A Changing Leadership Paradigm:
South African Educators' Perceptions of the Dimensions of a Healthy School Culture for Teacher Leadership

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ABSTRACT The aim of this research was to determine the perceptions of educators in relation to a school culture which could support or hinder teacher leadership. A total number of 283 educators from schools in the Eden and Central Karoo Education District of the Western Cape Province in South Africa participated in the study. Two instruments were used to determine educators' perceptions of different aspects in the school context that may impact on teacher leadership practices. The results indicated that although educators perceived their school cultures as healthy for the emergence and nurturance of teacher leadership practices, lacking open communication, participation and collegiality may hinder the emergence and enhancement of teacher leadership. Educators indicated that they experience barriers to teacher leadership. A significant difference was found between the barriers to teacher leadership perceptions held by district officials and other educators. No significant differences were found between educator types on a variety of dimensions of a healthy school culture for teacher leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Effective leadership is widely accepted as a key aspect in achieving school improvement. It implies that the prevailing 'great man' theory of leadership should be replaced by models of leadership which appreciate teachers as leaders and provide for a paradigm of open, transparent and deep democratic leadership. Instead, leadership should be embedded in the school community as a whole, primarily concerned with the relationships and the connections between individuals where everyone's expertise, experience and talents are tapped (Lambert 1998; Wheling 2007). Huber (in Lumby et al. 2008) emphasizes that schools can no longer be seen as static organisations that need to be run or administered, but rather as learning organizations that should continuously be developed or supported to devel-

op itself. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) assert that teacher leadership should be positioned on 'centre stage in the leadership play'**.**

In South Africa, the national Department of Education, established in 1994, through the development and implementation of various policies, has facilitated a process in which schools are guided from a paradigm of centralized control to decentralized control. The South African Schools Act, (Act No. 84 of 1996) (Republic of South Africa 1996) as amended, provides for democratic school governance by school managers, school governing bodies (SGB's) and learner representative councils (LRC's), including the community, parents and learners. Furthermore, to ensure efficiency in the education system, School Self Evaluation (SSE) and Whole School Evaluation (WSE) were implemented as accountability systems and processes. School leadership and management are crucial in ensuring successful outcomes in schools for all involved. A new conceptualization of leadership, as suggested by Senge (1990), where leadership is seen as the "collective capacity to do useful things and where leadership responsibility is widely shared beyond the principal" appears to be necessary to be sufficiently responsive to the complexity of contemporary school leadership demands.

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The broad research aim of this study was to determine the perceptions of educators in relation to aspects of school culture which could promote teacher leadership in a school. An investigation of educators' perceptions of aspects of the school context which could promote or hinder teacher leadership practices, is important because it can reveal aspects which could impact on collective, distributed leadership practices, school improvement, as well as educators' participation, engagement, commitment and job satisfaction.

Theoretical Background

Educational Leadership is gradually being shifted towards a form of collective, shared, distributed, professional and organisational responsibility, stretched over the school's social and situational contexts (Harris 2008). This implies that formal school leaders and teachers work in closer co-operation and collaboration with one another and culminates in deep democratic involvement in leadership practice and collective capacity building (Senge 1990).

Distributed Leadership Perspective involves two aspects, namely the *leader plus* aspect and the *practice aspect* (Spillane and Diamond 2007). The *leader plus* aspect acknowledges that leading and managing schools involve multiple individuals (Frost 2005; MacBeath 2006) and the *practice aspect* represents the product of the interactions of school leaders, followers and aspects of their situation (Gronn 2002; Spillane et al. 2004; Spillane and Diamond 2007).

Distributed leadership is a model of leadership with three distinctive elements namely, it belongs to a group or network of interacting individuals; it has open boundaries with no limits on who should be brought into leadership; and leadership depends more on expertise and this is distributed across the many and not the few (Woods et al. 2004).

Teacher Leadership, as one of the manifestations of distributed leadership, refers to teachers who are "leaders within and outside the classroom; identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders; influence others to improve their teaching practice; and accept responsibility for realizing the goals of their leadership" (Katzenmeyer and Moller 2001; 2009). Teacher leadership represents a par-

adigm for the teaching profession as reflected in the *Teachers as Leaders Framework* which was introduced and refined by Crowther et al. (2009). This paradigm is based on the views of both a better world and the power of teachers to shape meaning systems. Through collaboration new forms of understanding and practice are developed which contribute to school success and the quality of the school community in the long term (Crowther et al. 2009).

Silva et al. (2000) note that "until spaces are made for teacher leadership and the culture is created to support teacher leadership, there will be few stories of successful …teacher leadership". Culture, according to Peterson and Deal (1998), is the "underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions and rituals that has built up over time as people work together, solve problems and confront challenges".

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) refer to the creation of professional learning communities within schools in order to provide a culture that is supportive of both student and faculty learning. DuFour (2004) states that in order for these professional learning communities to thrive, a culture of collaboration must be created; teachers and administrators must work together to achieve their purpose of assuring that all students will learn. The three factors of importance in providing a context that supports teacher leadership are: the relationships between adults in the school; the organizational structures; and the actions of the principal. York-Barr and Duke (2004) claim that optimal or minimal conditions in three key areas can facilitate or challenge the nurturance of teacher leadership: school culture and context, roles and relationships, and structures.

The context necessary for the emergence and nurturance of teacher leadership was the focus of this research project as educators' perceptions of their respective school cultures supporting or hindering teacher leadership practices, were assessed.

Research on School Culture for Teacher Leadership

The literature revealed the following key aspects on school culture for teacher leadership:

Leadership practices for schools today are a distributed entity, which is primarily concerned with and facilitated by human interactions (Mac-

beath 2006; Day et al. 2000; Harris 2001). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) emphasise that continuous efforts are needed to resolve issues and remove barriers in the school context to facilitate teacher leadership.

Murphy (2005) suggests that teacher leadership can be achieved within an enabling school culture where teacher leadership is valued, purposefully developed, nurtured, supported and rewarded. York-Barr and Duke (2004) refer to conditions in three key areas which can facilitate or challenge the nurturance of teacher leadership. These conditions are: teachers are respected as teachers, want to learn leadership skills and have the capacity to develop such skills; their leadership work is valued by peers, visible in the school, continually negotiated through feedback and assessment and shared among teachers; and the culture within the school supports teacher leaders, supervisors and colleagues encourage leadership and teachers are provided with time, resources and opportunities to develop leadership skills.

Doyle (2000) argues that barriers exist at all levels, are interrelated and cannot likely be separated meaningfully. The barriers to teacher leadership are clustered into three broad organisational components, namely structural conditions in schools; support for teacher leadership; and occupational and professional norms/culture.

In relation to the *structural conditions* in schools, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) identify one of the main barriers to teacher leadership in the literature, namely structural barriers which concern highly bureaucratic top-down models, with its hierarchical culture of authority which still dominates in many schools, also in South Africa. The results of a study completed by Grant et al. (2008) provide strong evidence that, school management teams act as an impediment to teacher leadership as they demonstrate a lack of trust in teacher leadership potential and do not distribute leadership but instead autocratically control the leadership process. Studies completed by Singh (2007), Rajagopaul (2007) and Ntuzela (2008) support the notion of principal and or school management team as barrier to teacher leadership by controlling decision-making processes and being afraid to delegate authority. Grant and Singh (2009) found that principals delegate unwanted tasks and administrative work to teachers, while school management teams use formal positions to delegate management and administrative tasks to teachers they perceive as having the expertise for the role, and in the process restrict teacher access based on their seniority, experience and expertise.

Other structural barriers are lack of clarity about process and locus of decision-making and channels of authority (Pellicer and Anderson 1995); isolation of teachers caused by traditional schedules and structures (Coyle 1997); inadequate time for collaboration, learning, leading (LeBlanc and Shelton 1997; Ovando 1996); and a lack of incentives or rewards for engaging in leadership activities (Little 1988).

With regard *to support* for teacher leadership, Frost and Durrant (2003) state that, in addition to new structures, "teachers are unlikely to be able to engage in such leadership without a framework of support". Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) assert that to support teacher leadership, means to understand the concept, to create awareness in teachers of their own leadership potential and to provide opportunities for the development of teacher leadership. Pellicer and Anderson (1995) found that a lack of time, unsatisfactory relationships with teachers and administrators and a lack of money were factors that hinder development.

Murphy (2005) describes support under six broad dimensions, namely values and expectations, structures, training, resources, incentives and role clarity.

The third organisational component, which may hinder the birth and development of teacher leadership, relates to *school culture and climate*. As the teaching profession is not a profession that values or encourages leadership in its ranks, the current culture in schools represents the norms of privacy, autonomy, equality, egalitarianism and cordiality which could counter interventions to distribute leadership and neutralise attempts to create new roles for teacher leaders to support and work collaboratively with colleagues (Keedy 1999). In a study on primary school educators' perceptions of school climate, De Villiers (2006) reports that *principal directive behaviour* were indicated as high, suggesting autocratic, rigid and constant control over educators and school activities; and that *principal restrictive behaviour* were slightly above average, which could be indicative of the assignment of some burdensome duties to educators resulting in interference with their teaching responsibilities.

It is evident that the first dimension towards recognition and promotion of teacher leadership is to establish an appropriate school culture (Bishop et al. 1997) and to create a school culture, which is committed to provide a supportive environment in which teachers are encouraged to collaborate, to participate in school-site decision-making, to engage in ongoing learning and to reflect upon their pedagogy (Snell and Swanson 2000). Harris (2001) emphasises the importance of shared values for teacher leadership to flourish, which are developed through shared pedagogical discussion, observation and team teaching.

York-Barr and Duke (2005) summarise that as far as roles and relationships are concerned, the following factors are important in promoting teacher leadership: colleagues recognise and respect teacher leaders who have subject-area and instructional expertise (Little 1988); high trust and positive working relationships exist both among teacher peers and with administrators (Silva et al. 2000); teacher leadership work that is central to the teaching and learning processes (as opposed to administrative or managerial tasks) is routinely assigned (Hart 1994; Little 1988); teacher-leader and administrator-leader domains are clearly defined, including their shared leadership responsibilities (Smylie and Brownlee-Conyers 1992); aspects in relation to interpersonal relationships between teacher leaders and the principal are prioritized (Smylie and Brownlee-Conyers 1992); recognition of ambiguity and difficulty in teacher leadership roles (Stone et al. 1997); and principal support for teacher leadership through formal structures, informal behaviour, coaching and feedback (Buckner and McDowelle 2000; Kahrs 1996).

Factors in relation to roles and responsibilities that may hinder teacher leadership are: hierarchical, instead of horizontal relationships with peers, for example teacher leaders exercise authority instead of work collaboratively in learning and decision-making situations (Cooper 1993; Darling-Hammond et al. 1995); appointment of teacher leader by administrator without teacher input (Wasley 1991); change in the nature of relationships between teacher leaders and peers, form social to organisational and instructional purposes (Little 1995); ambiguities about teacher leaders' roles and expectations (Ovando 1996; Smylie and Brownlee-Conyers 1992); uncertainty about teacher leader versus principal domains of leadership (Smylie and Brownlee-Conyers 1992); and inadequate communication and feedback among teacher leaders, principal and teacher staff (Hart 1994).

Murphy (2005) refers to the following norms about teaching and leading, which could contribute to a lack of enthusiasm for shared leadership in schools, namely the norms of: legitimacy, which confirms that teaching is defined as a classroom-orientated and student-centred activity (Doyle 2000); the divide between teaching and administration, where teacher leaders have to cross the border and violate the norm of "principals lead; teachers teach" (Barth 2001; Whitaker 1997); managerial prerogative, which refers to the traditional patterns of the principal's authority and autonomy over action outside of classrooms (Smylie 1992); followership, which refers to the belief that "teachers are followers, not leaders" (Katzenmeyer and Moller 2001); and compliance, which emphasises that teachers are to comply with the directives from the school hierarchy (Wasley 1991).

According to the literature, school culture and context can facilitate teacher leadership when a school wide focus on learning, inquiry, and reflective practice exists (Katzenmeyer and Moller 2001). In addition, taking initiative should be encouraged (Katzenmeyer and Moller 2001), an expectation for teamwork and shared responsibility, decision-making and leadership should be present (Katzenmeyer and Moller 2001; Pellicer and Anderson 1995), and teaching professionals are being valued as role models (Little 1988). Furthermore, a strong sense of community among teachers that fosters professionalism should prevail (Caine and Caine 2000; Talbert and McLaughlin 1994).

School culture and context as conditions which can influence teacher leadership, on the other hand, can be challenged by: a lack of clarity about organisational and professional direction and purpose (Duke 1994); norms of isolation and individualism (Hart 1994); socialisation of teachers to be followers, to be private, to not take on responsibilities outside the classroom (Little 1988); reluctance by teachers to advance and violate egalitarianism norms (Little 1995); a view of teacher leadership as career advancement (Little 1995); and the 'crab bucket culture' wherein teachers drag each other down instead of supporting and inspiring one another (Duke 1994).

Horton et al. (2009) conclude from their literature review that more personal challenges could also hinder teacher leadership, for example to balance responsibilities of families, students and leadership responsibilities. The pressure of time, the stress of building new relationships with peers, the possible resistance to change and overall support are key factors in undermining teacher leadership.

It is thus evident from the literature review, that both personal and organizational barriers may prevent the promotion and development of teacher leadership in schools. The most significant of these barriers are the structural conditions in schools, the current lack of support for teacher leadership and the variety of subtle norms embedded in the culture of every individual school (Doyle 2000; York-Barr and Duke 2004).

The growing interest in more distributed leadership practices in schools and the obvious benefits of enabling teacher participation in leadership practices in schools, not only for students, but also for educators' professional growth and development make it worthwhile to focus on the perceptions of educators regarding possible barriers to teacher leadership, as well as aspects of a healthy school culture that could promote or hinder teacher leadership. The investigation will therefore focus on the following research problem.

Research Questions

The following specific research questions will be investigated:

- What are the *barriers* to *teacher leadership* as identified by educators (principal, member of school management team, veteran, middle, novice and district official) in the Eden and Central Karoo Education District?
- Is there a difference between the barriers to teacher leadership as identified by educators (principal, member of school management team, veteran, middle, novice and district official) in the Eden and Central Karoo Education District?
- What are the *perceptions* of educators (member of school management team, veteran, middle and novice) in the Eden and Central Karoo Education District in relation to the seven *dimensions of a healthy school culture* for teacher leadership?

- Is there a difference between educators (member of school management team, veteran, middle and novice) in the Eden and Central Karoo Education District in relation to their perceptions of the seven dimensions of a healthy school culture for teacher leadership?

The following method was adopted to investigate these research questions.

METHOD

Data Collection

The data were collected by means of the following questionnaires, namely
  o Barriers to Teacher Leadership
  o Teacher Leadership School Survey (TLSS)
  o Demographic Information
Two surveys were compiled, namely
- Survey 1 (Dimensions of School Culture – Principals, District Officials) : a short version, which would be intended for principals and district officials; and
- Survey 2 (Dimensions of School Culture – Educators): a longer version, which would be intended for educators, including members of school management teams, veteran, middle and novice educators.

For the purpose of this study two perspectives were used to assess educators' perceptions of different dimensions of a healthy school culture which could enhance teacher leadership within the school, namely barriers to teacher leadership and a healthy school culture for teacher leadership. Each perspective will be illustrated below.

Barriers to Teacher Leadership

In their work in schools over the years, Crowther et al. (2009) encouraged principals and educators to identify possible forces and factors that might prevent teacher leadership from germinating and proliferating in schools and the profession. A list of possible barriers to teacher leadership was compiled, as well as possible strategies to overcome these barriers (Table 1).

To determine the possible barriers to teacher leadership as perceived by respondents, fifteen possible barriers are listed in a closed form questionnaire by the researcher and a five-point Likert scale was used to facilitate educators' re-

Table 1: Overcoming barriers to teacher leadership

Barriers to teacher leadership	Ways to overcome the barriers
"I'm just a teacher" mindset	Draw attention to ways in which teachers exhibit leadership in school activities and processes
Lack of confidence	Ask teachers to take a lead role where they will be comfortable
Unclear understanding of the concept	Engage in professional dialogue and analysis, using the Teachers as Leaders Framework and snapshots
"I just want to teach" mindset	Explore three-dimensional pedagogy and its links to the Teachers as Leaders Framework
No time for development	Highlight developmental opportunities in daily operations
System that expects only principals to be leaders	Encourage mentoring from teacher leaders (TL) models
Possible encouragement of rabble rousers	Insist that the school's vision and values be used as guide to action
Belief that too many cooks spoil the broth	Discuss how to make 1 + 1 = 3
No rewards for extra effort	Highlight intrinsic reward systems
Open to abuse by manipulators	Make projects transparent and accountable
Previous failures with lead teachers	Create new labels, without attached baggage
Language that reinforces teachers as subordinates ("bosses" and "staff")	Devise lists of appropriate and inappropriate language
Not taught in pre-service education	Make sure that beginning teachers become aware of TL and its relevance for their careers
Peer pressure	Reiterate that TL is voluntary but a commitment to school success should be obligatory
Lack of principal support	Ask the principal to explore (and critique) meta-strategic leadership concepts

(*cf* Crowther et al. 2009)

sponses. The response scales are defined by categories "never", "rarely", "sometimes", "often" and "always". Two examples of the questions are:

"I'm just a teacher" mindset
Lack of Confidence

This is a useful exercise for a school management team, as well as a whole-school staff to assess internal and external barriers in enabling teacher leadership (Crowther et al. 2009).

Teacher Leadership School Survey (TLSS)

Analysis of and understanding of the school context is of importance before teacher leadership activities could be advanced upon. The four key areas within the context to consider are administrative support, the teaching culture, history of professional learning and personal balance (Katzenmeyer and Moller 2009).

Katzenmeyer and Katzemeyer (2005) developed the *Teacher Leadership School Survey (TLSS)* to assist schools and education managers in assessing their school contexts. The instrument measures educators' perceptions of the dimensions of a healthy school culture which could support teacher leadership within a school.

Seven scales highlight the different aspects in the school context that may impact on the successful introduction and implementation of teacher leadership, namely:

Developmental Focus

Teachers are assisted in gaining new knowledge and skills and are encouraged to help others learn. Teachers are provided with needed assistance, guidance and coaching.

Recognition

Teachers are recognized for roles they take and the contributions they make. A spirit of mutual respect and caring exists among teachers. There are processes or the recognition of effective work.

Autonomy

Teachers are encouraged to be proactive in making improvements and innovations. Barriers are removed and resources are found to support teachers' efforts.

Collegiality

Teachers collaborate on instructional and student-related matters. Examples of collegial behaviour include teachers discussing strategies, sharing materials, or observing in one another's classrooms.

Participation

Teachers are actively involved in making decisions and having input on important matters. Department chairpersons, team leaders and other key leaders are selected with the participation of teachers.

Open Communication

Teachers send and receive information relevant to the effective functioning of the school in open, honest ways. Teachers feel informed about what is happening in the school. Teachers easily share opinions and feelings. Teachers are not blamed when things go wrong.

Positive Environment

There is general satisfaction with the work environment. Teachers feel respected by one another, by parents, students and administrators. Educators perceive the school as having effective administrative leadership. Appointed or informal teams work together effectively in the interests of students (Katzenmeyer and Moller 2009; Katzenmeyer and Katzenmeyer 2005).

The *Teacher Leadership School Survey (TLSS)* measures teachers' perceptions of the dimensions of a healthy school culture which could support teacher leadership within a school. The TLSS is a 25-item, closed form questionnaire and a five-point Likert scale was used and the response scales are defined by categories "never", "rarely", "sometimes", often" and "always". Two examples of the questions are:

At my school administrators (managers) and teachers try hard to help new teachers be successful

At my school teachers are provided with assistance, guidance or coaching if needed

The TLSS could assist educators and schools to assess the dimensions of support for teacher leadership and inform their decisions and

onward planning. A high score on a particular dimension will indicate a more healthy school culture for teacher leadership for that dimension, while a low score will indicate a less healthy school culture for teacher leadership. The results of these assessments facilitate powerful discussions between educators on how different schools recognize and strengthen teacher leadership and can be a springboard for educators to influence change in their schools (Katzenmeyer and Moller 2009).

Measures to Ensure Validity and Reliability

The *Barriers to Teacher Leadership* questionnaire and activity are part of an approach to leader development in school-based processes. Crowther et al. (2009) referred to their work with the IDEAS Project (Initiating, Discovering, Envisioning, Actioning and Sustaining), a school revitalization project, managed through the Leadership Research Institute of the University of Southern Queensland, during which these questionnaires and activities were used in five distinct phases in order to facilitate a process of organizational learning. The project had been rated as highly successful in the development of teacher and parallel leadership in many schools in Australia, Singapore and Sicily (Chesterton and Duignan 2004). Independent research had further indicated that the project contributed significantly to the enhancement of teacher morale and satisfaction, as well as student efficacy (Crowther et al. 2009). The CLASS Plan (Creating Leaders to Accelerate School Success), a comprehensive approach to developing teacher and parallel leadership, had been specifically designed by Crowther and associates and thoroughly tested in the field during the implementation of the IDEAS Project. The activities which comprise the CLASS Plan endorse both the features of the *General Framework for Professional Development* (Murphy 2005) and Hord's concept of *Professional Learning Communities* (Hord 2003).

The Teacher Leadership School Survey (TLSS) was developed by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001, 2009) during their work with many teachers, schools and districts. They became aware of the variation amongst schools in the degree to which they support teacher leadership initiatives and efforts. Schools in support of teacher leadership displayed certain identifi-

able characteristics, which were categorized by the researchers in seven dimensions, namely *developmental focus*, *recognition*, *autonomy*, *collegiality*, *participation*, *open communication* and *positive environment*. The purpose of the instrument is to measure teachers' perceptions of how their own schools model effective practices in supporting teacher leadership. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) reported that they widely use the TLSS with teachers as part of their *Leadership Development for Teachers* course. It offers an opportunity for teacher and school leaders to analyze the results of their assessment and collectively plan to develop a more collaborative school culture in order to promote teacher leadership.

The set of questionnaires used for the purpose of this study is widely used in training, professional development and informal activities within schools, with the focus to invite personal assessment, context analysis, conversation amongst educators and development of insights which facilitate further discussion, visioning, planning and implementation.

In the case of a quantitative design, two categories of external validity need to be considered, namely *population external validity* and *ecological external validity*. *Population external validity* refers to the extent to which the results of a study can be generalized to other people (McMillan and Schumacher 2010). As the subjects in this study, namely educators, have certain characteristics and can be described with respect to variables as gender, educator type (principal, district official, educator [member of school management team, veteran, middle, novice]) and school type (primary, secondary, special), the results of this study could only be generalized to other people who have the same or similar characteristics.

For the outcomes of this research project to be reliable, it must demonstrate that if it was to be carried out on a similar group of respondents in a similar context, then similar results would be found. It was therefore of importance to establish whether the calculated measures or scales used in this study, acted as reliable indictors or respondent perceptions to the various aspects of teacher leadership. Reliability, more specifically internal consistency reliability, was evaluated by means of scale reliability testing.

Sampling

Non-probability sampling, specifically *purposeful sampling,* was used for this study, because the researcher selected particular subjects from the population who would be representative or informative about the topic of teacher leadership.

Data for this study was collected in 61 schools, including primary, secondary and special schools in the Eden and Central Karoo Education District of the Western Cape Province in South Africa. The sample consisted of specific educators in the school, including principals, members of school management teams and veteran, middle and novice educators. District officials of the Eden and Central Karoo Education District were also invited to participate in the study. The sample size of this study was 283 in total, both male and female and Afrikaans and English speaking educators participated. Participants were orientated and motivated by means of a brief introductory section before completion of the survey. Participation was voluntarily.

Procedure

Application was made to conduct the study in 134 schools in the Eden and Central Karoo Education District, as well as to include the district officials of the education district. Permission was granted by the Western Cape Department of Education.

Both postal and internet-based surveys were used for the purpose of this study. Postal questionnaires were administered in schools, with educators, including the principal, a member of the school management team, veteran, middle and novice, as respondents. Internet-based questionnaires were administered in the education district, with district officials as respondents.

A preliminary invitation to participate in the research project was sent by the researcher to each of the 134 schools in a personalized email message. This message included a cover letter, a copy of the letter of approval by the Western Cape Education Department, as well as a warning that the surveys will be mailed to schools, addressed to the school principal.

A research pack was sent to each of the identified schools. The mailed research pack included a cover letter, five copies of the survey and a

stamped return-addressed envelope. The five copies included one copy of Survey 1, intended for the principal, and four copies of Survey 2, intended for educators, one each for an educator: member of the school management team, veteran, middle and novice.

At the time of the closing date for surveys to be returned to the researcher, a final reminder email message, requesting completion of the survey, was sent to each of the schools with outstanding surveys.

The district officials received an electronic e-mail-based survey. The email included a cover letter, a copy of the letter of approval by the Western Cape Education Department and the link to access the online version of the survey. Instructions for completion of the survey were attached to the survey. At the time of the closing date for the completion of surveys, a final reminder and request to participate were sent to all district officials.

As previously mentioned, the responses of completed surveys (paper-based) were manually added to the database. The database was created on the software program, *Survey Monkey*, for the purpose of the study. The responses of the completed surveys (e-mail-based) were collected through the software program, *Survey Monkey*. For the purpose of statistical analysis, the data was shared with the statistician by creating a link which could be accessed via the software program.

Data Processing

The scoring and statistical processing of the TLSS questionnaire were done as explained by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009). The researcher provided a scoring protocol for the *Barriers to Leadership* questionnaire.

The following procedures were used to analyze data:

To describe the biographical attributes of the sampled population, one-way frequency tables on all characteristics queried in the survey were calculated. The two descriptive research questions of the study were answered by means of two general composite frequency analyses which were completed. The response distributions of questionnaire items, pertaining aspects of teacher leadership, are represented. The calculation of summative measures for each aspect

of school culture was necessary in order to identify the underlying trends and relationships in the data more accurately and parsimoniously.

In order to answer the difference research questions a one-way analysis of variance (abbreviated ANOVA) was used to investigate the probable effect of the biographical variable 'educator type' on the various aspects of school culture.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study found that when a single summative measure or 'barrier score' for each respondent's perception of barriers to teacher leadership initiatives was calculated, it was evident that educators do experience barriers to *teacher leadership* as 63% of the respondents indicated that they *sometimes*, *often* or *always* experience barriers to teacher leadership. 37% of the respondents *never* or *rarely* experience barriers to teacher leadership (Fig. 1).

The barriers identified in this instance are 'I'm just a teacher' and 'I just want to teach' mindset, lack of confidence, an unclear understanding of the concept of teacher leadership, lack of time for professional development, the belief that 'too many cooks spoil the broth', the fact that teachers are not rewarded for extra input and the fact that *teacher leadership* is not taught in pre-service courses.

On the other hand, results revealed that educators differed in opinion about the following barriers to teacher leadership: 'possible encouragement of rabble rousers', 'open to abuse by manipulators', 'peer pressure', 'previous failures with lead teachers', 'language that reinforce teachers as subordinates', 'a system that expects only principals to be leaders' and 'lack of principal support'.

Taking into consideration that more respondents indicated that they 'never' or 'rarely' lack the support of their principal than those who indicated that they 'sometimes', 'often' or 'always' lack the support of the principal, as well as the fact that more educators did not perceive the language usage in their schools as reflective of them being subordinates and that it was only expected of the principal to be a leader, it can be derived that fewer educators in this study experience the structural barriers to teacher leadership such as traditional top-down leadership and isolation by traditional schedules and structures
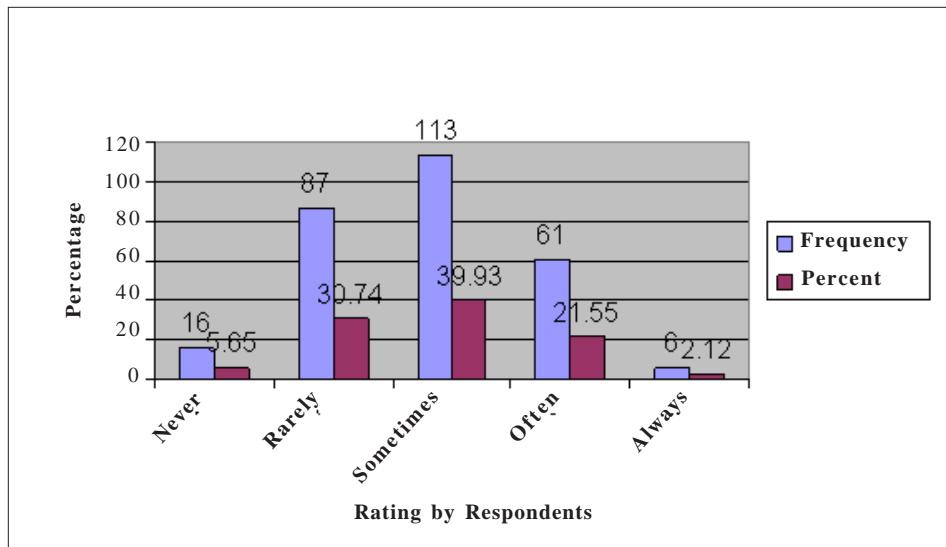
Fig. 1. Frequency distributions for barriers to teacher leadership

(York-Barr and Duke 2005). This finding appears to challenge the findings of Little (2002), Magee (1999), Grant et al. (2008), Singh (2007), Rajago-paul (2007), Ntuzela (2008) and De Villiers (2006) who reported that the principal and senior management teams act as impediment to teacher leadership as they do not distribute leadership, but control the leadership process autocratically; that principals are perceived as directive and restrictive in their approach; and because of their distrust of teachers, isolate them from decision-making processes. It is however possible that the mere statement 'lack of principal support' within the context of teacher leadership could have been understood by respondents as support to teachers in their role as teachers and not related to support to teacher leadership, under-standing of the concept, creating awareness for teacher leadership and providing opportunities for teacher leadership initiatives and activities. It should also be noted that the respondents for this particular aspect of the project included prin-cipals, members of school management teams, senior educators, as well as district officials, suggesting that they might have had different experiences or perceptions than those in non-leadership positions.

Educators in this study identified inadequate time for collaboration, leading and learning, as well as a lack of incentives or rewards for engag-ing in leadership activities as barriers to teacher leadership. These are indicative of barriers to teacher leadership which relate to organisation-al support. These findings are consistent with findings in relation to time, as documented by Murphy (2005) and recognition, as documented by Crowther et al. (2002).

Lack of pre-service training in the area of teacher leadership was also highlighted as a barrier to teacher leadership. This finding also concurs with findings as documented by Smy-ser (1995), Le Blanc and Shelton (1997) and Grant et al. (2008). The need for continuous profes-sional development opportunities is emphasised.

The statements "*I'm just a teacher*", "*I just want to teach*" and "*lack of confidence*", repre-senting barriers to teacher leadership, should be considered with care. On the one hand, it may be reflective of a person's personality, a choice made by an individual to be a teacher, to teach and to be the best teacher he or she can be. On the other hand, it may be reflective of a teacher with poor self-esteem, who might be-lieve that he or she is not able to perform or act as a leader due to a variety of factors and or previous experiences in education. It is the view of the researchers that a climate should be creat-ed for each professional in the school to enable the individual to develop and realise his or her potential. The role of the principal and school
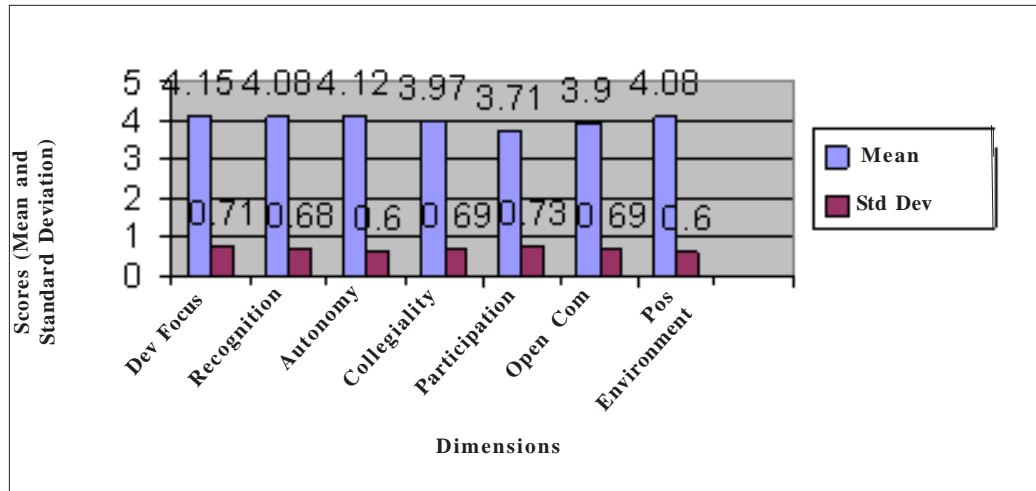
Fig. 2. Mean perception scores for dimensions of a healthy school culture for teacher leadership

management team is clear: to invite all stake-holders to participate in vision-setting, a collaborative practice of thinking, planning, implementing and monitoring, building capacity, being accountable and in this way support and enhance the outcomes for students, but also educators. It can be concluded that educators experience barriers to teacher leadership and that these barriers may be embedded in structural conditions in schools, support for teacher leadership and or occupational and professional norms or culture.

With regards to the research question on differences between educators the study found that district officials' perceptions of possible barriers to teacher leadership differed significantly from all other educator types, including principals, members of school management teams, veteran, middle and novice educators.

Educators' perceptions regarding the dimensions of a healthy school culture for teacher leadership showed general agreement in the areas of *developmental focus*, implying that educators are provided with assistance, guidance and coaching; *recognition*, implying that there are processes of recognition of effective work; *autonomy*, implying that barriers are removed and resources are found to support educators' efforts; and *positive environment*, implying that there is a general satisfaction with the work environment. Respondents appeared to be less in agreement in relation to their perceptions of a

healthy school culture in their respective schools in the areas of *participation, communication* and *collegiality*.

Although not statistically significant, it can be derived that *participation*, as one of the seven dimensions indicative of a healthy school culture for teacher leadership, was perceived as less positive than the other six dimensions. This finding implies that educators are less actively involved in making decisions and having input in important matters. It can be derived that true democratic sytems and shared decision-making are not yet in place in schools, which had been highlighted by the literature as one of the characteristics and benefits of teacher leadership (Glover et al. 1999; Pellicer and Anderson 1995).

Respondents perceived their respective school cultures as less healthy in the following areas, namely *participation*, which implies that educators are less actively involved in making decisions and having input in important matters; *open communication*, which implies that they feel less informed about what is happening in schools and less easily share opinions and feelings; and *collegiality*, meaning that collaboration on instructional and student-related matters takes place less often. The finding in relation to collegiality appears to be inconsistent with the finding of Grant et al. (2008), who found that collegiality amongst teachers, was perceived as a positive aspect within school cultures.

Table 2: Summary analysis of variance results on seven dimensions of a healthy school culture for teacher leadership

Summary analyses of variance results conducted on seven aspects of teacher leadership to evaluate whether categories of educators view these issues differently

The various issues, the summary Anova tables, educator categories, number of respondents per category and mean Teacher Leadership aspect-score are presented in the table

Source	DF	Study of squares	Mean square	F Value	Pr>F	Educator category	n_i	Mean	R-sq
Teacher Leadership: Barriers: Effect of educator type									
Model	5	20.9516260	4.1903252	6.46	<.0001***	District	26	3.6436 b	
Error	277	179.5562970	0.6482177			SMT	52	2.7974 a	
Corrected total	282	200.5079230				Principal	61	3.8645 a	
						Veteran	89	2.6816 a	0.11
						Middle	29	2.8276 a	
						Novice	26	2.5769 a	
Source: Healthy school culture, developemntal focus dimension - Effect of educator type									
Model	3	2.39575238	0.79858413	1.62	0.1864				
Error	192	94.72575949	0.49336333			SMT	52	4.2253	
Corrected total	195	97.12151187							0.02
						Veteran	89	4.0562	
						Middle	29	4.0788	
						Novice	26	4.3626	
Source: Healthy school culture, recognition dimension: Effect of educator type									
Model	3	1.18488847	0.39496282	0.86	0.4654				
Error	192	88.67933477	0.46187154			SMT	52	4.1841	
Corrected total	195	89.86422324							0.01
						Veteran	89	4.0080	
						Middle	29	4.0739	
						Novice	26	4.1593	
Source: Healthy school culture, autonomy dimension: Effect of educator type									
Model	3	0.88319875	0.29439958	0.80	0.4929				
Error	192	70.28912528	0.36608919			SMT	52	4.2198	
Corrected total	195	71.17232403							0.01
						Veteran	89	4.0979	
						Middle	29	4.0985	
						Novice	26	4.0110	
Source: Healthy school culture, collegiality dimension: Effect of educator type									
Model	3	0.76832143	0.25610714	0.54	0.6548				
Error	192	90.90181601	0.47344696			SMT	52	4.0275	
Corrected total	195	91.67013744				Veteran	89	3.9069	
						Middle	29	3.9803	0.01
						Novice	26	4.0659	
Source: Healthy school culture, participation dimension: Effect of educator type									
Model	3	2.2660213	0.7553404	1.42	0.2371				
Error	192	101.8414339	0.5304241			SMT	52	3.8571	
Corrected total	195	104.1074552							
						Veteran	89	3.5987	
						Middle	29	3.7241	
						Novice	26	3.7473	
Source: Healthy school culture, open communication dimension: Effect of educator type									
Model	3	1.87300109	0.62433370	1.31	0.2725				
Error	192	91.52839416	0.47671039			SMT	52	3.9643	
Corrected total	195	93.40139525							0.02
						Veteran	89	3.7897	
						Middle	29	4.0000	
						Novice	26	4.0055	
Source: Healthy school culture, positive environment dimension: Effect of educator type									
Model	3	1.99766821	0.66588940	1.87	0.1363				
Error	192	68.41590946	0.35633286			SMT	52	4.1374	
Corrected total	195	70.41357768							0.03
						Veteran	89	3.9743	
						Middle	29	4.1626	
						Novice	26	4.2363	

Bonferroni Multiple Comparison of means tests.

Mean score values with the same letters next to them do not differ significantly from one another

Significance legend

*** : significant on 0.1% level of significance   ** : significant on 1% level of significance

* : significant on 5% level of significance   : significant on 10% level of significance

It can be concluded that although respondents in general perceived their school cultures as supportive of and healthy for teacher leadership, there are aspects, for example open communication, participation and collegiality, which might hinder the fostering and enhancement of teacher leadership (Fig. 2).

In relation to the seven dimensions of a healthy school culture for leadership, significant differences in perceptions among the different educator types were not indicated. It can therefore be suggested that 'health' of the school culture for teacher leadership was perceived as constant for all educator groups and thus reflecting an objective view of the school culture in the participating schools. It can be derived from this study that school cultures were viewed as supportive for the emergence and establishment of teacher leadership (See Table 2).

CONCLUSION

It can be inferred from the results of the study that educators, including school-based educators and district officials in the Eden and Central Karoo Education District in the Western Cape Province in South Africa, rated their respective school cultures as healthy for and/or supportive of teacher leadership to be introduced, nurtured and sustained. However, dimensions of school cultures which may hinder the development and enhancement of teacher leadership practices in schools were highlighted namely open communication, participation and collegiality.

It was also evident that barriers to teacher leadership are a reality in schools, with a lack of time, incentives and experiential training as part of a process of continuous professional development in the area of teacher leadership, as key aspects highlighted. Of significance was the finding that respondents differed significantly in their responses in relation to their perceptions of 'principal support' for teacher leadership. More respondents perceived their principals as accommodating and open towards teacher leadership activities and initiatives than those who perceived 'lack of principal support' as a barrier to teacher leadership. With the important role that the principal has to play in the arena of teacher leadership, this is a positive and encouraging finding. Although encouraging, it should be noted that all respondents were not in agreement on this statement and that educators in leadership positions were included in this sample.

Despite existing barriers and certain dimensions of school cultures that need attention and which might restrict teacher leadership, as also supported by other research findings, specifically in the South African context, it is evident that schools, more specifically educators, are ready to embrace teacher leadership practices and are ready to convey convictions of a better world, facilitate communities of learning, strive for pedagogical excellence, confront barriers in the school's culture and structures, translate ideas into sustainable systems of action and nurture a culture of success.

In order to release the potential of teacher leadership, for teacher leadership to become a valued leadership theory and practice in decentralized education systems and schools, where district, circuit and school wide organizational development is of critical importance, it is recommended that the Department of Education, the education district, the principal and school management team and educators commence with a process of acknowledging, embracing of and investing in teacher leadership as leadership model for the future.

In doing so, schools will follow the international trends for school leadership development as educators will be empowered, professional communities will be developed and continuous professional development will guide educator growth and development. This would enhance educators' motivation, productivity, morale, job satisfaction and general well-being. The outcomes for students are numerous.

Further research could focus on the perceptions of less experienced educators (middle and novice), who do not necessarily fulfil leadership roles, as well as district officials, in order to obtain a more representative view of their perceptions of school culture for teacher leadership. The study is limited due to the fact that the majority of the respondents represented more experienced educators who probably already fulfil leadership roles and responsibilities; and the fact that the response rate of district officials was unsatisfactory.

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