under study (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2014: 186) indicated that the deductive analysis involves the process where the researcher has to look more deeply at the data to determine whether more information and evidence can be added to the themes or categories. The main aim of a research is to learn and address the problem by collecting data from the participants at the site (Creswell, 2014: 186).

### **3.2.2. Research paradigm**

This research has an interpretative paradigm approach. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011:17) best describe that the interpretative research paradigm indicates how people perceive and experience situations around them and how they adapt to and manage these experiences (Cohen et al., 2011:17). An interpretative research paradigm is chosen for this study because this research is descriptive and focuses on the understanding of human and individual perceptions and experiences of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2004:21). The interpretative research paradigm values the subjectivity of human behaviour and their experiences (Willis, 2007:110). McQueen (2002) argues that interpretivist researchers seek methods that enable them to understand the relationships of human beings in their environment and the part that they create in their social setting.

### **3.2.3. Research design**

The researcher chose to use a case study design because it is small- scale research project (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014:28; Thomas, 2011). A case study has been chosen by the researcher because many research methods are used (Muronga, 2011:42) and different data collection instruments can be used to collect the data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014:28). A small-scale case study design describes and investigates a single problem in the field (Yin, 2009). A case study creates an understanding of how humans relate and interact with each other in a particular situation (Cohen et al., 2011:289).

Yin (2009:18) describes a case study using two main definitions. Yin's (2009:18) first definition is concerned with real life experiences and perceptions of humans in a setting. Yin's (2009:18) second meaning states that a case study uses multiple sources of triangulation to validate and check the credibility of the data during the data collection and the data analysis.

The researcher chose a case study design because the teachers will describe their real-life perceptions and experiences of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership. The principal will also describe his or her distributed leadership role in developing teacher empowerment.

### **3.3. THE DATA COLLECTION**

#### **3.3.1. Site**

The research study was conducted in a public primary school in the Northern suburbs of the Cape Metropole of the Western Cape. The researcher chose one school because she was teaching at the time of this study and I had insufficient time and funds to choose more schools. This school was conveniently selected because it was easily accessible and in close proximity to the researcher (Briggs, Coleman and Morrison, 2012:141). The school chosen enrolls learners with mixed cultures and languages. It is a quintile five primary school and is situated in a well-resourced middle-class working community. The school enrolls learners from Grade 1 to 7 and there are three hundred and forty learners in total. There are nine classes from Grades 1 to 7, with one class per grade, except in Grades 3 and 4 where there are two classes in each. There are thirty to thirty-five learners in each class.

#### **3.3.2. The Participants**

The participants included the nine teachers and the principal at the school. Convenient sampling was used to select the nine teachers and the principal who participated in the study (Creswell, 2014). They were easily accessible, willing and available to participate in the research. At the time of the research the principal was the subject lead teacher for Mathematics in the Intermediate Phase. The grade 1 class teacher is the lead teacher in the Foundation Phase. She was also the lead teacher for English in the Foundation Phase, the team leader of the School-Based Support Team (SBST) and the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) leader. The other eight teachers were all subject leads in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases. Five of the eight teachers were team leaders of the different committees at the school, namely the school discipline team, school cultural team, prefect team, the school governing body and, as mentioned before, the Foundation Phase lead teacher was the team leader of the SBST and IQMS. The participants gave knowledgeable data of their experiences of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014).

The following table below shows the information of the teachers and the principal. The ages, gender, the number of teaching years and their teaching qualifications are outlined in the table. The researcher collected this information from the participants because I wanted to gain



knowledge of their leadership roles and teaching experiences. The information also shows that some teachers are newly appointed, while others are more experienced.

Table 3.1 Information of the participants

<b>Position</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Total number of years teaching</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>
Principal Mathematics lead teacher in Intermediate phase	Male	63	44	Advanced diploma in Education
Foundation Phase lead teacher, English lead teacher, School Based Support Team (SBST) and Integrated Management System (IQMS) team leader	Female	43	21	Diploma in education
Teacher Foundation Phase Afrikaans lead teacher and school discipline team leader	Female	62	34	Diploma in education
Teacher Foundation Phase Mathematics lead teacher	Female	32	5	Bachelor of Education
Teacher Foundation phase Life skills lead teacher and Cultural team leader	Female	27	4	Bachelor of Education
Teacher Natural Science and Technology lead teacher	Female	26	3	Bachelor of Education
Teacher Life skills and Life Orientation lead leader	Male	39	2	Diploma in sport
Teacher English lead teacher and School Governing Body team leader	Female	35	7	Bachelor of Education

Teacher Social sciences lead teacher and prefect team leader	Male	45	23	Certificate in education
Teacher Afrikaans lead teacher	Female	42	6	Bachelor of Education

### 3.4. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

To collect qualitative data, research instruments are used (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014). The accuracy and the validity of the results and findings depend on the correct choice of the instruments used during the data collection (Annum, 2015). Gibbs (2007) cited in Creswell (2014:201) states that validity means the researcher needs to check the accuracy and the reliability of the findings.

The research instruments that the researcher chose were semi-structured interviews and the document analysis. The following research instruments are described below.

#### 3.4.1. INDIVIDUAL SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews are the opinions and views of the participants (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014). Creswell (2013) suggests that semi-structured interviews include the major questions, with sub-questions and the probing questions. Furthermore, Seabi (2012:89) indicates that during semi-structured interviews the researcher uses open-ended questions which are flexible. Semi-structured interviews were the correct choice as the teachers and the principal described their experiences with ease (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2014: 411).

Individual semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data. The main reason why the researcher used the interviews was to allow the teachers to describe the teachers' experiences of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership. The principal described his distributed leadership role. The interviews were conducted with the nine teachers and the principal.

Before the interview commenced the researcher asked the participants to sign the consent forms confirming their voluntary participation in the study. The researcher first gathered information on the participants, namely their position at the school, gender, age, total number of teaching years and their qualifications. The researcher used open-ended questions and further probing questions during the interview process. All nine teachers and the principal participated in the individual semi-structured interviews. Delamont (2012: 67) states that during interviews the participants describe their experiences and perceptions that researchers do not know about.

The questions used in the interview process were taken from the theoretical framework and literature review of this study.

The key research question that the researcher asked the teachers was:

What are the teachers' experiences of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership?

The following sub-questions were also asked:

- What are the teachers' understandings of distributed leadership and teacher empowerment?
- How do the teachers' perceive and experience the principal's distributed leadership?
- What are the teachers' possible contributions to their own teacher empowerment?
- What are the challenges the teachers' perceive and experience of the principal's distributed leadership?
- What is the principal's role in developing teacher empowerment and distributed leadership?

The following questions were used in the interview with the principal:

- What is your leadership approach?
- How do you implement distributed leadership and teacher empowerment?

The semi-structured interviews were conducted orally with the teachers and the principal and the researcher recorded the narratives shared in terms of the participants' experiences and perceptions.

### **3.4.2. Document Analysis**

Documents are private documents of meetings, newspapers, journals, diaries and personal letters (Creswell, 2014:190). Documents are the written evidence of information and it helps the researcher to save time and expenses of transcribing (Creswell, 2014:192). The documents used in this research were the SASP (2015) policy document and the minutes of the two teacher empowerment staff meetings conducted by the principal. The researcher asked the principal's consent to view the minutes of the two teacher empowerment staff meetings. The use of the SASP (2015) document and the two teacher empowerment staff meetings helped the researcher to establish whether the principal empowers the teachers through his leadership style.

### **3.5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Creswell (2014:95) describes the data analysis as segmenting and taking the data apart and putting it back together.” He further explains that the data is massive and rich and not all the information can be used (Creswell, 2014:195). Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012) cited in Creswell (2014:195) conclude that researchers need to focus on meaningful and relevant information and disregard other parts that are not useful. Creswell (2014:186) states that qualitative data analysis is inductive because patterns, categories and themes are created by organising the transcribed data into meaningful themes. In the inductive process the researcher examines and reads through the raw data before organising the transcribed data into comprehensive themes (Creswell, 2014). Rossman and Rallis (2012) suggest that coding is done by bracketing the transcribed data and labelling it with a heading or a term to represent a theme. Cohen et al. (2011:559) contend that coding enables the researcher to identify similar information in the research.

#### **3.5.1. Interview Analysis**

The researcher read, listened to the recordings and wrote down the spoken words of the teachers and the principal to get an understanding of the data before transcribing it (Orb, Eisenhauber and Wynaden, 2000). After the transcription process the researcher used a coding system by systematically organising the relevant information into themes and labelling it with a heading (Rossman and Ellis, 2012). The researcher inserted brackets around the meaningful transcribed data and wrote the names of the themes in the margin (Rossman and Ellis, 2012) cited in Creswell, (2014: 198). The themes and categories used in the study were: Teachers’ understanding of distributed leadership, teachers’ experiences and perceptions of distributed leadership, the challenges the teachers experience of the principal’s distributed leadership, teachers’ understanding of empowerment and teachers’ experiences of empowerment. The categories that emerged from the data gathered from the principal’s interview were: the understanding of distributed leadership, understanding of teacher empowerment, the leadership role of the principal and the principal’s role in empowerment.

#### **3.5.2. Document Analysis**

During the document analysis process the researcher read the documents to gain meaning and understanding before the data was coded into themes. (Yu et al., 2011:738). In the two empowerment meetings the researcher obtained the information of the spoken words of the teachers and the principal (Creswell, 2013) cited in Creswell (2014: 191). The researcher identified the similarities and differences of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership stated in the SASP (2015:20) policy document. The

researcher analysed the minutes of the two teacher empowerment staff meetings and the information in the SASP (2015) document.

The table 3.2 below shows an extract from the SASP (2015:20) policy document.

Table 3.2 SASP (2015:20) policy document.

### **Developing and empowering self and others**

The principal, working with all stakeholders, embraces the philosophy and practice of Ubuntu and has the overall responsibility to build a professional learning community in the school. This will be achieved through effective interpersonal relationships and communication, which recognises, manages and celebrates the diversity of ethnicity, race and gender. Through the provision of opportunities for shared or distributed leadership, teamwork and participation in decision-making the principal promotes the empowerment of those working in the school. By encouraging effective and relevant continuing professional development opportunities, the principal supports whole school development. Principals also need to be reflective to build personal capacity and be committed to their own continuing professional development.

### **Staff development**

The principal needs to have knowledge of the following:

Relationships between performance management continuing professional development and sustainable school improvement.

Approaches to promoting continuing professional development, including approaches to adult learning.

Methods in which shared leadership, participation in decision-making, teambuilding and effective teamwork may be encouraged, promoted and implemented.

Principals need to enhance teacher morale to improve job satisfaction by empowering his or her teachers.

Principals should encourage humanness and Ubuntu between all staff members.

### **Actions related to developing and empowering self and others.**

The school principal should practice the following:

Principals should empower teachers through professional development and also develop their professional development.

Encourage the development of shared or distributed leadership, participation in decision-making, teambuilding and teamwork and other positive working-relationships.

Provide a range of opportunities for and encourage and support engagement in the continuing professional development of everyone working in the school.

Implement processes to plan, allocate, support and-evaluate the work of individuals and teams to guide support and ensure improvement and celebrate achievements.

Establish effective communication-mechanisms within the school and its community.

Develop and maintain effective procedures and practices for personnel processes such as induction, performance management and professional development.

Ensure equity and fairness in the delegation of work and the devolution of responsibility.

Engage in ongoing review of his or her own practice and accept responsibility for personal and professional development-

### **3.6. TRUSTWORTHINESS**

The researcher ensured trustworthiness by means of triangulation and member checking to guarantee the credibility of the findings (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014:331). The researcher took the transcribed data back to the participants to check that it correctly reflected what they had said in the interviews. Furthermore, Gibbs (2007) cited in Creswell (2014: 191) suggests that the transcripts from the individual interviews should be checked by the participants to ensure that the findings are accurate. To ensure validity, accuracy and correctness of the results the researcher used triangulation, credibility and member checking (Creswell and Miller, 2000) cited in Creswell (2014:201).

### **3.7. CREDIBILITY**

McMillan and Schumacher (2014) point out that credibility indicates the truthfulness and accuracy of the data findings. This study looked at the teachers' experiences and perceptions of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership. The researcher used semi-structured individual interviews to find answers to the research questions. The interviews helped the researcher to gather knowledgeable and rich data of the teachers and principal's experiences and perceptions (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014). The participants were asked to read the transcripts of their spoken words to ensure credibility and trustworthiness.

### **3.8. TRIANGULATION**

In triangulation many different sources are used to validate and check the accuracy and credibility of the data (Creswell, 2014: 201). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014) one of the ways to ensure trustworthiness is by means of triangulation. In triangulation different data collection methods are needed to understand and identify a problem or an issue (McMillan and

Schumacher, 2014). The researcher used different methods to collect the data which included individual semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

### **3.9. MEMBER CHECKING**

During the member checking process the researcher took the transcribed data with the themes to the teachers and the principal to check that the findings were correct and accurate (Creswell, 2014:201).

### **3.10. THE RESEARCHER'S POSITION**

The researcher was not involved and did not influence the participants' views (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014) state that the main role of the researcher is to collect data for the findings of the research study. The researcher is not a staff member of the school where the research was conducted.

### **3.11. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical considerations are important as they are concerned with protecting the privacy and human rights of the participants and the school where the research was conducted (McMillian and Schumacher, 2014). The researcher wrote a letter to the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), the principal and the teachers to procure permission to conduct the research. In the letter the researcher indicated that the research was about the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership. Furthermore, the researcher disclosed the aims of the research study to the participants (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2014:93-94) stated that the confidentiality of the data, results and findings must be protected. The information that the teachers and principal provided as well as their identities should be kept anonymous (Creswell, 2014). The researcher assured the participants that the information obtained from the individual interviews and the two teacher empowerment meetings would be strictly confidential and that nowhere in the research project would their names or the name of the school be mentioned. All the teachers including the principal signed the letters of consent. All the required ethical considerations were followed by the researcher.

### 3.12. TIME FRAME AND STUDY PLAN

The table below reflects the time frame decided on for this research project.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
4 March 2019	Seek permission from the principal and teachers
11 March 2019	Discuss the aims of the research study and what it entails
9 April 2019	Start with interviews
26 April 2019	Analysing and Interpretation of data
6 May 2019	Sharing of information and first intervention
13 July 2019	Identifying further problems, if any
27 August 2019	Further assessment
7 September 2019	Analysis and interpretation of data
17 September 2019	First Submission
9 October 2019 -30 April 2020	Further submission
5 -31 August 2020	Final submission

### 3.13. CONCLUSION

The research methodology has been fully described and discussed. The site and the selection of the participants were also outlined. The research instruments that were used during the data collection process was also mentioned.

In the next chapter the results and findings of the teachers' experiences and perceptions of the principal's distributed leadership style will be discussed.



## **CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter Three the interpretative research paradigm research was discussed. A case study design was used. In the previous chapter a description of the site, the participants, the methodology and the research instruments were described.

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings of this study.

As mentioned earlier the aim of this study was to describe the teachers' experiences and perceptions of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership.

This was a qualitative study conducted through individual semi-structured interviews with the participating teachers and the principal. The SASP document and the minutes of the teacher empowerment meetings were also outlined in this chapter.

As the study centres on teacher empowerment and distributed leadership it was appropriate that the teachers and the principal began by expressing their understanding of related concepts.

The following themes, namely the teachers' understanding of distributed leadership, the teachers' experiences of distributed leadership, the challenges the teachers' experience of the principal's distributed leadership style, the teachers' understanding of empowerment, the teachers' experiences of empowerment and the principal's distributed leadership will be discussed in this chapter.

The themes emanating from the document analysis include the minutes of the two teacher empowerment staff meetings and the SASP (2015) policy document.

### **4.2. FINDINGS OF THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS OF THE TEACHERS**

The findings of the teachers' understanding of distributed leadership are detailed below.

#### **4.2.1. The Teachers' understanding of Distributed Leadership**

The teachers were asked to relate their understanding of the meaning of distributed leadership. Their understandings are based on their experiences of distributed leadership. Distributed leadership was not an entirely new term to the teachers, as before the semi-structured interviews they were informed in writing that the study was based on distributed leadership.

The teachers reflected different understandings of the concept of distributed leadership. Some teachers referred to it as shared leadership and other teachers regarded distributed leadership

as working alongside the principal. A few teachers regarded distributed leadership as a mere delegation of tasks and duties by working collaboratively with the principal. Interestingly, the majority of the teachers seem to share a common understanding of distributed leadership presented in the literature review. 'Distributed leadership is described as shared, collective and extended leadership that develops the capacity for change and improvement in schools' (Harris, 2014). Nevertheless, their understanding contains similar elements of distributed leadership as described by Harris (2014) above. The teachers therefore expressed a fairly decent understanding of the concept of distributed leadership, as shown below.

Teacher A explained the following:

*"I think distributed leadership is when the principal shares his leadership with the teachers and are given opportunities to take on leadership roles."*

Teacher B commented:

*"Uhm, I believe that leadership roles must be delegated to all members of the staff and they see this as a way of decentralising powers of the principal."*

Teacher C said:

*"Distributed leadership can be described as shared leadership. Uhm, and those in leadership are willing to share the responsibilities with others and to include others on their teams. They are not concerned with autocratic leadership styles."*

Teacher D suggested:

*"I would think that distributed leadership can happen if the principal believes and has trust in his or her teachers and allows them to be lead teachers".*

Teacher E mentioned:

*"To me the term distributed leadership refers to a process whereby the school principal assigns different roles to each and every member of the staff. Leadership is a continuous process and it aims at equipping teachers and members of an organisation with responsibilities for the achievement of organisational goals."*

Teacher F said:

*"Uhm, I think distributed leadership is being a leader."*

Teacher G indicated:

*"Yes, it is shared leadership and the principal knows my skills and talents."*

Teacher H commented:

*“Not too sure ..... but let me guess its about being in charge of a subject.”*

Teacher I

*“Yes, I definitely think I know distributed leadership is sharing tasks with the principal and the other teachers at the school.”*

### **4.3. THE TEACHERS’ EXPERIENCES OF THE PRINCIPAL’S DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP**

The teachers in this study expressed the following on the principal’s distributed leadership and their experience of it, namely the leadership role of the principal, a collaborative school climate and teamwork.

#### **4.3.1. The Leadership Role of the Principal**

The teachers indicated that the principal appointed all the participating teachers at the school as subject lead teachers. The teachers mention that the principal supports the notion that all teachers hold leadership positions at the school because he believes in sharing his leadership role with them. The teachers hold the view that the principal motivates them to improve their weaknesses and strengths. The teachers also indicated that the principal values their contributions and participation in school activities. The teachers articulate that the principal gives them the necessary experience and exposure to gain confidence and develop in their leadership skills.

Teacher C explained:

*“Yes, definitely the principal implemented distributed leadership. Uhm, I think that the principal is aware that he has too much important work to do and that some of the duties can be given to other staff members and in this way the principal shares his leadership tasks with the teachers.”*

Teacher H commented on the following:

*“Uhm, yes, by fostering leadership roles to all the teachers it empowers them.”*

Teacher B said:

*“Yes, he does. The principal creates the opportunity for all the teachers to be responsible for subject leadership roles apart from just being the teacher of the class and this shows that he shares his leadership with the teachers.”*

Teacher G indicated that:

*“The principal allows all the staff members to be actively and collectively involved and to participate in the steering of school activities, uhm, I am the English subject lead teacher at the school.”*

Teacher D mentioned the following:

*“Yeah, the principal provides opportunities for some staff members to take up a position on a committee. Being a team leader and a subject lead teacher the principal gives me a chance to better my strengths.*

Teacher E said:

*“Yes, the principal definitely implements distributed leadership. I am the SBST and IQMS team leader and the foundation phase English lead teacher”*

Teacher A commented on the following:

*“I am in a contract post and the principal has given me an opportunity to be the Afrikaans lead teacher. This is a testimony to the fact that the principal embraces distributed leadership.”*

Huber (2004) states that good leadership allows all staff members with different talents to participate in leadership roles. A similar view was concluded by Nkabinde (2012) that stated leadership in schools needs to spread collectively and collaboratively among all the teachers for to improve the performances of learners and teachers.

#### **4.3.2. Collaborative School Climate**

The participating teachers all express that the principal initiates and promotes a collaborative school culture. The teachers indicate that the principal shares his leadership role with all the teachers by creating teacher leadership roles, in order to inspire them to work collaboratively with one another.

The teachers also indicate that collaboration and collegiality are the core features of distributed leadership. The teachers mention that the principal creates collaboration by sharing his leadership in the school and shows interpersonal relationships filled with respect and trust. The teachers all view the principal's democratic and participatory leadership style as pro-active and productive as he works co-operatively and collaboratively with them.

Lowe (2010) states that a successful organisation or working environment has to be flexible and collaborative. Distribution of leadership to all teaching staff encourages empowerment in teaching and learning based on trust, mutual respect, the sharing of authority (Lowe, 2010).

The responses of the participants are described below.

Teacher A said:

*“Well, I would say yes, the principal shares his power with the teachers because all the nine teachers are subject lead teachers which indicates that the principal has a democratic and participatory leadership style.”*

Teacher D explained the following:

*“Yes, I think the principal embraced and promoted an atmosphere of caring and trust among the teachers to work collaboratively with us.”*

Teacher B mentioned:

*“I don’t think so because the principal only chose the more experienced teachers to be team leaders and I am only a subject lead teacher for History in the Intermediate Phase.”*

Teacher G said:

*“Uhm, ... being a subject lead teacher for Natural Science I really feel that I am getting a chance to become a real leader one day.”*

Teacher C commented:

*“There is a collaborative and democratic atmosphere at the school because I really feel proud and honoured to be an Afrikaans lead teacher.”*

Teacher F indicated the following:

*“Yes, because I think I can be a subject lead and a team leader and I am still young and I know that I have great leadership skills. I have the time and the passion.”*

Harris (2014) maintains that distributed leadership is a leadership approach which empowers and develops teachers to work collaboratively with one another. Principals execute a democratic approach to allow all teachers to participate in leadership roles (Heck and Hallinger, 2009). “When distributed leadership works well, individuals are accountable and responsible for their leadership actions and collaborative teamwork becomes a cultural norm” (Harris, 2014).

### **4.3.3. Teamwork**

Some participating teachers indicate that they are team leaders of different committees at the school. These teachers further indicate that they feel the principal needs to provide them with more support and guidance on their responsibilities and duties of being team leaders. The teachers therefore reveal that they need to meet regularly with the principal to gain more knowledge, guidance and training on teamwork. The team leaders also express that the workload becomes too much for them. The other participating teachers mention that teamwork needs to be

rotated and that they should also be given an opportunity to be team leaders of the different school committees.

Teacher E explained:

*“I am the team leader of the committee of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) and the School Based Support Team (SBST), but the principal needs to give me more guidance about controlling the IQMS and the SBST.”*

Teacher C said:

*“I am the team leader of School Governing Body. Yes, I definitely think, the principal needs to implement teamwork more regularly by having training meetings for team leaders.”*

Teacher D stated the following:

*“The principal needs to share his knowledge about teamwork at all times. I am the team leader of School Discipline Committee.”*

Teacher B said the following:

*“I definitely think that members in teams have different characteristics and are given roles based on what they can do well. The principal needs to be aware of everyone’s skills and strengths. In my opinion all the teachers need to become team leaders at the school.”*

Teacher F mentioned the following:

*“Yes, teamwork joins people together with different fields of specialisation and competencies. I think I also need to be given a chance to be a team leader because I know that am a good disciplinarian.”*

Likewise Teacher A indicated:

*“I also want to become a team leader at the school in the future.”*

Lowe (2010) states that it is not only the responsibility and duty of the principal to achieve good learner performances because leadership is a collaborative practice (Lowe, 2010). When teachers take up leadership roles, they work co-operatively to achieve their goals and strategies (Lowe, 2010).

Teacher I answered:

*“Uhm, the principal encouraged me to be the team leader of the School Prefect Committee. I need more support from the principal because of the workload of teaching and being a team leader becomes too much for me.”*

Teacher G commented:

*“I have been approached by the principal to be the team leader of the School Cultural Committee. There are times that it becomes overwhelming for me to be a team leader because the principal expects too much from me and we need to be supported and trained by the principal to become effective team leaders.”*

Van der Mescht and Taylor (2008) suggest that teamwork encourages teachers to work and share their decisions collectively. Furthermore, Van der Mescht and Taylor (2008) perceive that teamwork is also about sharing leadership roles. Similarly, Muronga (2011) maintains that teamwork allows all staff members to work together to achieve the vision, mission and the school culture.

#### **4.4. THE CHALLENGES THE TEACHERS EXPERIENCE OF THE PRINCIPAL'S DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP**

The main challenges that teachers experience are time constraints, support and guidance from the principal and the workload attached to being lead subject teachers and team leaders.

The views of the challenges that the teachers experienced are listed below.

Teacher A said:

*“Being an English lead teacher in the Foundation phase and a team member of the School based support (SBST) team I spend too much time doing loads of administrative every afternoon after school. Uhm, the workload is way too much for me.”*

Teacher B likewise mentioned:

*“Oh, uhm I just cannot cope with all the work of being a class teacher and a subject lead teacher.”*

Teacher C commented the following:

*“I definitely don't have a problem, because I have the time to stay after school to finish all my administrative work.”*

Teacher D said:

*“This is too much work. I am a Life Skills lead teacher and a class teacher, uhm oh, I have to mark my learners' books and check the teachers' lessons plans that's way too tough.”*

Teacher E indicated:

*“I don't mind the principal is giving me lots of support and guidance.”*

Teacher F said:

*“The principal does not give me the necessary support and guidance because I am also the team leader of the School discipline committee. I feel the teachers are doing all the subject leadership roles and are team members of the different committees at school. Uhm, I honestly feel that we need more support from the principal.”*

Teacher G commented by saying the following:

*“I really feel tired and worn out because I spend long hours at the school and even on some weekends.”*

Teacher H said:

*“Uhm, too much administrative work, oh ... I really feel I can manage , but there are times when the work becomes too much for me.”*

Teacher I likewise said:

*Oh, no... really too much. I communicated with principal about this problem, but still I did not get enough support and guidance from him.”*

When teachers are given more work than they are supposed to do, distributed leadership can become destructive and challenging for teachers (Lumby, 2013).

#### **4.5. THE TEACHERS’ UNDERSTANDING OF EMPOWERMENT**

The teachers’ understanding of empowerment is described below.

Most teachers define empowerment as when teachers are given opportunities to learn new skills and attend workshops and courses to develop professionally and take up leadership roles. The other teachers indicate that empowerment refers to when teachers are given tasks to do by allowing them to act or use their own authority with guidance from the principal. Some teachers believe that empowerment refers to teachers feeling encouraged, supported and motivated at the school.

Empowerment is the development and growth process that empowers and motivates an individual to make decisions and share his or her opinions (Carl, 2012:7). According to Hatcher (2005),” teacher empowerment creates leadership roles for teachers by working collectively with the principal.”

These are the comments of participant teachers.

Teacher B indicated the following statement.

*“It means that teachers are given an opportunity to learn new skills.”*



Teacher E said:

*“Empowerment is the same as distributed leadership uhm, you become a lead teacher.”*

Teacher A mentioned:

*“I think is when someone is given duties to do and be in authority and with support and encouragement of the principal.”*

Teacher F commented:

*“Empowerment makes me feel encouraged to be a principal one day.”*

Teacher C said:

*“Uhm, not too sure, but I think empowerment is when a person is given more authority.”*

Teacher G indicated:

*“For now, uhm, I am going to guess empowerment means to develop your skills, talents grow professionally.”*

Teacher D said:

*“It is when you become empowered and feel that you have developed new skills to grow in your profession.”*

Teacher H mentioned this:

*“Uhm, yes empowerment is developing yourself by getting the support and guidance from your principal and having leadership roles”*

Teacher I commented:

*“I think empowerment is when you feel empowered and you develop new skills because you learn from other teachers and the principal.”*

#### **4.5.1. The Teachers’ Experiences of Empowerment**

The teachers experienced the following forms of empowerment from the principal at the school, namely professional and staff development, decision making and communication, mentoring and building trust and respect.

#### 4.5.2. Professional and staff Development

All the participating teachers indicate that the principal encourages professional development for continual growth and development to enhance lifelong learning. Harris, Wheeler and Kacmar (2009) explored how empowerment and professional development influenced the impact of the LMX theory (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995) on job satisfaction and work performances.

The participating teachers share that the principal gives them opportunities to lead professional development activities and school workshops. All the teachers express, however, that it is extra work for them to prepare for subject lead workshops that are held during the professional development sessions. Furthermore, the teachers indicate that the principal encourages them to attend workshops offered by the education department to improve their skills and abilities to teach, lead and experience growth and development.

The participant teachers' responses verify this in the following comments:

Teacher H commented:

*"The principal recognised the skills of all the teachers and encouraged staff development activities and allowed some teachers to lead professional sessions for teacher development and leadership although it was more work for me to prepare my Maths presentations."*

Teacher G uttered the following:

*"Uhm, yes, definitely we had professional development workshops, but uhm, it was extra work for me to prepare. We also attend WCED workshops after school."*

Teacher F said:

*"Uhm, I was given an opportunity by the principal to lead a professional development workshop on Natural Sciences and Technology. I am the subject lead teacher of those subjects in the Intermediate phase at the school, but I found it tiring and overwhelming to present workshops after school."*

Teacher A said:

*"Yes, we do professional development workshops once a month we have to prepare subject meetings which we present to the teachers and the principal, but it is extra work that we have to do."*

Teacher B commented:

*"We learn from the other teachers and the principal when we have the workshops"*

Teacher I said the following:

*For the workshops we prepare extra work. Uhm, .... I am exhausted from teaching the whole day and in the afternoons we still have to present workshops to the other teachers and the principal. It is...really too much and tiring for me."*

Teacher D indicated:

*"The workshops help me to gain knowledge about the different subjects as I am still an inexperienced teacher. We also attend the WCED subject workshops every second week after school."*

Teacher E said:

*"Uhm, no it is way too much for me being a subject lead teacher in Social Sciences in the Intermediate Phase and a team leader for the School discipline committee and I need to prepare for workshops in the workshops."*

#### **4.5.3. Decision Making and Communication**

Most participating teachers mention that the principal initiates communication between himself and the teachers. These teachers express that the principal listens to and respects the teachers' opinions about teaching and learning. Some teachers mention that there are times when the teachers and the principal cannot reach a decision, after which the principal then makes his final decision. Most teachers agree that communication is of utmost important at the school because it encourages decision making, problem solving and allows school issues to be resolved collectively by the principal and teachers.

Evidently, Harris, 2008 states that distributed leadership involves collaborative decision making and problem solving. Lunenberg (2010) suggests that the "in group" experience job satisfaction, effective communication and gain confidence and trust from their leaders."

The responses of the teachers with regards to this are indicated below.

Teacher B stated:

*"Uhm, the principal encouraged good communication and respected the teachers' opinions about teaching and learning."*

Teacher E commented:

*"The principal supported an open door policy and allows teachers to discuss school problems about teaching and learning openly with him."*

Teacher F indicated:

*“I would think so because the principal motivated us to communicate openly about teaching and learning and also to solve school problems together and in this way he empowered me.”*

Teacher H commented:

*“I can really say so. I feel empowered to be in a leadership role because it develops my professional growth. I also feel good because my voice is heard and to know that I am part of the school. My decisions are respected by the principal.”*

Teacher A replied:

*“Uhm, the principal motivated us to communicate openly with him, but sometimes he made his final decision.”*

Teacher D said:

*“There were times that, uhm, yes the principal made his own decisions.”*

Teacher C replied:

*“Yes, most times the principal encouraged us to respect one another’s opinions and ideas, even if we differ from one another we still need to listen.”*

Teacher I mentioned:

*“I have spoken to the principal about the workload but he promised to help me, but to date he did not so I feel he does not communicate feely with all of the teachers.”*

Teacher G said the following:

*“I really feel that sometimes the principal does not listen to our views and ideas because there are times that he makes his own decisions which tells me that he is still making his own decisions.”*

#### **4.5.4. Mentoring and Induction**

The new appointed participating teachers indicate that the principal has mentoring programme workshops to empower them to become future leaders and team leaders at the school.

Principals have to provide continuous support and guidance to newly appointed and inexperienced teachers (Lambeth, 2012). Principals also need to present orientation programmes about teaching and learning to inexperienced teachers (Lambeth, 2012).

Teacher C commented:

*“Definitely, the principal instilled mentoring leadership workshop and programmes for the newly appointed teachers at the school to develop the teachers professionally to also take up leadership roles.”*

Teacher H said:

*“Yes, I find that the principal is professionally developing and encouraging me to also have a leadership role at the school in the future.”*

#### **4.5.5. Building Trust**

Most of the participating teachers indicate that the principal shows respect and trust which makes them feel worthy and increases their teacher morale. The teachers further express that the principal shows his trust by giving the teachers the opportunity to grow professionally by appointing subject lead teachers and team leaders. “The LMX theory is a relationship-based leadership approach that influences subordinates’ responsibilities to increase member performances” (Graen and Uhl-Bien,1995). Lunenberg (2010) suggests that “building mutual trust results in a shared and committed relationship between leaders and followers.” Sheppard, Hurley and Dibbon (2010) point out that if principals trust teachers and implement distributed leadership and empowerment it increases teacher enthusiasm and morale. Furthermore, Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008) suggest that distributed leadership and teacher empowerment are related to organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Various studies show evidence of the positive effects of distributed leadership on teachers’ morale and empowerment (Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins, 2008).

Teacher B explained:

*“I find that the principal shows a sense of trust and respect because he shares his leadership role with the subject lead teachers and the team leaders.”*

Teacher G commented:

*“Yes, I think through trust and respecting the teachers I feel empowered. By feeling empowered it filters down to the learners.”*

Teacher I stressed:

*“I, uhm, feel happy and eager to be at the school because the principal makes me feel that I am worthy and part of the school. Being empowered and trusted by the principal increases my teacher morale.”*

Teacher C said the following:

*“The principal maintains that he trust the teachers, but I really don’t think so because he would keep checking on some teachers during the teaching time.”*

Teacher E mentioned likewise:

*“There is no trust at this school, because you are being watched all the time, if someone trust you then you need to be free to do your job.”*

Teacher F indicated:

*“I think ... the principal trust me because I always do my work.”*

Teacher A said

*“Uhm, I think there is some trust but really no not all the time, because the principal always wants continuous feedback of the teaching and learning at the school and why certain tasks have not been completed. So I really feel he does not trust all of us.*

Teacher D indicated:

*“Uhm, yes I can really say I feel that the principal trusts because I am a team leader and a subject lead teacher.”*

#### **4.6. FINDINGS OF THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH THE PRINCIPAL**

##### **4.6.1. The Leadership Role of the Principal**

The principal declares that teamwork is high on his priority list and has made his staff understand that no task can be completed successfully without the support of others. This clearly shows that the principal views himself as a distributive leader who encourages a collaborative school climate. According to the principal, all staff members play an important role in the overall success of the school, saying “I embrace the distributed leadership role”. The principal feels honoured to work with his teachers, because they show respect towards him and in return he also respects and trusts them. Furthermore, he encourages teachers to respect and trust one another. He shares that the preparation of tasks assigned are often spoken about and the teachers are reminded of the consequences when they are unprepared to fulfil their duties. He also indicates that he encourages the teachers to work collaboratively alongside him to achieve the best for the school. The principal believes that it is his responsibility to be a good example, and to encourage principles such as obligation and commitment, as shown below.

The principal said:

*“Uhm, I am extremely fortunate at this school, since we have many young staff that shows huge respect towards me.”*

The principal shared the following:

*“Since 2013 the learner numbers have increased which allowed the school to appoint an extra teacher. The fact that all the same teachers are still at the school, since I had been appointed, clearly indicated that my input of distributed leadership impacted positively on them.”*

Good leaders should be flexible and willing to change their leadership style and encourage others to participate in leadership responsibilities. (Fullan, 2007).

#### **4.6.2. The Principal’s Role in Teacher Empowerment**

The principal states that he provides the necessary mentoring to the few newly appointed teachers, has built a trusting relationship with them and encourages communication at all times. The principal also believes that he encourages the teachers to be involved in the decision making processes at the school. The principal further indicates that some of the teachers serve on different team committees at the school. The principal shares eagerly that all the participating teachers on the staff are subject lead teachers. The principal also encourages regular feedback from the team leaders who co-ordinate the committee meetings and indicates that he holds the team leaders of the committees accountable if the teachers fail to perform their duties. He mentions that he encourages the teachers to attend professional development workshops to become empowered and to develop in their teaching careers.

The principal commented:

*“Because of their trust in me, it allows them freedom to ask when in need of support and also grants them the opportunity to express their views and opinions without fear.”*

The principal also uttered the following:

*“It is very seldom that my teachers do not adhere to instructions, as a matter of fact, it is not done intentionally. The teachers do trust that I am very reasonable and they will either apologise if they failed to perform their duties or any administrative has not been completed within the stipulated time frame.”*

*“I also encourage the staff that professional development workshops are purposeful and meaningful for their empowerment and the teachers have not refused to attend workshops and this I really appreciate.*

*“The support I give the teachers is always highly appreciated and in return I always give praise where it is due.”*

Furthermore:

*“The teachers enjoyed challenges which created a collaborative school climate. They are also very thankful that I allow them freedom to make decisions and to be creative in their planning, as this has a positive influence on their empowerment.”*

#### **4.7. DATA FROM THE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

The findings of the two school planning empowerment meetings and the SASP (2015) policy document are described below.

##### **4.7.1. Findings from the Minutes of the First School Planning Empowerment Meeting**

The researcher requested the minutes of the school planning empowerment meetings. The principal mentioned that the meeting was held at the end of last year in preparation for the 2019 school year. The meeting took place for two consecutive days after school for one hour. All nine teachers and the principal were present at the meeting.

At the first meeting the subject lead teachers were appointed in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases. The minutes of the first meeting showed that all nine teachers were appointed subject lead teachers.

Distributed leadership strongly influences the motivation and empowerment of teachers (Asastasiou and Loukeri, 2014). It is the responsibility of the principal to empower, develop and motivate the teachers to participate in leadership roles (Hermann, 2016). When the principal empowers the teachers he or she encourages and supports them to take up leadership roles (Hermann, 2016).

##### **4.7.2. Findings from the Minutes of the Second School Planning Empowerment Meeting**

The contents of the minutes of the second meeting showed the principal appointed the leaders of the different committees. The different committees were the School Based Support Team (SBST), Integrated Quality Management Support (IQMS), School Discipline Team (SDT), School Governing Body (SGB), Cultural and Prefect Committees. The team leader of the SBST and the IQMS, also the Head of Department for the Foundation Phase at the school, mentioned the following:

*“I am responsible for monitoring that the teachers identify the learners who need remedial support in certain subjects especially in Reading and Maths. Uhm, I also help the teachers with intervention programmes to support the learners with learning difficulties in Reading and Mathematics. I also monitor the teachers’ teaching and learning progress so they can develop and grow professionally in their teaching career.”*

The Cultural Committee leader indicated:



*“I am responsible for the school concerts that are held in the third term.”*

The principal claims that he motivates the teachers to communicate effectively with each other by allowing all the teachers to give their opinions and decisions on teaching and learning. The principal maintains that he is the head leader responsible for monitoring, guiding and evaluating the functions and responsibilities of the lead teachers and team leaders.

#### **4.7.3. Findings from the SASP (2015) Policy Document**

The teachers' experiences of the role of the principal showed many similarities, such as professional development and having subject leaders that are stipulated in the SASP (2015) policy document. The findings indicated in the semi-structured interviews and the minutes of the two teacher empowerment meetings showed that the principal appointed subject leadership roles and the five team leaders.

#### **4.8. CONCLUSION**

The results of the individual semi-structured interviews and the documents have been discussed.

It offered an overview of what the teachers' experiences were of the principal's role in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership. In order to gain understandable knowledge of the teachers' experiences, the following categories were described, namely the teachers' understanding of distributed leadership, their experiences and of distributed leadership, the challenges the teachers' experience of the principal's distributed leadership and the teachers' understanding and experiences of empowerment.

The following categories emerged from the findings from the principal namely the principal's distributed leadership role and developing teacher empowerment.

The semi-structured interviews allowed the teachers to describe their experiences of the distributed leadership role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment. The principal also described his leadership role in empowering the teachers. This research has revealed some useful and insightful information on how principals can lead their schools by empowering the teachers in implementing distributed leadership.

In the final chapter the conclusion, recommendations and the implications of the study will be described.

## **CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY OF RESULTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter the teachers' understanding of distributed leadership is described, as well as the teachers' experiences of distributed leadership, the challenges the teachers' experience in the principal's distributed leadership, the teachers' experiences of empowerment and the leadership role of the principal.

The aim of this research, as previously stated, was to describe the teachers' experiences and perceptions of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership in one school in a district of the Western Cape in South Africa.

The results of the individual semi-structured interviews, the SASP (2015) policy document and the minutes of the school empowerment meetings will be discussed and summarised in this chapter.

"Schools throughout South Africa face significant changes, challenges and demands in terms of leadership, therefore schools cannot be led by principals alone" (Elmore, 2000). Leadership should be shared among all stakeholders of the school (Hermann, 2016).

In this chapter the limitations, the significance, suggestions for further research, recommendations and the conclusion of the research will be described.

### **5.2. RELATING THE RESULTS TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

The research question is mentioned below.

What are the teachers' experiences and perceptions of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership?

The results of the semi-structured interviews and document analysis are described below.

#### **5.2.1. The Results from the Semi-Structured Interviews with the Teachers and the Principal**

##### **5.2.1.1. Distributed leadership**

The participating teachers gave different meanings for the term distributed leadership but all the definitions had similar elements of distributed leadership. Most of the teachers described it as shared leadership and that leadership roles must be delegated to all staff members, while others described it as being in authority and the delegating tasks and duties to others by working collaboratively with the principal. Distributed leadership is shared or collective leadership that develops the capacity for change and improvement in schools (Harris, 2014). Overall, the

teachers gave an understandable meaning of distributed leadership. Distributed leadership is described as an interdependent interaction and practice rather than independent action (Harris, 2014).

#### **5.2.1.2. Teacher Empowerment**

All the teachers gave different definitions of teacher empowerment. Most teachers define empowerment as when teachers are given opportunities to learn new skills and attend workshops and courses to develop professionally and take up leadership roles. Other participating teachers indicate that empowerment refers to when teachers are given tasks to do by allowing them to act or use their own authority with guidance from the principal. Some teachers believe that empowerment refers to teachers feeling encouraged, supported and motivated at the school.

Teacher B said the following: *“When you learn new skills in your profession.”*

Teacher G mentioned: *“Uhm. when a person is given authority as a leader.”*

Empowered teachers believe their involvement is genuine and their opinions are considered and as result they professionally (Heck and Hallinger, 2009). Carl (2102:7) defines teacher empowerment as a form of professionalisation which provides with more authority for individual growth.

#### **5.2.1.3. The Principal’s role of distributed leadership**

All participating teachers mentioned that the principal implemented distributed leadership. The teachers indicated that the principal shared his leadership with the teachers because they were all lead subject teachers and team leaders of the different committees at the school. The team leaders mentioned, however, that they needed more support and guidance from the principal. All the teachers indicated that they class teachers. The majority of the participating teachers mentioned that they had limited time to be subject lead teachers because they spent most of their time on teaching and learning in the classroom. workloads. Most of the teachers stated that their workload increased as they had a large amount of administrative work which included moderating of subject question papers, learners’ workbooks, setting up their own question papers, marking of the learners’ workbooks as well as attending WCED subject training workshops, staff meetings and professional development meetings. Some teachers indicated that they had the time and could take up the challenges of more loads.

Most of the team members expressed they needed more support and guidance from the principal on teamwork. They also expressed their concerns about the overload of duties that they performed at the school. Some of the other participating teachers who were not team members

indicated that they were also capable of being team leaders of the different committees at the school.

Teacher F said: *Yes, teamwork joins people together with different fields of specialisation and competencies. I think I also need to be given a chance to be a leader because I know that I am a good disciplinarian.*"

Teacher D shared the following: *"The principal needed to share his knowledge about teamwork at all times. I am the team leader of the School Discipline Committee."*

Harris and De Fleminis (2016) as well as Lumby (2013) argue that some principals viewed distributed leadership as way of exploiting teachers by giving them more work than what they were supposed to do.

The principal indicated that distributed leadership is closely linked to empowering others to perform duties and responsibilities. The principal further highlighted that teamwork was his main priority, mentioning that he worked well with the teachers and always aspired to set a good example for them. He indicated that he empowered the teachers to share his leadership by appointing them to be subject leaders and team leaders of the different committees at the school.

#### **5.2.1.4. The Principal's role of Teacher empowerment**

All the participating revealed that the principal empowered them through continuous professional development, decision making, mentoring, induction and building trust.

All the participating teachers expressed that they had to do the professional workshops after school. During the workshops they had to present subject content workshops that they were responsible for. The majority of the teachers felt that it was overwhelmingly too much work. While some of the others felt that they had learnt a lot about the different subject content. Some teachers also felt that the principal supported good communication and in doing so he encouraged them to view their opinions and respect their voices in decision making processes at the school, because he showed a sense of trust in them. Other participating teachers indicated that the principal did not encourage good communication and respect their opinions because they felt that he did not support them and listen to their views and problems. All the newly qualified teachers mentioned that they were given mentoring programmes about the profession by the school.

Not all the participating had similar views about the trusting relationship with the principal. Some of the teachers revealed that the principal did not trust them because he always checked on what they were doing in their classes. The other teachers felt that the principal trusted them and that they also trust their principal.

Stronger communication between leaders and team members resulted in positive leader-member relationships (Hill et al., 2014). Graen and Uhl-Bien LMX (1995) suggest that mutual trust and respect are all qualities that are characterised between the leader and the team members.

The principal indicated that empowerment meant that teachers should be given opportunities to grow and develop professionally to achieve their goals. The principal believed that teamwork played a key role in teacher empowerment.

The principal expressed that he had built a trusting relationship with the teachers and allowed them to have the freedom to air their views and opinions on matters pertaining to teaching and learning. The principal also indicated that he supported good communication channels between the teachers. He also mentored the newly appointed teachers to develop and grow professionally in their teaching career. The principal insisted that he encouraged the teachers to give regular feedback of their subjects and team committee meetings.

#### **5.2.1.5. Results of the Document Analysis**

The results from the document analysis corroborate the findings of the interviews discussed above on the teachers' experiences and perceptions of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership.

#### **5.2.1.6. Minutes of the whole school empowerment staff meetings**

The two teacher empowerment meetings showed the appointment of the nine subject leader teachers for the new school year. At the second meeting the team leaders of the different committees were appointed.

The researcher used the SASP (2015) document to obtain more information of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership. The findings showed many similarities which included the appointment of subject lead teachers, team leaders and professional development.

### **5.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Before 1994 schools were led and managed by principals only (Grant et al., 2010). Principals can, however, no longer lead schools alone because of the huge loads of responsibilities on their shoulders (Spillane, 2005).

This study identified, firstly, the gaps which had evolved in the role of the principal over the decades since 1994 when principals led schools alone. Presently, principals need to lead schools and develop teacher empowerment through distributed leadership (SASP, 2015)

Secondly, this study is useful to the Department of Education in South Africa as a guidance to implement mentorship workshops to novice and experienced principals to develop their knowledge and skills on teacher empowerment and distributed leadership.

The findings in this study, thirdly, would also be useful to teacher training colleges and universities to develop students and in-service teachers and principals in their knowledge of and skills in distributed leadership programmes.

Fourthly, this study can be used by principals and teachers during professional development sessions and workshops conducted at schools on leadership roles and teamwork.

Ultimately this interpretative, qualitative approach was designed to describe the teachers' perceptions and experiences of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership.

#### **5.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study presented the limitations in terms of its scope as a result of the quantity of data collected. It was a qualitative research study conducted in only one school with one principal and nine teachers. One school was chosen as it is situated close to the researcher's home. Furthermore, as the researcher is herself a teacher she has limited time. The costs involved in gathering data was a further factor for only choosing one school. The principal and teachers were conveniently selected as they were the only participants at the school who could participate in the study. All the teachers were subject leaders and/or team leaders of the different committees at the school. A qualitative research method was used to collect the data from a small number of participants therefore the findings cannot be generalised (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014).

#### **5.5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study provided an in-depth perspective and experience of a limited number of participants. The participants described their experiences and perceptions of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership.

Some qualitative and quantitative studies have been conducted which have examined the implementation of distributed leadership after 1994 in South Africa. The studies worth mentioning are "Distributive Leadership in Public Schools: Experiences and Perceptions of Teachers in the Soweto Region" by Naicker and Mestry in 2011 and "The Understanding of Distributed Leadership in South African Schools: Challenges and Prospects" by Sibanda in 2017. The SASP (2015) policy document implemented by the Department of Education clearly stipulates that principals need to empower their teachers through distributed leadership. The researcher recommended that the Western Cape Education Department implement regular workshops to all principals on

distributed leadership and teacher empowerment in South Africa. A further recommendation is that all principals study the SASP (2015) policy document with the teachers during professional development workshops to enlighten them on how to implement distributed leadership, so that teachers can become empowered.

The findings clearly indicated that the principal encouraged all nine teachers to be subject lead teachers. The five team leaders indicated that they needed more support and guidance from the principal on teamwork. The teachers also expressed challenges of the principal's distributed leadership which included that their workload was increased and that they spent more time at school doing administrative work. The principal empowered the teachers by involving them in professional development and collective decision making about teaching and learning processes at the school. The principal mentored the newly appointed teachers and built trusting relationships with the teachers. As the study was conducted in one school only all of the findings are specific to this particular institution.

As this was a limited in-depth qualitative study, it is recommended that further research be conducted in the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership. Further research is also required to add depth to the emerging field of distributed leadership and as a result of this study questions emerged that need further investigation.

These include:

- Would similar results on distributed leadership be found in other primary and high schools?
- Would similar results be found if more schools or participants had been used in this study?
- What will happen in a school with distributed leadership after the principal leaves or retires?
- What happens if there is conflict in a school where leadership is distributed?

## **5.6. CONCLUSION**

In this chapter a summary of the entire research project has been discussed. The findings were reviewed of the teachers' perceptions and experiences of the role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership. The limitations, significance and recommendations for further research were described. In addition, recommendations were made to indicate possible ways to improve teacher empowerment through distributed leadership.

Choi and Schurr (2014) suggest that teacher morale and empowerment are enhanced when distributed leadership is practiced in schools." Distributed leadership is a fluid approach which encourages individuals to expose their skills, knowledge and strengths in an organisation" (Harris, 2014).

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**APPENDIX A**  
**Questionnaire for the teachers**

Tell me about your understanding of the term distributed leadership.

Tell me about your understanding of teacher empowerment.

How do you experience the principals' role of distributed leadership in this school?

What are the challenges you experience of the principal's distributed leadership?

Do you experience that your principal implements teacher empowerment in your school in general, with the staff and state how he implements it? And with you specially.

Does the principal implement distributed leadership? IF Yes or No explain how does his leadership style make you respond in your job/teaching/What effect does it have on your teaching?

**APPENDIX B**  
**Questionnaire for the principal**

Tell me about your leadership approach in your school?

How do implement distributed leadership and teacher empowerment?

How do the teachers respond to this approach, either in what they say or on their teaching or their behaviour in general?

## APPENDIX C

### Letter from the Western Cape Education Department



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**REFERENCE:** 20190729-7347

**ENQUIRIES:** Dr A T Wyngaard

Mrs Sarah Saunders  
56 Oxford Street  
Goodwood  
7460

**Dear Mrs Sarah Saunders**

#### **RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN DEVELOPING TEACHER EMPOWERMENT THROUGH DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES. CASE STUDY**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **05 August 2019 till 30 August 2019**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services  
Western Cape Education Department  
Private Bag X9114  
CAPE TOWN  
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

**Directorate: Research**

**DATE: 31 July 2019**

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Lower Parliament Street, Cape Town, 8001  
tel: +27 21 467 9272 fax: 0865902282  
Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47

Private Bag X9114, Cape Town, 8000  
Employment and salary enquiries: 0861 92 33 22  
[www.westerncape.gov.za](http://www.westerncape.gov.za)

**APPENDIX D  
Research Ethics Clearance Certificate**



<b>***For office use only</b>	
<b>Date submitted</b>	
<b>Meeting date</b>	
<b>Approval</b>	<b>P/Y/N</b>
<b>Ethical Clearance number</b>	<b>EFEC 2-7/2019</b>

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

This certificate is issued by the Education Faculty Ethics Committee (EFEC) at Cape Peninsula University of Technology to the applicant/s whose details appear below.

**1. Applicant and project details (Applicant to complete this section of the certificate and submit with application as a Word document)**

<b>Name(s) of applicant(s):</b>	SAUNDERS SARAH JULLY		
<b>Project/study Title:</b>	The role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership: Teachers' perceptions and experiences. A case study.		
<b>Is this a staff research project, i.e. not for degree purposes?</b>	Yes / No		
<b>If for degree purposes the degree is indicated:</b>	Degree: M.Ed Supervisor(s): Dr Stanley A Adendorff		
<b>If for degree purposes, the proposal has been approved by the FRC</b>	None		
<b>Funding sources:</b>			

**2. Remarks by Education Faculty Ethics Committee:**

Ethics clearance granted and this certificate is valid until 30 December 2022.		
<b>Approved: X</b>	<b>Referred back:</b>	<b>Approved subject to adaptations:</b>
<b>Chairperson Name: Dr Candice Livingston</b>		<b>Date:11/7/2019</b>
<b>Chairperson Signature:</b> <i>Livingstone</i>		
<b>Approval Certificate/Reference: EFEC 2-7/2019</b>		

EFEC Form V3\_updated 2016



**APPENDIX E**  
**Request Permission for Research Study**

56 Oxford Street

Goodwood

7460

7 August 2019

Dear Principal and Teachers

Request permission for research study

I am currently completing my Masters' Degree in Education at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

I hereby ask you permission to participate in my research study. My research topic is "The role of the principal in developing teacher empowerment through distributed leadership."

I would like your permission to conduct an interview with you. I would also like to ask permission to view the minutes of the teacher empowerment planning meetings. I would like to ensure you that all the information given during the interviews as well as the minutes of the two planning meetings would be kept strictly confidential. Your names and the name of the school would not be mentioned in my study.

When my research project is completed I would make it available so that you may view it.

Thank you in advance for taking part in my study.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Saunders

I give you permission to interview me and to view the minutes of the planning meetings.

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature of participant