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**THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON TEACHER
PROFESSIONALISM OF GRADE 6 TEACHERS IN THE XHARIEP DISTRICT**

by

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Dissertation

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Education

in Education Management and Leadership

in the

Faculty of Education

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

SUPERVISOR: DR J. HAMILTON

JULY 2023

DECLARATION

I, SANDRA NONTUTHUZELO MONA, hereby make a declaration that this mini-dissertation that I submit for the Masters of Education in Education Management and Leadership at the University of the Free State titled “The influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District”. I further declare that I have not previously submitted it for any qualification in any institution of higher education.

I have complied with the ethical standards in terms of the University of the Free State code of ethics for researchers. I also declare that all sources I used have been acknowledged by means of references.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to My Moms:
Nyenjiwe Angelina Mona, up above in heaven.
Nombulelo Gloria Mjuluki, my prayer warrior.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the following people who have made this research a success:

- God, my Redeemer.
- Dr Joleen Hamilton, a special thank you for your informed advice, support, and expertise in guiding and supervising me without complaints. Thank you, Doc.
- I am grateful to the Free State Department of Education for allowing me to conduct this research.
- Principals of participating schools, thank you for allowing me to attend your schools.
- A special word of thanks to my research participants. Without you, this research would not be possible.
- Miss Carmen Nel, my language editor. Thank you very much for your assistance.
- My Moms, thank you for your motivation, prayers and teaching me the value of education.
- My family and friends, your love, constant encouragement and support kept me going. God bless you.

ABSTRACT

The focus of education today is on providing high-quality education that can change the socioeconomic circumstances of South Africans living in poverty. Teachers have a responsibility to look after the emotional, physical, and mental health of their students. School principals play a vital role in supporting these tasks. One of their responsibilities is to be effective leaders who can influence how teachers behave in their schools.

This study investigated how transformational leadership can impact the professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District. According to the literature, principals can have a significant impact on how teachers behave professionally because they are transformational leaders. The study was guided by the discussion and analysis of the transformational leadership model, which helped to identify the factors that influence Grade 6 teachers' professionalism.

The study used a qualitative approach to the research problem located within the interpretivism paradigm. Three primary schools were selected as the research sites, and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. The data from six Grade 6 Natural Sciences & Technology teachers (two from each primary school) and three principals from each primary school were analysed using thematic analysis.

The study found that principals can influence teachers' professionalism through effective leadership practices, which can lead to high-quality teaching and learning. The study also found that teacher professionalism is a complex issue that is influenced by both teacher-internal factors and school-external factors. The study provides recommendations on how schools can help teachers become more professional and create environments with adequate teaching resources to deliver high-quality instruction.

Keywords: transformational leadership, teacher professionalism, principal, teacher, teacher performance, behaviour, enhance, influence.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS

ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
CPTD	Continuing Professional Teacher Development
CT	Critical Theory
CTPD	Continuing Teacher Professional Development
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DH	Departmental Head
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
NST	Natural Sciences & Technology
NST	Natural Sciences and Technology
PLC	Professional Learning Community
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SBST	School-Based Support Team
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

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CHAPTER 1 :

BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The level of skill in a community is determined by the quality of education (Dodillet, Lundin & Krüger, 2019:24; Hanushek, 1996:10). According to Van der Berg (2004:114), education is acknowledged as a critical tool for national equitable distribution of resources and growth. The democratic government has created policies that aimed at fixing the unequal distribution of resources in South Africa's education system and, most importantly, creating a unified curriculum without any racial bias (De Clercq, 2013:13). Various researchers (Cruickshank, 2017:22; Okcu, 2014:2163; Alageheband, 1997:15) have argued that the school leadership style has a significant impact on promoting quality education. As such, school principals are now encouraged to shift from the traditional leadership style in schools to a more transformational one that involves all the stakeholders involved in improving the quality of education.

Since 1994, the South African government has dedicated resources to the transformation of public education in the country (Gardiner, 2017:9). South Africa had to insert itself in a changing world affected by globalisation and this was evident in education policies (Vally & Spreen, 2003, Jansen, 2004). Furthermore, Jansen (2004) adds that because of the prevalent status then drastic and rigorous actions in education had to be taken to put the country to the level of the world and that meant the introduction of foreign policies to rescue education system. At the centre of this transformation, the goal is to ensure that every student has access to quality education as entrenched in the country's constitution (De Clercq, 2013:112). This drive for quality education shifted the role teachers play in education and the kind of performance expected from them. The South African government acknowledges that improving education quality depends on educators' professionalism level (Badat & Sayed, 2014:13). As such, the issue of teacher professionalism in public schools is essential in the pursuit of quality education in South Africa. The importance of teacher professionalism is also recognised in research conducted in other countries. Spaulding (2005) found that teacher behaviours, such as lack of control or authority, supervision, and visibility, can impact the conduct of learners in the classroom. Overall, improving

teacher professionalism is seen as crucial for delivering quality education and transforming the education system in South Africa. Establishing organisations like South African Council for Educators (SACE) and implementing policies to enhance the level of teaching profession are important steps towards achieving this goal.

The new curriculum was put into place to raise education standards, focus on skill and knowledge development to support lifelong learning, and keep up with international trends (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019:112). The introduction of this new curriculum was welcomed and unavoidable, but it was important to consider the learners' varied cultures, backgrounds, and educational principles for social justice, equality, and growth (Malada, 2010:19). However, Leibbrandt and Borat (2001:8) draw the conclusion that despite efforts to improve the standard of the South African educational system, education outcomes remain a major concern in the nation. In agreement, Spaul (2013:3) notes that when compared to other middle-income nations, South Africa has the lowest performance rating for educational results. According to Badat and Sayed (2014:12), inadequate instruction is even worse in many township and rural schools because of insufficient resources.

This study examined how the transformational leadership approach may influence teacher professionalism amongst Grade 6 teachers in primary schools in Xhariep District in the Free State Province. According to Steward (2014:34), the transformational leadership approach focuses on the principal being the role model for teachers who instil a shared vision. This study explores how the transformational leadership approach may improve teacher professionalism.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Over the decades, the South African education system has been characterised by challenges ranging from lack of resources, teachers striking, and teacher scandals around abusing learners. These challenges are well-known in historically disadvantaged townships and rural schools. Researchers (Gardiner, 2017:11; Badat & Sayed, 2014:130) have noted that this has created an interest in the quality of education in townships and rural areas. The kind of education the learners are subjected to and poor results evident in South Africa's basic education system can be

attributed to the level of professionalism of teachers in schools. Badat and Sayed (2014:131) further argue that while the South African government invested in changing the curriculum post-apartheid, teachers were not adequately trained to teach and fully implement the new curriculum to achieve the desired outcome. South Africa is then stuck with a policy version of an ideal teacher without providing the necessary support to actual teachers to measure up.

The professionalisation of a teacher is a significant and primary concern for most schools as teachers are the most crucial resource in the delivery of quality and effective education in the classroom. A principal need to develop better strategies and build a strong culture of collaboration to improve teacher professionalism in schools. Properly implementing suitable conditions, a good communication plan and a transformational leadership approaches are essential to promote teacher development. The quality of the principal's leadership positively influences the teacher's performance and achievements. In supporting this issue, Okinyi, Kwaba and Nyabuto (2015:107) state that the principal needed to provide highly valued insights into their daily leadership style that cultivate a supportive and transformative environment for teachers.

Lack of teacher professional development has been indicated as probably the most important factor hindering the successful implementation of curriculum and improvement in the quality of teaching, a crucial element of teacher professionalism (Ono & Ferreira, 2010:59). However, factors such as lack of organisational support may result in teachers' absences, turnover behaviour, lack of adequate resources, and student absenteeism may hinder teacher professionalism.

Locke, Vulliamy, Webb and Hill (2004:1) argue that teachers' lack of professionalism is partly a result of school principals' inability to monitor and guide teachers in doing what is right. As a result, this study aimed to understand the challenges that hinder teacher professionalism and explore how the influence of the transformational leadership approach can enhance teacher professionalism of the Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District, Free State Province.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Xhariep District is situated in a rural area, surrounded by farms in the Free State Province. In the district, the learners, parents, and community rely on teachers to ensure that learners are educated. There is a noticeable difference between the various schools according to teacher professional behaviour. Teachers' behaviour and performance must be good to provide quality education to these learners. For teachers to conduct themselves well, the principal should be influential in terms of their professional and personal development. The provision and management of education play a pivotal part in learners' education. The school needs programs for teachers to develop the necessary skills to create a positive relationship for effective teaching and learning conditions; principals should therefore implement strategies and requirements to enhance teacher professionalism.

The South African government recognised the importance of improving teacher professionalism in order to deliver quality education to previously disadvantaged schools. In 1995, government published a white paper on education and training with the goal of transforming education in the country (Gardiner, 2017:11). As part of this transformation effort, SACE was established. The main aim of this council is to enhance the level of the teaching profession and develop professional conduct among educators (SACE, 2011:11).

The motivation for this research is rooted in the researcher's observation as a Grade 6 Natural Sciences and Technology teacher. A big challenge with teacher professionalism needs to be addressed as these teachers prepare learners for a new phase. There is a need for proper implementation of scientific and technological terms and skills as learners are to experience intensive work on science and technology subjects in the next phase. The researcher has experience, observations and actions happening almost daily, directing the study to focus on this group of teachers.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the above research problem and rationale, this study sought to address the following research questions.

1.4.1 Main research question

How does transformational leadership influence teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District?

1.4.2 Sub-research questions

- What factors and conditions are influential in teacher professional development?
- Which school factors impede teacher professionalism?
- What recommendations could be offered on how transformational leadership can influence teacher professionalism?

1.5 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.5.1 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to explore the influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District.

1.5.2 Objectives of the study

The following research objectives have been formulated to achieve the aim as mentioned above

- To identify the factors and conditions that can influence teacher professional development.
- To examine school factors that impede teacher professionalism.
- To give recommendations on how transformational leadership could influence teacher professionalism.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings from this study may provide a deeper understanding of motivational factors and conditions that enhance teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in Xhariep District. The results of this research have the following importance for the school principals and teachers.

Good working relationships between principals and teachers unlock ways of working in an atmosphere of mutual understanding. Principals must guide, assist, and support teachers to implement their knowledge and skills diligently and correctly. This study can encourage principals and teachers to team up in enhancing their working relationship as partners in the level of teacher performance and principals execute transformational leadership approach to influence teacher professionalism.

The research can help create favourable circumstances that will affect teacher professional growth. Additionally, by using the appropriate teaching strategies, transformational leaders encourage and support teachers to put in a lot of effort to meet educational objectives. This study offers suggestions for enhancing instructional strategies and realistic actions that may be taken to support and promote teacher professionalism. The results unequivocally demonstrate how transformational leadership affects Grade 6 teachers' professionalism in the Xhariep District.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

In examining teacher professionalism, this research took a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is useful because it takes the subjects' viewpoint on social action as the starting point (Wilson, 2011:179). The study further employed a multiple case study research design. A multiple case study strategy helped the researcher to compare the cases and explore the differences within and between them. A multiple case study strategy aims to replicate findings across the case studies. Hence, the main task of the researcher is to select the cases carefully. The careful selection of the instances enabled the researcher to predict similar results across the case studies and to predict conflicting results based on a theory (Gustafsson 2017:11). There were three cases for this study, namely three schools.

1.8 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

In this study, the data was collected through semi-structured interviews. As defined by Dawson (2002:26), the researcher uses an interview plan with questions to be discussed in semi-structured interviews. However, there is no fixed order of questions, but the discussion between the researcher and participants determines the questions to follow. In addition, Ruslin, Mashuri, Rasak Alhabsyi and Syam (2022:28) also state that semi-structured interviews are a set of open-ended questions prepared in advance and do not guide the respondents to a specific response. The semi-structured interviews were arranged and conducted to find out how principals, as leaders of the schools using transformational leadership, influence teachers. The interviews also looked at factors and conditions suitable for enhancing teachers' professional behaviour and discussed factors that impede teacher professionalism in schools. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The researcher used purposive sampling because the focus was on Grade 6 Natural Sciences and Technology (NST) teachers at the intermediate phase's exit level. The NST is the developed subject in the area, and the researcher is also teaching the subject. The three primary schools that were chosen are situated in the Xhariep District. The sample comprised principals of three primary schools and six Grade 6 teachers, two from each primary school.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Johnson and Christensen (2012:100), research ethics is a guiding set of principles to help the researcher conduct an ethical study. The researcher ensured that the necessary ethical steps were followed in this study. The researcher applied and received ethical clearance from the University of the Free State and the Free State Department of Education. After obtaining ethical approval, the researcher requested permission from school principals to collect data. The participants were informed about the nature and purpose of the research, namely, the influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District. The participants were also informed about their rights, and consent forms were sent to each participant to obtain permission to conduct research. The researcher protected collected data from harm by making the information known to everyone else but the researcher.

1.10 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.10.1. Transformational leadership: A leadership style that inspires and motivates followers to achieve their full potential and exceed their own expectations (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

1.10.2. Teacher professionalism: is defined as a set of qualities, behaviours, and ethical standards that educators adhere to in their practice, encompassing their commitment to student learning, self-improvement, and ethical conduct within educational community (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

1.10.3. Principal: A principal is the leader of a school responsible for its overall administration, management, and leadership. Principals play a pivotal role in shaping the school's culture and ensuring its effective functioning (Hallinger, 2013).

1.10.4. Teacher: A teacher is an individual who imparts knowledge, skills and guidance to students. Teachers are key figures in the education system and are responsible for facilitating learning and fostering the development of learners' intellectual and social abilities (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

1.10.5. Teacher performance: Refers to the effectiveness, competence, and quality of a teacher's work in the classroom (Hattie, 2009).

1.10.6. Behaviour: Refers to how learners act and interact in the classroom and how teachers conduct themselves and manage the learning environment (Marzano & Marzano, 2003).

1.10. 7. Enhance: To enhance means to improve, enrich, or make something better. Refers to having the quality of teaching, learning, experiences or educational outcomes (Hagreaves & Fullan, 2012).

1.11 STUDY OUTLINE

The research study has five chapters and is structured as follows.

Chapter One: Background and Orientation to the Study

The introduction and background, purpose statement, rationale, research questions, the research aims and objectives, research design, data collection process, significance of the research and chapter summary are all included in this chapter.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This second chapter unpacks the literature around teacher development, from a general analysis to a focus on teacher professionalism in South Africa. The chapter further explains the theoretical framework that guided the research, namely transformational leadership.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

The philosophical underpinnings of the research are described in this chapter. It explains the rationale behind the chosen methodological approach, including how the study was conducted and how data was collected and analysed.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Presentation

This chapter deals with the collected data's presentation, analysis and interpretation.

Chapter Five: Summary, recommendations and Conclusion

This final chapter of the study discusses how the findings address each research question, the limitations, recommendations for future study, topics for further research and the conclusion.

1.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the background and the problem to be investigated, the rationale behind the research study, the questions to be answered and the study's objectives. It also presented the significance of the study and provided the research design and data collection process. The chapter concluded with a chapter outline of this study. The next chapter will present the literature review linked to the research topic and the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

O'Leary (2014:88) describes a literature review as a critical review of knowledge, including findings and a theoretical framework. With the reviewed literature, the researcher planned to detect research strategies and specific data collection that would be useful in investigating the influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism. The post-apartheid education landscape in South Africa has undergone several changes. All these changes are underpinned by the government's goal of creating a unified curriculum that provides quality education to all learners (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019:12; De Clercq, 2013:13). In turn, this has meant teachers' role during the apartheid education system transformed to deliver this new curriculum and this new kind of learner.

The change in education has pushed the drive towards professionalising teaching in South Africa's education system (De Clercq, 2013:13). Dibete (2015:16) cites that the purpose of a literature review is sharing the knowledge of other studies that are related to the study that is being researched. This chapter sets out to unpack the trends within teacher professionalism in South Africa's basic education system. The chapter first explains the theoretical framework guiding this research: transformational leadership. After that, the concept of professionalism and how it has been viewed within education is discussed. The study looks at how professionalism has developed in South Africa, and the world. The last section of this chapter explains the role of the principal in promoting teacher professionalism at school.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study's theoretical framework will discuss the transformational leadership approach and incorporate transformational leadership models. Grant and Osanloo (2014:13) define a theoretical framework as a structure that directs research by relying on a theory made by employing an established, clear, and sensible explanation of

remarkable facts and relationships. Ngulumbe, Mathipe, and Gumbo (2015:54-55) further state that a theoretical framework is the base of a research plan that places the researcher within academic discourse. The study shows how transformational leadership can influence teacher professionalism.

2.2.1 The transformational leadership approach and its models

Aydin, Sarier, and Uysal (2013:3) define a transformational leadership approach as a leadership style where the leader places a strong emphasis on increasing followers' motivation and knowledge. Furthermore, Abdul Wahab, Mohd Fuad, Ismail, and Majid (2014:40) define transformational leadership as spurring followers to greater heights and personal improvement. This leader places equal emphasis on internal and external incentives. According to Atsebeha (2016:4), the leader uses this strategy to influence change and turn things around. The behaviour of the teachers would change under this kind of leader. Okoth (2018:320) continues by saying that a transformative leader sets attainable objectives, promotes skill advancement, and values talent. Ability and drive are the driving forces behind achieving stated goals (Hayward, 2005:25). According to Steward (2014:54), Bass and Riggio (2006:12), and Lunenburg (2003:12), the transformational leadership approach encompasses a number of paradigms.

Four dimensions, though, have been found by these writers to be common to all of these models. According to Bass and Riggio (2006), these four characteristics are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These methods help schools expand, enhance teacher effectiveness, and raise educational standards (Alzoraiki, Rahman, & Mutalib, 2018:322). The models also emphasize idealized motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, and individualized consideration (Northouse, 2001:23). Idealized influence, according to Steward (2014:54) and Bass, Avolio, Jung, and Berson (2003:13), focuses on the transformative leader as a role model for followers. A leader also wishes for a better future through vision, say Berson, Shamir, Avolio, and Popper (2001:55). Focusing on inspirational motivation is whereby the leader influences the followers by constantly motivating them to work hard with passion and determination to perform more than expected.

According to Avolio (2011:989), the transformational leader creates togetherness and a harmonious working environment, where the followers are tasked with high-quality and challenging tasks to motivate their enthusiasm. Lowe, Galen Kroeck and Sivasubramaniam (1996:385) refer to intellectual stimulation as a dimension in which the leader inspires and stimulates the creativity and innovation of followers. The transformational leader encourages followers to think in new ways, discover new ideas, and emphasise problem-solving. Furthermore, García-Morales, Jiménez-Barrionuevo and Gutiérrez-Gutiérrez (2012:1040) state that the transformational leader has a good reasoning ability to analyse the situation critically in finding creative solutions to problems.

The fourth dimension is about the transformational leader who works as a coach, gives advice, and monitors the followers in achieving their objectives (Bass, 1999:32). Following this approach, the leader caters to individual needs and wants, helping them succeed and thrive. Moreover, Yukl (2008:720) explains that transformational leaders develop their followers by giving support and training when needed. The leader respects individual differences.

2.2.2 Transformational leadership in the education sector

In the 1980s, leadership in the education sector was shaped by the instructional leadership model, where the principal made decisions about school management and the curriculum (Vanblaere & Devos, 2016:35; Horn & Kane, 2015:376). In the 1990s, the transformational leadership model gained popularity in the education space because it advocated for school principles to encourage a shared vision and motivate educators to embody school goals.

In the education sector, transformational leadership is an approach that, when adopted, helps educators lead by example (Postholm, 2018:5). According to Postholm (2018:18), the transformational leadership approach emphasises the importance of fostering community bonds, inspiring both students and educators to achieve higher levels of success. When adopting the transformational leadership approach, the school principal takes the position of cultivating a shared vision and inspiring teachers to achieve excellent results (Meador, 2005:149). The transformational leader in the

education sector, through supporting, helps teachers identify what their development needs are, helps in finding resources to support the teaching and learning process.

The school has goals and objectives, which are supported by the school leader through enhancing both organizational and individual performance (Avolio & Gardner, 2005:315). A transformative leader must possess a wide range of abilities in order to improve the school (Yang, 2014:82; Meador, 2005:39). According to Allen, Grigsby, and Peters (2015:2), transformational leadership is one approach that has been recommended for success in the process of school improvement. Thus, in order to evaluate how it can contribute to enhancing teacher professionalism, this research employs this theory.

In creating a conducive teaching and learning environment, Alageheband (1997:15) states that successful principals using a transformational leadership style, develop a well healthy relationship with teachers to equip them and produce a well-orientated working environment. The teachers will follow suit to display exemplary behaviours such as independence, engagement, and positivity (Cruickshank, 2017:22). In support, Okcu (2014:2163) argues that transformational leadership can adapt in today's world where significant changes happen, new values develop and where the future cannot be predicted. This research uses the transformational leadership approach to examine how teacher professionalism can be enhanced.

2.2.3. The relevance of theoretical framework

Transformational leadership theory

Transformational leadership emphasize leaders who inspire and motivate followers to achieve higher levels of performance (Burns, 2004). The framework explores how transformational leadership impacts teacher professionalism through mechanisms like motivation, job satisfaction, and professional development within the school's organisational culture. The research framework outlines variables, relationships, and research methods. It builds upon existing literature, aiming to bridge gaps and contribute new insights. The framework also provides a structured approach to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher professionalism.

The theory of transformational leadership is relevant in the context of the influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism for several reasons as discussed:

Motivation and inspiration.

According to Bass and Riggio (2006) transformational leadership has been linked to increased teacher motivation and performance. Transformational leaders are known for their ability to motivate and inspire followers. This can lead to increased enthusiasm and dedication to their profession, contributing to higher levels of professionalism.

Professional development.

Marks and Printy (2003) state that transformational leaders prioritise the professional development of their teaching staff. The teachers are provided with opportunities for continuous learning and growth, which are key components of teacher professionalism.

Improved job satisfaction.

Transformational leadership is associated with increased job satisfaction among employees. When teachers are satisfied with their work, they maintain high standards of professionalism and positively impact learners (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Positive organisational culture.

Leithwood et al., (2004) assert that the leader promotes a positive organisational culture characterised by trust, collaboration, and shared values. Such culture can create an environment in which teachers exhibit professionalism, as they feel supported and valued. This can lead to a more conducive environment for teaching and learning.

The transformational leadership theory is relevant because it provides a framework for understanding how leadership behaviours and practices can positively influence teacher professionalism, which in turn, can have a significant impact on the quality of education and success in schools.

2.3 PROFESSIONALISM

Ifanti and Fotopoulou (2011:113) assert that the legal, medical, and religious professions were the first to develop professionalism. The key features of a career that distinguish these three vocations from all others are described by the researchers. There is therefore no single definition of professionalism due to the various ways the term has been interpreted. According to Hoyle (1995:10), professionals are people in a profession who use tactics and rhetoric to elevate their rank, pay, and working circumstances. The quality of the services provided then improves as a result of professionalism. Professionalism, according to Carr (2000:111), refers to the skills and behaviours one develops in their particular occupation or profession. Therefore, professionalism is viewed as the behaviour that people in a given field should have specific to their field.

For instance, Green (2009:5) defines professionalism as a particular activity that includes actions directed at some specific end that could be a human need. Hargreaves (2003:10) explains the concept as a multi-dimensional structure consisting of one's attitudes and behaviours towards their job, and it refers to the achievement of high-level standards. According to Gardner and Shulman (2005:19), and David (2000:10), a profession can be determined by the following six main factors:

- A dedication to acting in the best interests of clients and society at large;
- A specialised set of professional abilities, methods, and performances specific to the profession;
- A body of theory or special knowledge with its own principles of growth and reorganisation;
- The ability to make decisions with integrity in the face of uncertainty in both technical and ethical matters;
- a methodical strategy to collectively and individually learning from experience; and
- The creation of a professional community tasked with overseeing and keeping track of professional and practice excellence.

One of the primary objectives of professionalism traits is freedom. Demirkasımoğlu (2010:2048) adds that because professional duties are significant, unique, and complex, professionals should be free to make decisions without interference from other forces. Based on the above definitions, professionalism is a complex structure that includes how one conducts oneself in the workplace. Professionalism consists of the attitude and practices one must have to provide quality service. Improving the quality of service rendered within a field is defined as professionalising a specific occupation. While professionalism is related to an individual's qualifications and capacities, professionalisation refers to the attempt to gain professional skills (Hoyle, 1995:10). Professionalisation then improves the profession's quality.

2.4 TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

David (2000:15) claims that the reason teaching was a "semi" or "quasi" profession was that it couldn't fully satisfy the standards of professionalism that were frequently used in the literature. Teaching was viewed as a semi-profession because administrators specifically monitor teachers to ensure that teachers' performance is in line with the previously established standards. The 'supervising' role administrators limit teachers' autonomy because they are formed and guided by the administrators to accomplish corporate goals. According to Samuels (1970:41), who backs up these claims, public school teachers lack significant authority because they do not make critical decisions in educational environments.

It is possible to say that definitions of teacher professionalism place a strong emphasis on teachers' professional accomplishments, such as performing well, meeting the highest standards, and reaching greatness. For today's teachers, professionalism is defined by how well they handle obstacles and how efficiently they draw from their specialized knowledge and experiences, according to Baggini (2005:55). Phelps contends that using excellence as a yardstick for rating their behaviour and attitudes enhances teachers' professionalism. In other words, professionalism is measured by the highest and best standards.

According to Hargreaves (2000:161), there were four historical stages in the development of professionalism in the field of education.

1. Teaching was regarded in the pre-professional era as managerially challenging but technically straightforward, and its tenets and guidelines were regarded as unquestionable common sense. Being a teacher requires real experience, and one gains proficiency via personal trial and error.
2. The singularity of education and the unquestionable traditions on which it is built were challenged during the era of autonomous professionals.
3. In the era of the collegial professional, initiatives to create strong professional cultures of collaboration are growing.
4. The post-professional era, also known as postmodernism, is fuelled by two key economic advancements as well as the digital and electronic revolution in communications.

Sachs (2003:39) groups these different phases into two versions of teacher professionalism under “old professionalism” and “new professionalism”. Old teacher professionalism is more focused on (a) exclusive membership, (b) conservative practices, (c) self-interest, (d) external regulation, and (f) reactive. In contrast, the new teacher’s professionalism takes on an inclusive, more transformative approach and holds a public ethical code of practice, flexible and progressive.

The new idea of teacher professionalism professionally creates the conditions for teachers to take ownership of their actions. Sachs (2003:39) refers to this change of perspective as transformative professionalism. Transformative professionalism highlights the need for teachers to take control of their curriculum, consider underserved people, and help students and communities that are frequently treated as tools rather than targets of educational policy.

2.5 TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM AND QUALITY EDUCATION

Education systems have been under the spotlight globally because of the difficulties learners face in fully engaging with the content (Hargreaves, 2013:13). It has been realised that the education process goes beyond having an educator standing before learners and delivering a lesson. Governments across the globe have thus transformed how teaching occurs and the approaches to teaching (Toh, Diong, Boo &

Chia, 2000:11). In trying to transform the education system, the role of teachers has been identified as a critical factor (Toh et al., 2000:12). This change needs to ensure that learners receive a quality education, gave birth to the introduction of professionalisation into the education sphere. Hoyle (1995:20) argues that viewing teaching as a profession refers to the ability of teachers to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired in the classroom and adhered to the set regulations.

Teacher professionalism is thus seen as a critical element in providing quality education. Teacher professionalism is defined as the extent to which teachers subscribe to a set of ethical standards of conduct set for teachers (Dodillet, Lundin & Krüger, 2019:24). To foster educational professionalism and facilitate the professionalisation of teaching, countries prepare codes and conducts for the education profession. Morley (1999:144) adds that teaching as a profession further requires a move away from merely understanding the issues within education but involves performing and delivering quality service. In such an instance, educators are only viewed as professionals through their work.

The professionalism of teachers is then measured by their ability to control the learning and teaching process positively. Teachers are considered professionals when they can use their skills to adjust the curriculum to cater to the diverse needs of students in their classrooms. In this instance, teacher professionalism moves beyond possessing skills but also includes a level of care for their learners and understanding the individual needs of learners. Munje (2019:22) adds that teachers are always expected to behave professionally, be mannered and resilient, exercise a caring, accessible, friendly, and calm attitude with learners under their guidance, and be well-orientated, flexible, and able to show confidence in the classroom.

For Hargreaves (2003:35), professionalism of teachers relies on educators taking an active role in ensuring they deliver the required services. Therefore, this author believes that teachers' professionalism depends on the working conditions, status, and power in society, and at the same time, the profession's internal quality. Teacher professionalism can be summed up as how teachers perform their jobs, understand the content they are teaching, their attitude, the specific code of behaviour being adhere to, and how they interact with learners (De Clercq, 2013:112). Having defined

what teacher professionalism is, the following section will look at teacher professionalism in the South African context.

2.5.1 Teacher Professionalism in South Africa

How education was structured during the apartheid era in South Africa meant that changing the nature of teachers' professionalism in South Africa would be different from how the rest of the world experienced it (Gardiner, 2017:9). The racial segregation that existed during apartheid was a determining factor in how education was structured. Government funding, the type of curriculum taught, and the quality of teachers were determined by a school's racial composition (Gardiner, 2017:9). Black township schools were underfunded, and teachers were either underqualified or had little resources to work with. Government legislation like the Bantu Education Act ensured that the black population received an inferior education (Munje, 2019:19). The inferior education black people received also extended to the kind of training black teachers received in colleges. Thus, schools for black people were set up to prepare them for unskilled and low-paying jobs (Munje, 2019:17; Gardiner, 2017:10).

When the democratic government emerged in 1994, it wanted to eliminate the evident inequalities in South Africa's education system. It aimed to phase out the racial segregation in the education system (DBE, 2012:2). In 1995, the South African government published a white paper on education and training that wanted to transform education and training in the country (Gardiner, 2017:11). One of the goals being to deliver quality education to previously disadvantaged schools in marginalised communities. The goal of the South African government is to create a unified curriculum for all public schools. This goal is driven by the hope that an improvement in South Africa's education system will improve the socio-economic realities of poor South Africans. Under this goal, the government identified teachers as playing a crucial role in the transformation of the education system (Gumede & Biyase, 2016:2). Gumede and Biyase (2016:11) explain that the change of curriculum placed a massive burden on the educators who were the ultimate drivers of educational transformation in schools. This focus on teachers being the main drivers of transformation within education has highlighted the teacher's ability to deliver this new curriculum adequately in the classroom.

The drive for transformation resulted to establishment of the South African Council for Educators (SACE) in 1995. The core aim of this council is to enhance the level of the teaching profession and develop the educators' professional conduct (SACE, 2011:11). SACE identified four elements of professionalising teaching in South Africa, namely:

1. Initial Teacher Education (ITE) – Prospective teachers in South Africa must complete one of two training routes: a three-to-four-year education degree or a one-year postgraduate certificate in education. Once completed, they can become qualified teachers.
2. Registration of teachers – Once the initial training is complete, section 21 of the South African Council of Educators notes that every teacher must register with the teacher's council before practising as an educator.
3. Continuing Teacher Professional Development (CTPD) – The CPTD system is managed by SACE and aims to continuously improve teachers' teaching practices to respond to learners' ever-changing needs.
4. Evaluation of teacher performance – Teachers in South Africa are subject to assessment under the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) policy to monitor their competency, strengths, and areas that need development.

The above elements imply that improving teacher professionalism rests on the ability of educators to invest in their skills. While the South African government has made strides in improving teachers' quality, the government's current input is not rendering the desired output in terms of student quality. Government funding for primary education has increased since 1994. However, Badat and Sayed (2014:130) state that formally disadvantaged schools, inequalities and poor academic achievement are still key features of the educational order.

Researchers such as Gardiner (2017:11) and Badat and Sayed (2014:130) note that the poor results evident in South Africa's basic education system can be attributed to the level of professionalism of teachers. For instance, a study conducted by Munje (2019:12) in three poor primary schools in Cape Town found that the lack of professionalism in teachers directly impacts learners' learning experiences and, ultimately, their performance in school. For Maphosa, Mutekwe, Machingambi,

Wadesango and Ndofirepi (2014:23), one of the causes of teachers' lack of professionalism is a lack of accountability in the South African education system.

Teachers who are insufficiently knowledgeable about the curriculum may omit a particular topic or tell students to simply read the textbook. According to Munje (2019:13), learner absenteeism causes South African students to lose over 40% of instructional time each year. Additionally, it is claimed that school culture and local community context reinforce the connection between teacher professionalism and low levels of student performance (Maphosa et al., 2014:22).

While the above clearly shows the link between teacher professionalism and learner performance, De Clercq (2013:12) argues that the lack of teacher professionalism in South Africa must also be attributed to the government's lack of support for teachers. The South African basic education system is characterised by a lack of teaching and learning resources, teachers dealing with overcrowded classes, and dysfunctional school governance (Badat & Sayed, 2014:131). The authors further argue that while the South African government invested in changing the curriculum post-apartheid, teachers were not adequately trained on how to teach and fully implement the new curriculum to bring about the desired outcome (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019:21). South Africa is then stuck with a policy version of an ideal teacher without providing the necessary support to actual teachers to measure up.

Locke et al. (2004:1) add to this debate and argue that teachers' lack of professionalism is partly a result of school principals' inability to monitor and guide teachers in doing what is right. The South African Schools Act of 1996 (DBE, 2012:12) gives schools guidelines to create school governing bodies, which with the help of the principal, ensure the maintenance of the school in and outside the classroom. The governing bodies look around to ensure textbooks are bought, the subjects taught, good learner intake, and, in some cases, the hiring of teachers (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019:177; DBE, 2012:12). For poor schools situated in poor communities, school governing bodies are usually made up of parents with little to no understanding of financial management (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019:177). From this perspective, the composition of school governing bodies combined with the principal's leadership style plays a significant role in determining the level of professionalism teachers have (Du

Plessis & Mestry, 2019:178). The principal leadership style plays a pivotal role in influencing teacher professionalism.

2.6 THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Primary schools in South Africa are generally a learner's first entry into formal schooling. Therefore, the South African government emphasises improving quality education in primary schools (Gardiner, 2017:2).

According to Du Plessis and Mestry (2019:8), since 1994, primary education in South Africa has been a topic for debate amongst researchers and the government. In 2019 The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) conducted an international assessment of primary school achievement in different countries (TIMSS, 2019). The study found that South African primary school learners are far behind where they should be in their curriculum. These assessments also found that one-third of Mathematics teachers did not have Mathematics as a subject in their initial training. According to the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2012:12), the national average for tests on literacy in primary schools is 30-35 %.

While urban schools in South Africa have somewhat been able to adapt to the changing curriculum, schools in historically disadvantaged areas have found it difficult to change and adapt to new approaches in education (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019:8). The lack of adaptation to new approaches which result in poor performance is the reality for schools in rural areas in South Africa, which were historically under-resourced during apartheid and have carried this burden even in post-apartheid South Africa. Primary schools in rural areas face several challenges in obtaining a quality education. Schools in these areas are situated in secluded, underdeveloped areas (Gumede & Biyase, 2016:12). According to Gardiner (2017:12), these schools are then characterised by a lack of adequate resources and infrastructure; this hinders teachers' ability to deliver quality education and, in certain instances, teachers' professionalism.

Beyond the resource challenge teachers in rural schools face, they also face high rates of learner absenteeism from school, which is attributed to the location of these schools in farming areas, where learners are required to work on farms on certain days (Du

Plessis & Mestry, 2019:3). In addition, because of the socio-economic backgrounds of learners in rural schools, they thus face difficulties in getting extra support with school content at home. The influence of socio-economic backgrounds on learner performance shows that issues inside and outside the classroom affect teacher professionalism.

The location of schools in rural areas makes these schools unattractive to prospective young teachers. Young teachers not wanting to teach at rural schools means that teachers in rural primary schools, in most cases, prepare more than one grade and teach different subjects, to accommodate the demand (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019:1). For Du Plessis and Mestry (2019:2), this results in teachers resorting to shortening and adjusting the curricula, use contextual examples, or link the curriculum to local needs.

The discussion above shows that internal and external issues to the educator affect teacher professionalism. These range from the available resources, the teacher's knowledge of the curriculum, the school's governing structure, and the learners' socio-economic context, which is why this research seeks to examine whether adopting a transformational leadership framework could enhance teacher professionalism.

2.7 THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN PROMOTING PROFESSIONALISM AT SCHOOL

As a head of the school, the principal represents a more visionary and critical element (Botha, 2004:229). In terms of this formulation, school principals are entrusted with embodying and promoting certain traits, values, and norms in the process and environment of teaching and learning. Moreover, the principal is pivotal in facilitating school learning and acts as a change agent (Hauserman & Stick, 2013:188). As such, real change occurs at the school under the guidance of the principal's leadership. It is thus the work of the principal to inspire, nurture, support, and influence teachers.

To illuminate this conceptualisation further, Schreuder, Du toit, Roesch and Shah (1993:321) adds that educator professionalism also includes the educator's commitment and positive professional attitude toward completing their educational task. As a custodian of discipline, the school principal, in this way, should ideally become a guide against which acceptable behaviour is measured. When it comes to

practical leadership, which needs to bring about results to the school, Botha (2011:397) argues that a critical aspect in determining teacher professionalism is the managerial role played by the school principal.

The principal plays a central role in the school environment, and it must be borne in mind that if the school is not managed in such a way that enhances professionalism, and when the management of the school is not up to the expected standard due to lack of professional leadership, problems arise. Botha (2004:239) clarifies that an experienced school principal is an institutional leader and manager and is therefore responsible for the excellent work performance of all the people in the school. Therefore, if the principal can manage the school and further set the accepted standards through professional behaviour, the teachers can emulate the behaviour resulting in the school performing positively.

In recent times, particularly in times of uncertainty caused by the novel coronavirus, leadership and professionalism received significant attention and the importance of the principal being able to show professionalism was necessary. For Stone-Johnson and Weiner (2020:367), the coronavirus's uncertainty, confusion, and change placed immense pressure on leaders, including principals. As a result, it is vital that principals can exercise professionalism in the school environment and have a more substantial influence in some respects. It is important to note that the point above illustrates the need to contextualise professionalism into different scenarios which demand school principals to emerge. Scholars such as Arar, Sawalhi, Chaaban, Zohri and Alhouti (2022:123) recently emphasised the relevance of school leaders to step up during changing times and ensure that principals find innovative ways to lead and manage the whole school through tough times and unseen opportunities. Taole (2013:77) adds that a principal who is a transformational leader is actively involved in school vision and capacity-building tasks. In addition, a principal who is a transformational leader will result in teachers supporting and strengthening each other to excel.

2.7.1 Promoting professional responsibility

Brophy (1996:29) asserts that professional responsibility is the ethical, moral, and legal duty that individuals must perform their job responsibilities and conduct

themselves to serve the best interests of their clients, stakeholders, and the broader society. Professionals must uphold the highest standard of conduct while carrying out their daily responsibilities. It is necessary to imagine the classroom to clearly demonstrate this part. The teacher has a role in setting ground rules; in this way, they create a shared understanding of the accepted professional conduct in the classroom. If learners do not have a shared understanding of the teacher's functions, they are likelier to consider their educators as authoritarian than assertive (Brophy, 1996:29).

Teachers might misinterpret learners' behaviours and reply as ignorant, disrespectful, or in some other way devoid of worth, leading to punishment; this is why teachers must care about their work and consider the diverse areas in which they perform their duties. Professional responsibility encompasses many aspects related to values that promote integrity and positivity. Hence, Solbrekke and Sugrue (2011:13) state that professional responsibility is the power to provide service for others to benefit and care for their public welfare, which includes a combination of control, duties, and decisions.

Teaching professionals play an essential role in raising the level of professionalism in the schools because they directly interact with both the learner and the school leadership and therefore resemble the middle management. According to Ngcobo (1997:6), discussing a profession without including ethics is impossible since this concept refers to a defined set of individuals who provide society with a specialised product.

2.7.2 Promoting professional commitment

A teacher's commitment is based on their connection with their colleagues and the time and effort they put into their work at their school (Choi & Tang, 2011:767). Commitment may also be defined as a person's commitment to work with their co-workers in an organisation continuously (Wasko & Faraj, 2005:35). Commitment to the school is characterised by a feeling of solidarity and group spirit; excitement; shared purpose; strong morale; and promotion of the school (Sheppard, 1996:14). The leadership role here cannot be undermined as it is the principal that has the advantage of being the example in shaping norms that relate to commitment and how this

commitment can be transmitted from one teacher to the other, resulting in commitment being viewed as culture in the school environment.

It is possible that some teachers may be more concerned with their learners acquiring good grades and passing than they are with the well-being of their students. Commitment to teaching a topic is the main reason school teachers join the profession, as stated by Husen and Postlethwaite (1994:6209). The above discussion supports the previous points that various circumstances impact teachers' dedication to their work. These circumstances need to be re-directed by a person in a higher position to ensure that teachers reach and respond to various learners' needs at the school. As teachers gain more experience, their professional commitment grows more substantial.

Through teacher development programs, principals enhance learners' and schools' needs by promoting professional commitment. In this way, they also contribute to the equitable and ethical treatment of all learners, recognising that equity and justice require an understanding of and responsiveness to the diversity of learner needs and styles (Shann, 1998:67). It has been found that teachers' contentment and commitment are closely linked to school cultures that emphasise achievement, acknowledgement, and affiliation. The principals' actions also create distinct working environments in schools that are highly predictive of teachers' satisfaction and commitment, as discovered by Anderman (1991:35).

2.7.3 Promoting professional competence

Professional competencies are how teachers dedicate themselves to getting knowledge and being competent and effective (Husen & Postlethwaite, 1994:6209). According to Husen and Postlethwaite (1994:6209), good academic performance from learners is the only way to demonstrate professional dedication. Professional commitment in teaching refers to how much effort a teacher puts into meeting the requirements of their students (Ngcobo, 1997:3). Each teacher's degree of commitment and the things they are dedicated to are unique; this is one reason why the principal plays a crucial role in setting a common understanding within the schools and streamlining the diversity of their subordinates while recognising and appreciating

their uniqueness. Both new and experienced teachers will need ongoing professional development to be effective.

The quality of a school's management is directly correlated to the efficacy of its teachers. For Kartini, Kristiawan and Fitria (2020:156), teachers' performance may be boosted through academic monitoring, which improves the quality of their learners' education. As a result of the principal's academic supervision, teachers will be inspired to work more since they feel supported and cared for. According to Hardono, Haryono and Yusuf (2017:26), effective leadership by a school's principal boosts learner achievement. Setiyati (2014:200) supports this and states that when a reliable school principal supports a teacher, the teacher is likelier to perform at a high level. Hardono et al. (2017:26) and Setiyati (2014:200) suggest that the more influential the principal's leadership, the better the teacher's performance will be.

According to Suhayati's (2013:86) research, enabling school cultures is a condition for teacher performance. However, teacher performance depends on essential aspects, including regular and organised academic monitoring services for school principals. Setting objectives for academic supervision is a valuable feature of a small academic supervision element since it necessitates careful preparation for its execution. Yustiyawan and Nurhikmahyanti (2014:116) further support the argument posited in this section. They state that professional competence has a positive and statistically significant impact on teacher performance. Teacher performance is directly influenced by the teacher's professional competence level indicating that professional competence is a prerequisite for the teacher to carry out their responsibilities in the learning process.

2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter aimed to understand the concept of teacher professionalism and the influence of transformational leadership on teachers within the South African context. The researcher believes that the concepts discussed underpin this study, which investigated the influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism. The researcher explained the theoretical framework guiding this study, namely the

transformational leadership approach and how it could advance teacher professionalism.

Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013:356) argue that transformational leadership stimulates and transforms followers to look for extraordinary results. It defined professionalism and how this concept was introduced within the education space. Professionalism is seen as the teacher's ability to understand and teach the curriculum to the diverse needs of learners in their classes. It further discussed the South African context and the world of teacher professionalism. It went to show that teacher professionalism is an issue advocated for by the government; similarly, the government's lack of support for teachers in adequate resources hinders teacher professionalism. The last section of this chapter explained the role of the principal in promoting teacher professionalism at school. Principals may be able to arise, excite and influence teachers to put extra effort into achieving school goals and behave professionally. In Chapter 3, the researcher will explain the chosen methodological approach, how the study was conducted, and how the data was collected.

CHAPTER 3 :

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the methodology used to explore the influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District. The chapter details the methods used in this systematic study to address the research questions and objectives. Furthermore, the research paradigm, research approach and research design are discussed. In addition, the chapter explains the sampling process and how the participants were selected. It also discusses the data collection techniques, procedures, and analysis, and attention is given to trustworthiness and a description of ethical considerations.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:26), a research paradigm reflects the beliefs about the world people live in and want to live in. In addition, Mertens (2012:45) affirms that a research paradigm is a set of assumptions that gives a conceptual framework, making researchers establish organised studies worldwide. Moreover, Creswell (2009:12) explains a paradigm as a lens that directs the study. Healy and Perry (2000:120) state that four research paradigms are available: positivism, realism, critical theory and interpretivism. Positivism refers to expressing the scientific approach to the world. Realism is concerned with individual perception of the real world. Critical Theory (CT) emphasises social realities incorporating historically situated structures. Interpretivism is about the ideas and values that people have in their minds in finding reality.

The researcher used interpretivism as the paradigm for this study. Creswell (2003:10) stated that interpretivism is understanding the participant's environment by gaining insight into their background, beliefs, and experiences. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:33) agree that an interpretivist approach seeks to understand the personal world of human experiences. Individuals' different beliefs influenced the study through their

experiences and personal and subjective views (Hamilton & Corbet-Whittier, 2013:26). The researcher looked at individuals for the data through their experiences and perceptions. The researcher wanted to understand the lived experiences of participants of the influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism. Therefore, it is possible to find out what participants think, and their values and perspectives are (Pham, Rajic, Greig, Papadopoulos & McEwen, 2014:372). Irshaidat (2019:127) added that interpretivism prioritises the richness of the research context.

Based on the above explanation, the researcher located this study within an interpretive paradigm to understand the challenges the teachers encounter at schools that impede teacher professionalism and how influential the principal is in enhancing teacher professionalism. According to an interpretive paradigm, principals and teachers in this study constructed and merged their own subjective and intersubjective meanings as they interacted with the world around them (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2015:400). The interpretive paradigm allowed the researcher to probe deeper when conducting interviews to gain a clear understanding on how the principal influences teacher professionalism in enhancing positive participation and conducive working environment. This paradigm was applied successfully in this study to explore the factors and conditions that influence teacher professionalism and how principals as transformational leaders enhance teachers.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

In examining teacher professionalism, this research takes a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is helpful because it takes the subjects' viewpoint on social action as the starting point (Wilson, 2011:179). A qualitative research approach is used to explain in-depth how teacher professionalism can be influenced using a transformational leadership approach. It is also aimed at revealing and explaining the contribution of principals in motivating, developing and implementing acceptable values and principles to transform teacher performance. This research approach proved advantageous to this research because it wanted to explore how transformational leadership could enhance teacher professionalism. A qualitative approach answers questions regarding many aspects of occurrence in explaining and

understanding events in the way the participants find possible (Polkinghorne, 2005:137).

Furthermore, Mills and Gay (2019:25) define a qualitative research approach as the collection, analysis, and interpretation of all included written related information and visual data to gain insight into a particular phenomenon of interest. This study sought to identify the factors and conditions that can influence teacher professional development and examine school factors that impede teacher professionalism. An effort was made to understand the principals' and teachers' perceptions regarding their working relationship by visiting the research participants' settings to interview them. Through those interviews, the researcher could grasp the type of behaviours, abilities, and skills of the principals working amongst teachers and how they interact with teachers in bringing out order and professionalism at schools. In the case of this study, this approach is deemed suitable as it allows the researcher to make meaning on how influential transformational leadership is on teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District.

Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2006:264) describe the characteristics of qualitative research as follows:

- Qualitative studies are carried out in a natural setting.
- Researchers ask broad research questions to explore and interpret the social context.
- Participants are selected based on the information needed for the study.
- Data collection techniques include interviews where the researcher has close contact with the participant.
- The researcher is an active role player.

These characteristics made it suitable for a qualitative research approach because the researcher conducted the interviews in the participants' natural settings. The researcher used interviews to collect data and was the leading interactive role player in collecting data.

A research design is a strategic plan that guides the researcher to research and ensures a sound conclusion (Terre'Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2007). Denzin and Lincoln (2013:29) state that a research design explains guidelines followed by applying

inquiry strategies and methods for collecting data. In addition, a research design is seen as a plan, structure, and study strategy to obtain vital and valid answers to the research questions and problems (Merriam & Tisdell, 2014; Kumar, 2005).

The study employed a multiple case study research design. According to Yin (2014:16), a case study is experimental research investigating a modern phenomenon in depth and within its natural world. Multiple case studies are employed when the investigation involves more than one case (Zaninal, 2007:3). A multiple case study strategy design enables the researcher to compare the cases and explore their differences. A multiple case study aims to replicate findings across the instances under investigation. Hence, the main task of the researcher is to select the case studies carefully. The careful selection of the cases enabled the researcher to predict similar results across the various cases under investigation or predict conflicting results based on a theory (Gustafsson, 2017:11). A multiple-case study approach was suitable in this study because it answered descriptive and explanatory questions (Mills & Gay, 2019:419). In each case study, the researcher revealed facilitating data that show commonalities and differences across all the cases. The participants were explaining their perceptions and experiences encountered in schools.

Furthermore, Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013:9) state that multiple-case study research designs help the researcher collect data from different contexts where participants find themselves. That is, the study assisted the researcher in finding different responses to one question and comparing the context and experiences of various participants. The cases in this study constituted the three primary schools. All three of these primary schools are situated in the same geographical area. They faced the same challenges and factors that influenced teacher professionalism. These multiple case studies enabled the researcher to identify trends and patterns of behaviour and how these have been dealt with to bring transformation in schools to influence teachers to conduct themselves professionally. This design in this study would assist in providing support to demotivated teachers and discovered the factors that impede professionalism at schools. It also promotes leadership aimed at creating transformational platforms and can develop intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in teachers.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

In this study, the data was collected through semi-structured interviews. An interview is one method that is commonly used in qualitative studies. An interview is a useful tool for examining people's perceptions, meanings, and definitions of circumstances as well as the creation of reality, according to Punch and Oancea (2014:182). The perceptions of principals and instructors were investigated and engaged in this study to better understand their experiences, and they gave the necessary data. Dawson (2002:26) states that semi-structured interviews can be structured, semi-structured and unstructured. In structured interviews, the researcher plans questions prior and is arranged and asked in order. The same questions are asked for each participant, and there is no probing; the researcher only clarifies instructions. Semi-structured interviews, the researcher uses an interview plan with questions to be discussed. However, there is no fixed order of questioning, but the discussion between the researcher and the participants determines the questions to follow. The researcher probes the participants for more information. In unstructured interviews, in this type of interview, the participants talk freely about their experiences without being directed by the researcher. The researcher only guides the participants when they are irrelevant to the topic. The researcher selected the semi-structured interviews because the researcher would be able to get in-depth data from the participants. During interviews, the responses to the questions provided the researcher insight into the participants' opinions, thinking, and beliefs regarding the research topic. The questions asked also gave room for negotiation, discussion, and expansion of participants' responses.

3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

The researcher interviewed three principals and six Grade 6 Natural Sciences and Technology (NST) teachers in three primary schools for this study. The purpose was to explore their perceptions of their working relationship regarding transformational leadership and how principals influence teacher professionalism at their schools. All participants gave the researcher a suitable time for the interview, and it was critical that the interviews should not disturb the participants' duties and responsibilities at their schools. The researcher asked for 45 minutes of each participant's time to discuss all the questions arising from their offices. Interviews took part in the

participant's classrooms. At one school there were unpleasant noises and disturbances.

3.4.2 Challenges when collecting data

The researcher made appointments with participants of principals from three different primary schools in the Xhariep District and six Grade 6 NST teachers, two from each school. The appointments were scheduled timeously, though finding some participants was not an easy task. The first time the researcher visited the agreed-upon schools, all three principals were absent as they had an urgent district meeting to attend. There were two Grade 6 NST teachers in one school, and the other was also absent on that day. The researcher made arrangements with the other teacher present and had to come to arrange for those who were absent. In another school, both teachers agreed and showed enthusiasm. We set a time and date, and both agreed to be interviewed during their free periods as one of them is staying away from school, he cannot be available after school as he is using staff transport, and the other one had sports practice with learners. In the third school, four Grade 6 NST teachers and three were present, and one attended the meeting with the principal as she is a Departmental Head (DH). Two teachers agreed, and we arranged everything. Still, when the researcher came for the interview, they refused to be interviewed, stating that they were uncomfortable, it would be their first time doing such an interview, and they did not want to speak about their school. The researcher again explained the confidentiality and purpose of the interview, but after some discussion with them, one agreed, and the interview took place after some time. Fortunately for the researcher, the DH was present on that day, and she agreed to be interviewed after school. The principals all agreed to be interviewed at set times.

3.4.3 Interviews with teachers

The semi-structured interviews were arranged and conducted to find out how principals, as leaders of the schools using transformational leadership, influence teachers. These interviews also examined factors and conditions suitable for enhancing teachers' professional behaviour. Interviews with teachers also discussed

factors that impede teacher professionalism in their schools. The rationale for using interviews was to increase access and understanding of participants' perceptions and how and where to improve.

The interview consisted of the same questions asked to all teachers, and the principals had their questions. The questions for teachers were divided into three sections. The first section consists of the biographical data of each participant, stating their background, education qualifications, and teaching experiences. Then in the second section, ten questions were planned based on the study. The questions concerned how their principals influence them in enhancing teacher professionalism and the motivational factors that keep them teaching NST in Grade 6 under the challenges they encountered. Some were about how the principals assist them in challenges, how they overcome those problems, and what strategies and skills the principals impact teachers in developing their professional behaviour. The last section was where the participants added some information if available, and then the researcher thanked the participants.

3.4.4 Interviews with principals

The principals' questions were also divided into three sections. They started by giving their biographical data, followed by the second section, which consisted of nine planned questions. Their questions concerned how principals motivate, enhance and develop teachers. They face many school challenges, such as changing curriculum plans, overcrowded classrooms, and lack of resources to conduct experiments, as NST needs primarily practical. Some questions were focused on development programmes for teachers that will equip, support and influence them to behave professionally. The conclusion was for the principals to give more information about the study, and then the researcher thanked the participants. The interviews were conducted in English for around 45 minutes for each participant at the school. The interviews were recorded, and the researcher listened to each recording afterwards. Furthermore, the recording was transcribed and typed. The transcriptions were sent back to participants to verify and then kept for safe storage and accessibility.

3.5 SAMPLING

Okeke and Van Wyk (2015:222) explain a sample as a set of participants selected carefully from a large population for research purposes. Furthermore, Bertram and Christiansen (2014:59) state that sampling includes deciding which people, settings, and events to include in the study. The researcher used purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is whereby the researcher selects a sample based on knowledge about the study and the population (Barrat, Ferris & Lenton, 2013:5). The researcher chose purposeful sampling because it was possible to select the relevant participants that are the best for the study. Bertram and Christiansen (2014:59) affirm that sampling involves deciding which people, settings, and behaviours to include in the study. The researcher chose which participants to include in the sample and selected three primary schools as sites to explore the influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism of grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District.

The three primary schools that served as research sites were chosen purposively and conveniently to reduce travel costs. The criterion for selecting the three primary schools was informed by the fact that they are in the same demarcated area in the same district. The three primary schools are situated near a small town in the rural regions of the Xhariep District. The schools' surrounding communities are affected by socioeconomic factors such as unemployment, poverty and crime. The criterion was used to compare and understand teachers' experiences in different schools while also looking to obtain an unbiased view of teacher experiences; this criterion was also used to compare the transformational leadership approach principals implement successfully in their schools. These could influence the participants' views and perceptions regarding teacher professionalism.

The focus was on Grade 6 teachers as they were on the exit level of the intermediate phase. They are the ones who prepare learners for the senior phase. The researcher chose Natural Sciences and Technology teachers because it is the subject is involved in at school and developed in the area. The three primary schools chosen are situated in Xhariep District. The schools are in underdeveloped rural and farm areas. The selected schools and participants were identified using codes to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. Table 3.1 gives the summary of participants and codes.

Table 3.1: Summary of participants and codes

Participants code	Schools code	Participants designation
PP A1	School A	Principal
PT A2	School A	Teacher
PT A3	School A	Teacher
PP B4	School B	Principal
PT B5	School B	Teacher
PT B6	School B	Teacher
PP C7	School C	Principal
PDH C8	School C	Departmental Head
PT C9	School C	Teacher

3.5.1 Sample size

In order to get data that cannot be gathered through other options, specific individuals are purposefully chosen for the purpose of sampling (Maxwell, 1996). Six Grade 6 NST instructors, two from each primary school, are included in the sample because the researcher feels that they should be. The sample is made up of the principals of the three primary schools in the Xhariep District. The distance between the schools, which is roughly 10 to 15 km, is close by. All three of them are public elementary schools that are fee-free. Age, gender, race, and post-level at the schools of the participants varied. None of these factors were taken into consideration when choosing the sample.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Richmond (2006), data analysis involves collecting information to decide on the collected findings. Data analysis is a process that involves organising and summarising data, categorising and identifying patterns and themes (Kawulich, 2004:97). The researcher used thematic analysis to identify themes in the data collected. Wilson (2011:176) explains that thematic analysis is a method for selecting, analysing, organising, and placing themes found within a data set. In addition, Rubin and Rubin (2011) state that thematic analysis is a method which reports the experiences, meanings, and reality of participants. Once the data was transcribed, the researcher identified patterns and themes needed for the research.

The researcher first transcribed the recorded voices of the interviewees and then conducted a thematic analysis of the transcribed data. During transcription, the researcher listened to the voice recordings several times and transcribed them verbatim. After that, the researcher compared the transcribed data to categorise it into themes. The objective behind this analysis was to identify themes within the content and then associate and compare different themes depending on their level of relevance. When analysing the data, the researcher processed and reduced the data to manageable levels. The researcher studied the participants' responses to each interview question and made a comparison to get similarities and differences between the responses of the participants. The researcher compared participants teaching same class, subject and school environment, where after teachers from different school contexts were also compared. The researcher also compared the responses of principals from other schools. The aim was to determine whether there were agreements or differences in participants' perspectives within a similar environment and from a different environment. The researcher identified the common patterns and relationships between different categories and then devised their own interpretation of the analysed data.

The collected data were categorised into themes based on the data collected. The themes are as follows:

- A working relationship between principals and leaders as a motivational factor and strategy to develop teachers.
- Conditions that influence teacher professionalism for improving teacher professional behaviour.
- The factors impeding teacher professionalism and professional challenges.
- The role and qualities of the principal influence teachers to enhance their behaviour as a transformational leader.

The themes allowed the researcher to identify the causes and obstacles regarding teacher professionalism. Categorising the data further assisted the researcher in giving critical comments on how transformational leadership influences teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers. The researcher considered other themes that emerged from the collected data as well. From the transcribed conversation, patterns of experiences that relate to classified patterns are identified and combined into sub-

themes, which are as follows: principal leadership qualities and his role in enhancing teacher professionalism, teachers' professional involvement and challenges, lack of teaching resources, overcrowded classes and poor attendance by learners, developmental strategies-based n curriculum and problems that impede teacher professionalism at schools.

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

The researcher must ensure the interview data is as trustworthy and dependable as possible. The researcher made the necessary efforts to make sure that the data collected reflected what the participants said without adding any personal biases by recording the interviews and transcribing the data. The researcher also gave the participants the transcribed data to confirm what transpired during the interviews. According to Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013:135), data accuracy refers to the degree to which the research findings are accurate and reliable. This study exploring the influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism exhibits a high level of trustworthiness. The research design and methodology were carefully planned, qualitative approach was used with extensive participant representation, ensuring credibility. Descriptions of participant and contextual information enhance transferability. Dependability is assured through analysis procedures and transcribed documentation. Confirmability is established through participant checking the transcribed data. As a result, the findings provide reliable and relevant insights for teachers to understand the impact of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism.

3.7.1 Credibility

According to Holloway and Wheeler (2002), the definition of credibility is the degree of trust that can be placed in the study's findings. The researcher's accuracy and dependability in interpreting the information provided by participants is referred to as credibility (Chombo, 2019:77). The purposive sampling was applied where a principal and two teachers from each primary school were selected to participate in the study. The study was conducted through semi-structured interviews. The data were recorded

and transcribed. The researcher carefully reviewed the transcribed data to ensure that it accurately reflects what the participants had said and appropriately interpreted supports the validity of this study. By allowing the participants to examine the transcribed data and confirm that it accurately described their experiences, the study gained credibility. To give readers the required information and proof, the researcher also covered the sample and collection techniques.

3.7.2 Transferability

Transferability is defined as the degree to which the findings of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other participants (Bitsch, 2005:83). Chombo (2019:78) agrees that transferability entails the ability of the outcomes to be transferred to a similar situation to deliver similar results. The manner in which the study has been presented enables the readers to transfer the findings to another similar context with other participants without generalising them. The researcher supplied the necessary information about where the research took place, the research processes, and the study participants to decide how the research outcomes could be transferable. The participants are from three primary schools in the Xhariep District, a region situated in the rural areas and surrounded by farms. The primary schools are in the same community which is affected by socioeconomic factors. The principals of these primary schools participated in the interview giving details of how they influence teachers in their schools to behave professional. Two NST grade 6 teachers from each school were sampled. The researcher find the data can be transferable to similar context without generalising them.

3.7.3 Dependability

Reliability, in the words of Bitsch (2005:85), is the consistency of results through time. Participants in this study were given the opportunity to assess the researcher's interpretation and conclusions. According to Chombo (2019:78), dependability is the standard of interpretation between the method used to gather the data, the data analysis, and the theory derived from the data. The researcher must describe the procedures and analyses utilized in order to increase reliability. It is important to

protect the interview recordings. In order to guarantee the accessibility of the recordings, the researcher placed them on an electronic storage system. The qualitative method was established with well-documented procedures, ensuring the repeatability of the study. The transcribed information was coded and interview recordings are stored in a safe storage.

3.7.4 Confirmability

According to Tobin and Begley (2008), confirmability often addresses the presentation problem to make sure that the findings of an inquiry are based on the participants' experiences rather than the researcher's preferences. The interviews' transcriptions were presented to a sample of the participants to confirm whether the results are an accurate representation of what they stated be read by the participants. Confirmability, according to Chombo (2019:78), also refers to the extent to which the data acquired are consistent with the researcher's conclusions and interpretations. The researcher gave the participants the transcribed data to confirm accuracy of transcription.

3.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Among the limiting factors of an interview process, time consumption is one of them (Alshenqeeti, 2014:41). The data-collecting process took much longer than the researcher anticipated. As a result, timelines were not met as planned. The challenge was the change of the interview schedule in alignment with school programs. Schools had to prioritise departmental, and their school programs, and the researcher had to respect that. The arrangements made had to be rescheduled to accommodate the participants. Of all the participants, the principals were the most difficult to honour an appointment as they were often away from school for their school businesses. During the interview, one participant was uncomfortable using recordings and had to be assured again after being interviewed that their participation would be treated with extreme confidentiality. Another challenge was the transcription of all the interview data.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Johnson and Christensen (2008:102) state that ethics are a guiding set of principles to assist the researcher in conducting ethical studies. The researcher guards the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. Before commencing the research study, the researcher applied to the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State for an ethical clearance to proceed with the research. The researcher also wrote a letter to the Head of the Free State Department of Education asking permission to conduct the research at the chosen schools. After obtaining permission from the University of the Free State and the Free State Department of Education, the researcher wrote letters to all the principals of the chosen schools requesting access to conduct a research study at their respective schools. The letter explained in full the purpose of the research, what the researcher wanted to achieve at the end of the research, and ethical concerns that the researcher would uphold the confidentiality of the schools using codes so as not to reveal any school name to anybody. The researcher also communicated to the principals the sampling technique that would be used.

After being granted permission to conduct a research study at their schools, all participants were asked to sign letters of consent wherein they agreed to participate freely and voluntarily. All ethical concerns were explained to the participants before they signed the consent forms. Once the participants consented to participate in the inquiry, the researcher continued to set up dates and times that suited them to meet. The interviews were set at different times scheduled for their convenience. Some arranged time during their free periods during school time and some after school, depending on their availability. It was not easy for all the participants to honour their agreements for dates and times, and as a result, appointments had to be rescheduled, especially for the principals who had to attend the district workshops. I provided each participant with the interview schedule well before the interviews so that they could be on time though it was not the case with most participants.

3.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter of the study has presented the research approach and design used. The researcher described and motivated the selection of the methodological account of the

research including the paradigm, the approach and the design. The researcher has explained the methodology followed to gather and analyse the information. This chapter has outlined the data collection techniques in providing the rationale behind their selection. Furthermore, the sampling methods used in the study were detailed and justified. The trustworthiness and credibility of the study were also clarified. An explanation of how the study adhered to ethical considerations during data collection and the limitations encountered concludes this section.

In Chapter 4, the researcher will present the detailed data analysis and discussion of the findings of the interviews with principals and teachers of selected three primary schools.

CHAPTER 4 :

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher deals with data analysis and presentation. The researcher reports the findings from data gathered during interviews with three (3) principals and six (6) teachers from three (3) primary schools. Data analysis and presentation were based on transcribed data. The data were categorised into different themes to minimise a large amount of data into manageable parts in exploring the influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers.

The three schools from which the data was collected are situated in the rural areas of the Free State Province in the Xhariep District. Data were collected from the principal and two teachers from each school. To observe and maintain anonymity and confidentiality, the researcher used codes to disguise and be able to present data from each school. The three schools are presented as School A, School B, and School C.

The research objectives of the study

The research objectives of the study are formulated as follows:

- To identify the factors and conditions that can influence teacher professional development.
- To examine school factors that impede teacher professionalism.
- To give recommendations on how transformational leadership could influence teacher professionalism.

4.2 CODES OF PARTICIPANTS

The researcher transcribed the data from all interviews with three (3) principals and six (6) educators from three (3) primary schools in the Xhariep District. The interview questions asked of the participants are found in Appendix E. Each participant's interview was analysed using codes. The researcher coded the interview transcripts,

then combined some of the codes into categories, and some of the categories into themes. The amount of data received was reduced before establishing the codes. Corresponding themes were grouped together to make the data more manageable. The data was analysed using thematic analysis as a technique.

The researcher ensured confidentiality and anonymity by using codes (pseudonyms). The codes are as follows:

For example:

PP A1: PT A2:

P = participant P = participant

P = principal T = teacher

A = school name A = school name

1 = participant number 1 2= participant number 2

Table 4.1 summarises the codes of all the participants per school.

Table 4.1: Summary of the codes of participants per school

	School A			School B			School C		
Participant codes	PP A1	PT A2	PT A3	PP B4	PT B5	PT B6	PP C7	PDH C8	PT C9

4.3 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

To explore how influential transformational leadership is on teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District, the researcher developed themes identified from the interview transcribed data.

Thematic analysis and coding

The thematic analysis and coding process followed established guidelines outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis aimed to identify recurring patterns and themes within the qualitative data, offering insights into the influence of transformational

leadership on teacher professionalism. The researcher reviewed the interview transcripts in the data to gain familiarity.

Initial codes were parts of data, capturing meaningful concepts. These codes were generated in an open coding to allow for flexibility in identifying emerging themes. The researcher identified that initial codes similar and related were grouped together to form preliminary themes. These preliminary themes were reviewed to ensure their alignment with the data. The themes that shared a common thread and could be combined under a broad theme. To maintain coding consistency, the researcher applied these themes systematically to all relevant data, revising and refining codes as necessary.

Under each theme quotes were selected to illustrate the impact of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism. In facilitating the analysis and reporting, the selected quotes were organised for easy reference. The researcher analyse the themes and discuss how transformational leadership positively influenced teacher professionalism. The thematic analysis process as outlined allowed for a systematic and exploration of the data, ensuring foundation for drawing conclusions regarding the influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism.

The themes identified are:

Theme 1: A working relationship between principals and teachers as a motivational factor and strategy to develop teachers.

Theme 2: Conditions that influence teacher professionalism for improving teacher professional behaviour.

Theme 3: The factors impeding teacher professionalism and professional challenges.

Theme 4: The role and qualities of the principal influence teachers to enhance their behaviour as a transformational leader.

The information gathered from the interviews is discussed in the following sections (sections 4.3.1-4.3.4), using the identified themes as headings.

4.3.1 Theme 1: A working relationship between principals and teachers as a motivational factor and strategy to develop teachers

The researcher addressed the factors and strategies that motivate teachers to increase their interest in teaching and professional behaviour. The participants were asked to respond on what motivates teachers to behave well and the principal's strategy to develop good working relations with teachers.

Teachers need a good working relationship with the school principal to behave professionally. There must be strong and good communication at work. They mentioned different aspects when asked how they interact with school principals to support teachers. These aspects included good communication with the principals anytime they required assistance, sought advice, needed staff development, and experienced problems with learners. This sentiment was expressed by one of the teachers:

"She has been leading and showing me how to deal with challenges in the class, outside classroom and school premises" [PT A2].

In addition, the second participant (PDH C8) commented as follows:

"We are free to raise concerns is giving us a platform where we are free to raise our concerns. Where we are free to advise even the SMT."

The teachers also talked with their principals during meetings. Some meetings aimed to plan, monitor, and moderate teachers' work with the assistance of school management teams (SMT) in some schools. The sessions sometimes are one-on-one when there is a need, as principals are open and listen to teachers in working together to find solutions for the development of teaching and learning.

"We also have one on one meetings. So the principal is actively involved and is helping us a lot" [PT B5].

"We have one-by-one sessions with the principal to talk about the problem. She is an open person, committed and transparent, free-spirited person. It becomes easier to divulge and get the solutions" [PT C9].

The principal from School A, PP A1, added on the matter by saying:

"We are having what we call a PLC meeting, where we discuss some topics, and then some other will give an input on the subjects, and then we do also the lesson plans."

All principals interviewed described their working relationship with NST Grade 6 teachers as excellent, and exciting; this can be seen from the response of the principal of School C, who said that teachers always talk when they need advice and assistance on things that affect teaching and those that affect them personally.

“You don’t hold grudges and also give them a chance to come to you. You are just a supportive leader who supports your subordinates as a whole” [PP C7].

In support of the principal, a teacher from School A, PT A2, and from School C, PDH C8, said the teachers are welcome to discuss any matter that needs the principal’s attention. The principal is approachable, caring, and supportive. The teachers commented as follows:

“The principal helps me through like how learning and teaching is in the real world for a teacher. Sometimes there is that moment. I can talk. I usually talk to my principal” [PT A2].

PDH C8 added:

“Yes, he is very supportive. Our principal is very supportive professionally, socially in all means, is building us.”

The working relationship between principals and teachers to support and commitment to working together was evident in the interviews. Both parties are eager to develop teachers and create a conducive working environment in their schools. The eagerness of teachers to freely communicate with principals and principals’ openness and support showed great professional personality and good leadership qualities of the principals.

The interviews showed that teachers claimed to have learned a lot from principals and management. Therefore, the researcher can conclude that principals had a very high degree of support and communication. Principals work together with teachers since no teacher is indicated in any case of principals who are not communicating well. There is evidence of support and caring on the part of teachers that they get from principals all the time; this shows that both principals and teachers have constant consultation, which has a very positive effect on the teaching and learning process, which could show good professional behaviour. Consultation, support, and good

communication could be factors that can positively influence teacher professionalism at schools.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Conditions that influence teacher professionalism for improving teacher professional behaviour

The researcher explains the platforms and methods of development that assist teachers in promoting quality education.

Principals and teachers were asked to comment on the professional development programs that principals initiate at schools for Grade 6 NST teachers 'skills development to equip them with necessary knowledge as the curriculum changes more often. The programs are aimed at assisting teachers in developing and inspiring learners to study to achieve great results and pursue great careers for the future as young as they are in primary school.

In this regard, teachers responded that there are school programs for their development and learners. Principals and school management teams organise meetings and discussions for teacher development within the schools. The DH and subject coordinators lead those meetings. The teacher from School B PT B5 responded by saying:

"We having a meeting for a class, we having a meeting for the grade, we having a meeting for a phase, and we also have meetings for the school as a whole. The principal is guiding us through the HOD. That work is done by HOD, the developmental work."

Although teachers received support from principals and DHs, they did not only rely on this support but also realised their potential to help each other.

"After school, we left behind the sit together and then make lesson plans" [PT A3].

Another teacher supported the importance of assisting each other:

"Sharing, if you have a method that is working for you and you see it can help other teachers, you can communicate with other teachers. Share the method with other teachers" [PT B5].

It is evident that teachers helped one another, worked as a team, and gave support. One principal, PP A1, supported this claim by saying that all teachers from their school teamed up to assist one another when there were complex topics for the subject teacher in certain sections; this was articulated by the principal as follows:

“Some other educators will give an input on the subject, and then we do also the lesson plans.”

One teacher, in particular, said that teachers also went the extra mile and showed commitment and professionalism by teaching learners during weekends and after school while not being paid for the extra (over) time. They see learners passionate about learning more, so they invest this extra (over) time in teaching them. These additional classes also helped teachers have more time for teaching, revising, and reaching targets set in Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs).

“Yes, it is the passion that you see in the learners, though sometimes they don’t understand the language. Sometimes it is the barrier, but they are more passionate to learn. That then, I am able to go an extra mile where I start having afternoon classes. I start having morning classes. I start having Saturday classes so as to bridge the gap, the content gap they got from Grade 5” [PDH C8].

A teacher from School A, PT a2, added that:

“Yes, as an NST teacher, the skills you have as teachers should use our skills; we need to go the extra mile, think out of the box, not just go to the classroom and take out the textbook. We need to talk about the outside world, talk about how it relates to the content learners are taught.”

“We have good teachers. They try to improvise; they try to download the videos and show these learners the practicals they are supposed to be hands-on with, but they can see them on videos” [PP B4].

To develop teachers’ and learners’ knowledge and skills, principals invited relevant stakeholders to indulge in specific topics pertinent to certain subjects, such as Science Week and Arbor Day.

The schools commemorate those days, as it is evident that one school guest shares their knowledge; this could be seen as evidence of professional development in creating a positive attitude and conducive learning environment, which ends up helping the learners.

“It was three weeks back when we have visitors from Unisa who came to address our Grade 6 learners, especially on experiments. They rendered the experiment sessions with Grade 6 NST teachers as well as Grade 6 learners” [PP C7].

The support from principals increases the level of accountability amongst teachers regarding what they are doing in class. Teachers knew that follow-up will be done in the form of monitoring and moderation of work. The accountability maximised attendance and the classroom’s teaching and learning culture.

“The quality of support is so high. Our principal consults every time with teachers” [PT C9].

The Department of Education also organised workshops and training for teacher development. Teachers are required to attend workshops as scheduled and report back to their colleagues, which was evident when the researcher was making appointments with participants. On some days, the researcher did not find principals and teachers; it was reported that they attended meetings, and some were in workshops.

“We are always having NST, Natural Sciences, and Technology workshops here at school, sometimes outside the school, sometimes online, like today I have workshop online at 2 o’clock for Natural Sciences” [PT A2].

“In terms of teacher development, the District is trying its level best, basically training teachers as much as they can” [PT B6].

Teachers asked their principals to invite Departmental Officials such as Subject Advisors to come to schools and equip them where they lack information on specific topics.

“He asks for Subject Advisors to come or anyone. It can be a social worker, anyone that we need help from. The principal will invite that person to come and support us” [PT B5].

A teacher, PDH C8, adds that the Subject Advisors equip them with important information and skills. They also asked them for resources they lacked for experimental purposes.

“So we are having those challenges of resources we don’t have. Sometimes the Department supply” [PDH C8].

Another factor identified is a contributing factor by Department Officials visiting their schools. The officials encouraged teachers to use different lesson planning methods, lesson presentations, assessment techniques, and some skills to conduct experiments in more exciting ways. The officials supported educators in areas the teachers needed.

The participants' responses showed that teachers are passionate about their work and appreciate the assistance they get from principals and Department Officials. Principals influence teachers and create the power of success and willingness to work more. The workshops, meetings, and discussions should be organised frequently. The more the teachers attend these gatherings, the more their expertise increases and the more teacher professionalism will develop. This professional support from principals motivated the teachers and added quality and value to teachers' teaching practice. The teachers became intrinsically motivated, which could result in good professional behaviour.

4.3.3 Theme 3: The factors that impede teacher professionalism and teachers' professional challenges

The researcher examines the obstacles that hinder the teaching and learning process and teachers not behaving as expected.

The teaching and learning process cannot happen without any challenges. Teachers were asked about challenges they experience that impede teaching from taking place successfully. The teachers responded in many different ways, stating their various challenges and reasons that may be the cause in responding. In School A, one of the reasons was the shortage of textbooks. The principal ordered them the previous year, but they had not yet arrived at the time of the interview. In such a case, the teachers struggle because learners have no textbooks to learn from and do tasks appropriately. To solve this problem, teachers must photocopy those much-needed activities to allow the learners to learn. An unreliable photocopier, often in schools, will increase frustration and challenges.

“Here it is very difficult because this is a new school. We don't have the resources. We are struggling with resources. We asked the management to order textbooks a long time ago till today. There are no textbooks. Even the photocopying machine is one and an old machine. You have to photocopy, and after 30 minutes, you have to leave the

machine to cool down because if you photocopy right through, the machine will stop working” [PT A3].

Another resource necessary to teach the subject effectively is science labs with enough equipment and chemicals.

“In terms of the lab, laboratory science and the library itself are not user-friendly. One other thing is this of science labs whereby you will not find some materials. You feel like maybe the school, SGB or Department itself can assist us with making sure we have sufficient resources” [PT B6].

“There are resources though they are not for all experiments that we need to conduct in my classroom, for example, acids and bases” [PT C9].

Teacher PDH C8 added that even science equipment got stolen and some broken when a burglary occurred.

“We experience a lot of burglary, so in most cases, our science lab is vandalised then you find most of the resources stolen.”

It became difficult for teachers to conduct experiments as they were supposed to because NST has many experiments. Some of these experiments are planned for formal activities to be administered.

It is evident that some tasks are not done well and as required by the Department. Learners just theorise about those topics.

“Science subject is a practical subject, not only theoretical subject” [PT B6].

“We have challenges with some of the equipment we don’t have. We just tell the learners they have to imagine that we don’t have them” [PT B5].

Other teachers explained that in their schools, principals tried by all means to buy the needed resources from local shops and asked some from the District office to provide them.

“For those that we are able to buy locally, we do buy—things like batteries, magnets, straws” [PDH C8].

In minimising the lack of resources, one principal from School B, PP B4, said they have a plan for this challenge. These resources must be put into the school budget as early as the year starts.

“We are planning that the teachers must write all the things they will need in that particular year.”

There are laboratories and libraries in these schools, which are not user-friendly. There is a shortage of everything needed in the laboratories and libraries. Some tasks require learners to research; without laboratories and libraries, learners do not have the school’s proper support.

“If learners have to do research, they have to go and do research outside the school”
[PT B6].

Absenteeism of learners impacts teaching and learning negatively and in making progress in work. During time for assessments, these learners struggle a lot because they do not know some work, which lowers the level of performance when checking results. That is demotivating teachers who are doing their best to teach. A teacher attributed this as:

“If you give them a task, a project to do, they don’t do it, so that is a challenge. We don’t know what they know and what they don’t know. Because they don’t do their work, they just write for the sake of writing” [PT B5].

According to teachers, learners’ bad behaviour hinders classroom teaching. The teachers complained about the learners who do not conduct themselves well in class. Some learners do not write classwork and homework, which demotivates and cause tension in classrooms. The teachers had to plan for those misbehaving learners not to influence the whole class. Though principals assist with misbehaving learners, for teachers, the constant handling of misbehaving learners is tiring and demotivating.

“As I am teaching right now, behaviour. We are having behaviour challenge, discipline”
[PT A2].

“We are having a challenge, a burden. The behaviour of our learners is a real challenge to us; we cannot perform our duty as we are supposed to perform due to behaviour of the learners. They behave strangely; small learners they smoke drugs, beat other learners, they don’t come to school every day. So that hinders our work a lot” [PT B5].

Principals support teachers in all possible ways by writing letters and calling parents to come to school to discuss the learners’ bad behaviour. Principals also organise parent meetings to discuss learners’ progress and misbehaviour.

“We have learners who are having behaviour problems that can make an impact on your teaching and learning who do not know anything about the code of conduct of the school” [PP A1].

“They always complain that there are learners who sometimes do not do homework. The parents are invited to school. The parents do not pitch up. That is the most challenge we are experiencing” [PP C7].

Principals call on parents to take hands in solving discipline issues. Often parents do not honour appointments with the schools and seem uninvested in their child’s education.

“I call the parents some do not come. But I tried my best that those parents do come. We talk and solve the problems they encounter” [PP B4].

The above sentiment is echoed by teachers from different schools, saying that parents are negligent in coming to their children’s educational institutions. Most parents do not show up when called to school, and principals should take strict measures to ensure they come. That clearly showed parents have no interest and do not care about their children’s future. Teachers commented as follows:

“Principal give them letters for their parents to tell them about the learners’ behaviour. After that, if the learner repeats again, they call a parent two times before suspending a learner” [PT A2].

“Their parents are negligent. They do not care about them. Even if you call them, they do not come” [PT C9].

Another significant challenge mentioned by the teachers is overcrowded classrooms. Though they teach, some learners do not get reached as individuals as they try to reach them all. Overcrowding negatively impacts learners’ performance and teachers’ morale, knowing they cannot do anything to overcome that.

“Overcrowding is always a challenge in many South African schools. Even in our school, overcrowding is a problem” [PT B6].

“Large classes impact negatively to learners because those learners who are seated at the back sometimes do not hear the teacher” [PP B4].

4.3.4 Theme 4: The role and qualities of the principal influence teachers to enhance their behaviour as a transformational leader

The researcher describes the qualities and roles of principals as transformational leaders as given by the participants during the interviews.

Teachers were asked to respond to their understanding of a transformational leader, their qualities, and whether their principal is a transformational leader. The teachers were also asked to elaborate on how influential the principals are in enhancing teacher professionalism in their schools. In this sub-section, the researcher analysed each teacher's response as they portrayed their views.

From the responses, teachers see a transformational leader as a mentor to the followers, a caregiver and a supporter—such a principal mentors their teachers on lesson planning and how to tackle some challenging topics. A principal with transformational leadership skills also supports disciplining misbehaving learners.

“The principal helps me through, like how is the real world for a teacher. She has been leading, show me how to deal with challenges in the classroom. Sometimes I have one-on-one conversations with the principal” [PT A2].

Another view the teacher stated is that a transformational leader encourages people to work together as a team. The teacher further said a transformational leader motivates teachers to perform and behave well at and outside the school—a principal, as a transformational leader, assists teachers in planning together as a team.

“Principal is really trying to motivate us and to encourage us to work together all the time. Sometimes we left behind after school the sit together then make lesson plans together, so that we can be on par” [PT A3].

According to another teacher, a transformational leader is a guide, a developer, and a disciplinarian. The teacher stated that their principal guided them in developing their planning and teaching skills. In cases of learners misbehaving, he acts accordingly and the principal established committees that deal with misbehaving learners. This strategy, followed by the principal, reduced the level of ill-disciplined learners at their school. These acts enhance teacher professionalism because the principal creates an environment conducive to learning and teaching.

“So, the principal is actively involved in helping us a lot. We also have a committee that is the SBST, that committee is also helping us a lot” [PT B5].

A transformational leader should have good leadership skills such as a drive to succeed, reachable goals and objectives, be a good communicator, and show strong support. One of the teachers explained that their principal is a person who needs to see teachers showcasing their skills and talents. Their principal is a leader who says to participate in competitions and expose learners to all spheres of education, such as sports, debate and music. In reality, some learners perform better in extra curricular activities than in academics. Those learners should also be given a chance. Even teachers are motivated to develop themselves academically and otherwise. Their principal is much influential in enhancing professional behaviour. The explanation was elaborated in this manner:

“He is a transformational leader because when he recognises you have a certain passion in a certain subject, encourages you and says I can see you have passion for this, go for it. We have a kind of a leader that says it’s fine, let us expose our learners to all these things so that we know we are a school that is developing not only the brains but also talents” [PT B6].

Teacher PDH C8, who is teaching Grade 6 NST from School C, explained that a transformational leader must be an open, transparent, democratic leader, not bossy. A leader that listens and takes advice from the staff. This DH stated that their principal is a democratic leader and is not stereotyped. The principal is open and free to listen to and consult the teachers, giving the teachers a platform to raise their concerns and advise when necessary. Consultation and interaction flow among them. The principal is supportive professionally and socially, and in all spheres. The principal is influential in all spheres, making teachers valuable and seeing them behaving professionally.

One of the participants described a transformational leader as someone who aligns with change and success and is a good motivator and communicator. The teacher added that their principal is influential in seeing teachers behaving professionally. The principal is always present in times of need and gives full support. The principal is a transparent person, which is why it is easy and interesting to work with. Every time someone needs assistance of any kind, the person is free to approach the principal.

“Principal is a strategic person who is always willing to see teachers prosper as individuals and as a team at work. I like most consultation, no surprises and favouritism she treats all of us with the same respect” [PT C9].

It was revealed that all principals are influential in schools. The most critical factors identified by the researcher, which showed the influence of principals in enhancing good teacher behaviour, were:

- Good communication and consultation among principals and teachers.
- Creating a conducive working environment.
- Good disciplinary measures.
- Organising developmental programs for teachers and learners.
- Improvising resources.
- Enhancing good working relationships at all times.
- Support teaching and learning at all costs.

There were also a few challenges that impede teacher professionalism that were revealed:

- Lack of resources and textbooks
- Over-crowded classrooms
- Learners’ bad behaviour
- Learners’ constant absenteeism

The challenges stated threaten teacher professionalism and successful teaching and learning because they limit the learning capabilities of learners. Teachers become demotivated because teaching requires enough material, a healthy classroom environment, and a conducive atmosphere. If teachers cannot effectively disseminate the information in the curriculum to learners, learners’ performance will be poor.

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the data and the analysis through thematic analysis. In analysing the data, themes were created which showed how principals as transformational leaders influence teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District. The role played by principals assisted teachers in developing

professional behaviour and enthusiasm for teaching and learning. Though there were challenges teachers identified that impeded teacher professionalism. The good qualities of principals revealed by teachers indicated that these principals are transformational leaders. It was revealed that transformational leaders influenced teacher professionalism. Chapter 5 summarises the findings, recommendations, and conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER 5 :

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of research findings and recommendations of this study that are relevant to the influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism from data analysis and presentation. Furthermore, the researcher includes limitations and also recommends further research that can be done in respect of enhancing teacher professionalism.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The transformational leadership approach seems to be one of the primary schools' most applied leadership styles. Principals encourage teachers to perform in the most effective way they can. When teachers are highly motivated, they show good performance and improve the quality of education taught to learners. The key to creating a healthy, productive environment is the answer to how a transformational leader enhances teacher professionalism. Thus, this research seeks to provide the factors and conditions that influence teacher professional development.

This section discusses the findings to answer the main research question: how does transformational leadership influence teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District? To meet this purpose, as indicated in chapter one and reiterated in chapter three, the research was directed by three research sub-questions, namely:

- What factors and conditions are influential in teacher professional development?
- Which school factors impede teacher professionalism?
- What recommendations could be offered on how transformational leadership can influence teacher professionalism?

5.2.1 First sub-research question: What factors and conditions influence teacher professional development?

This study explored the factors and conditions that enhance teacher professionalism. The findings indicated a general agreement among all the participants that transformational leaders are influential in improving teacher professionalism in their schools. The significant factors that enhance teacher professionalism are development programs organised by the principal at school and facilitated by district officials.

The development programs have a more significant impact on teachers as these programs equip teachers with needed knowledge and skills to boost teachers' confidence when in class. As the curriculum changes more often, teachers require thorough training about effective methods to disseminate information to learners effectively. Okoth (2018:320) added that the transformational leader sets achievable goals, encourages skills development, and embraces talent.

Lack of training demotivates teachers, especially novice teachers because they are unsure of the content and methods to implement in class. What becomes vivid is that when teachers are provided with the necessary workshops and training, they have positive attitudes, and their level of professionalism improves.

Furthermore, the study findings indicated that teamwork was vital, as principals influenced teachers to develop themselves at schools by holding subject and phase meetings and sharing the knowledge and skills they have with each other. Even the principals and departmental heads with relevant information support and add value to those gatherings, which revealed commitment and cooperation. The findings discovered that as teachers are guided and trained during workshops, they become efficient and effective in teaching. Yukl (2008:720) agrees that transformational leaders develop their followers by giving support and training when needed. The leader respects individual differences.

The findings further revealed that teaching and learning need a conducive environment for teachers and learners. The school's location and the learners' behaviour reflect the socio-economic realities of the learners, which causes some behavioural problems. Through an awareness of the socio-economic realities of the

learners, the principal could enhance teacher professionalism by developing intervention strategies for teacher development in the school.

Such awareness provides the school with an opportunity to provide a quality education that is relevant to the lived realities of the learners. As noted in the literature review, teachers are considered professional when they can use their skills to adjust the curriculum to cater specifically to the diverse needs of learners in their classrooms. As an influential leader, the principal monitors these implementations to create an effective working environment for good interaction between teachers and learners.

The principal's communication with teachers enhances teacher professionalism. The finding revealed that principals' communication with teachers makes teachers perform well because they are informed about what to do and how to do it; this was because the principals held phase and school meetings with teachers to express their views. The principals even accommodate teachers with their personal problems at any time and give advice where necessary, which concludes that proper communication between the teacher-principal relationship is a characteristic of a transformational leader. As it is done continuously at all levels, it enhances teachers to higher performance and good behaviour.

The constant interaction also brought principals and teachers together, creating a platform where diverse ideas can emerge into effective educational programs that add value to teaching and learning. Teachers' performance increased because they feel valued, supported and informed of what is expected of them. It is through such meetings that teacher professionalism is enhanced. The study is in line with Avolio and Gardner (2005:315) in explaining that the school has aims and objectives; in fostering those aims, the school leader works effectively by improving individual and organisational performance.

5.2.2 Second sub-research question: Which school factors impede teacher professionalism?

The research revealed challenges that impede teacher professionalism at schools; a few are lack of textbooks and resources. A shortage of textbooks poses a threat to successful learning because it limits other written tasks, as teachers would give less

homework as some learners share textbooks. Though the principals seek assistance from the neighbouring schools, teachers work under pressure and do not finish work promptly.

The unavailability of resources is one of the most severe challenges encountered in all three primary schools. In agreeing with the assertions, Badat and Sayed (2014:131) maintains that the South African basic education system is characterised by a lack of teaching and learning resources, teachers dealing with overcrowded classes, and dysfunctional school governance. It isn't easy to conduct practical experiments and projects; many resources are unavailable.

Principals and teachers tried to improvise though many were not available in nearby shops since the schools are in under-developed rural communities. It means that some topics are theorised, and no practical tasks are done. These valuable lessons clarify and reinforce the science and technology concepts, and experiments enhance the learner's interests and acquire skills. Lack of resources hinders teachers from providing quality education. The findings agree with Gardiner (2017:12) that a lack of adequate resources and infrastructure characterises schools; this hinders teachers' ability to deliver quality education and, in certain instances, teachers' professionalism.

Absenteeism was found as another factor that impedes teacher professionalism. When learners are absent, teaching and learning occur, resulting in absent learners being behind and lacking the knowledge taught during their absence. Du Plessis and Mestry (2019:8) agree with the findings that absenteeism is a direct factor of schools in rural areas being surrounded by farms and learners needing to work on certain days, meaning that learner absenteeism might increase in these schools, which affects the class results. Principals are fighting to stop this tendency of learner absenteeism by calling parents to find solutions.

Misbehaviour of learners was also noted as determined by learners who do not write tasks given and bullying others in classrooms. Teachers report the matter to the principal, who assists them. There were no strict measures revealed by participants other than inviting parents of the misbehaving learners, which most parents do not come.

Parental involvement was also a concern in all three schools. Parents got invited to the school for the learner's progress, mainly for the learner's bad behaviour and being

directly involved in school matters, but few pitched up. The teachers believe parents are not involved in their children's education and just send learners to school. It was clear that only a few parents support their children's education.

Overcrowded classes cause inequality in the dissemination of information because some learners are disadvantaged in learning correctly. Monitoring and assessing their work is challenging, contributing to learners' ill-discipline. Teachers do not perform well under these conditions though principals motivate, convince and support teachers to work while finding solutions.

5.2.3 Third research sub-question: What recommendations could be offered on how transformational leadership can influence teacher professionalism?

This section answers the third research sub-question by highlighting the qualities of transformational leadership. Findings revealed that the way the principals conduct themselves set exemplary actions for teachers to behave professionally. Principals allow teachers to express themselves, showcase their talents and skills, and inspire their passion and eagerness to higher the standard of teacher performance. The findings align with Lowe (1996:385), who affirms that transformational leaders inspire and stimulate followers' creativity and innovation. The transformational leader encourages followers to think in new ways, discover new ideas, and emphasise problem-solving.

The support, motivation, and will assist teachers by principals make the schools a workable place. Teachers know they have leaders that transform unconditional situations to be the best environment for all teachers to provide quality education and enhance teacher professionalism. In agreement with this finding, Avolio (2011:989) observes that the transformational leader creates togetherness and a harmonious working environment.

Though the principals are the significant influencers of teacher professionalism, principals mentioned that it is not always good and well at schools; they sometimes struggle to make ends meet. Principals went the extra mile to get assistance from departmental officials and stakeholders to assist teachers' development. Transformational principals make means to provide tools for the implementation of

quality teaching. All the principals agreed that the teachers cooperate reasonably despite the challenges.

5.2.4 Responding to the main research question

As discussed above, the findings aimed to answer the main research question: “How does transformational leadership influence teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District?”

The significant factors and conditions that were explored to be influential in teacher professionalism were summarised as follows:

The researcher revealed that the principals built good working relationships with teachers in enhancing teacher professionalism. The relationship includes the empowerment of teachers in development programs and during meetings where principals influence teachers to provide quality teaching. In agreement, Abdul Wahab et al. (2014:40) define transformational leadership as inspiring change and empowering followers to achieve greater heights and improve themselves.

Motivation and support shown by principals improved teachers’ enthusiasm and passion. These have a significant influence on enhancing teacher professionalism. Setiyati (2014:200) supports this finding and states that when a firm school principal supports a teacher, the teacher is likelier to perform at a higher level.

Principal assistance and involvement in helping teachers with challenges they encounter are invaluable. Showing appreciation for teachers when good work is done, better results are achieved, and teaching and learning are implemented smoothly creates an atmosphere that influences teacher professional development.

Communication is vital to a good working environment. Regarding communication between principals and teachers, the findings revealed that principals established a platform where teachers could freely express their ideas and share their knowledge. The positive communication indicates that principals valued and acknowledged teachers’ inputs, greatly enhancing teacher professionalism.

Furthermore, the interaction with one another allowed teachers to share their ideas and discuss the challenges and struggles they encountered and plans for improving

academic achievements and teacher performance. These meetings build effective teamwork and energetic commitment from teachers. The findings corroborate with Taole (2013:77) that a transformational leader principal is actively involved in school vision and capacity-building tasks.

The study discovered that the good qualities of principals have a more significant influence on enhancing teacher professionalism at schools. The qualities such as leading by example, good conduct, mentoring, and good management inspired and stimulated teachers and initiated the change process. Teachers develop the will to perform well and behave professionally, implying that the more the principals perform well, the more the teachers' behaviour improves positively. Therefore, the principals as transformational leaders of schools had positive effects in enhancing teacher professionalism on teachers.

For teachers to share their ideas, challenges, and plans with principals is an honour and a privilege to work with a leader who accommodates their problems and gives solutions and advice where necessary. Teachers feel valued and acknowledged, which in turn, the teachers raise their work performance, behave professionally, and even go the extra mile in doing extra work to provide quality education as influenced by the transformational leaders in their schools.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study only focused on three primary schools in the Xhariep District. The sample population was limited to 3 principals and 6 Grade 6 NST teachers who participated in this study due to the area where the three primary schools are situated; they are the only primary schools in that vicinity. Another challenge was that during the interview process, the researcher had to reschedule the interviews of some participants due to departmental obligations. As a result, research findings may not be generalised to reflect all primary schools in the district.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the Department of Education's dedication to delivering quality and effective teaching and learning, some areas need improvement, particularly in quality teaching. Though principals ensure that quality education is provided to learners, there are challenges. For the betterment of quality education and enhancing teaching professionalism, the following recommendations are made:

Since the study revealed that lack of textbooks and resources impedes teacher professionalism, purchasing and delivery on time assist schools in having material for teaching and avoiding shortage. The schools should have a good plan for controlling textbook distribution and retrieval.

Constant workshops and training for teachers, especially the newly appointed ones, should be organised every quarter as training develops teachers' knowledge and skills.

Principals should develop teacher support programs to assist and support teachers with unique teaching challenges. In that way, the principal boosts teachers' confidence and enhances teacher professional behaviour.

Parent involvement has a good influence on teacher performance; it increases the urge for teachers to do well, knowing learners' work is monitored. The participation of parents fully would also minimise the absenteeism and misbehaviour of learners. There should be a policy which demands parents' full involvement at schools.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings and limitations of this study have led the researcher to make the following suggestions for further research topics.

- What impact do transformational leaders have on teacher performance?
- How can the Department of Education assist schools in alleviating barriers to teacher professionalism?
- The study can be researched further by involving teachers from other grades and schools to get more valuable information based on their experiences and perceptions.

5.6 CONCLUSION

This research shows that principals, as transformational leaders, tried to influence teachers to enhance professional behaviour. More specifically, the research sought to understand primary teachers' experiences regarding how their transformational leaders enhance teacher professionalism in schools. As a result, the study was conducted with an interpretive, qualitative approach. A multiple case study design and semi-structured interviews were used to acquire research data from the participants.

The researcher concluded that a good working relationship was essential to the school's progress because teachers received undying principal support and assistance. Positive communication during meetings and staff gatherings created a platform where teachers share their views and plans and voice the challenges encountered during teaching time. Motivation and appreciation are provided during constant interaction between principals and teachers. It was concluded that professional support from principals influenced teachers' good behaviour in classes. Teachers supporting other teachers shows that these teachers went the extra mile and demonstrated their commitment and teamwork by sharing their teaching methods and strategies.

On the effects of professional development, it was established that the workshops and training assisted teachers in ensuring that teachers teach the correct content using relevant methods and strategies. It was concluded that organising teacher workshops by principals for teachers enhanced teacher performance in classes, leading to improved results and professional behaviour. The commitment of principals to ensuring that teachers teach effectively in an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning enhanced teacher professionalism is valued.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICS APPROVAL



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

11-Aug-2022

Dear Ms Sandra Mona

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

The influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2022/0919/22

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

Dr Adri
du
Plessis

Digitally signed by Dr Adri du Plessis
Date: 2022.08.11 12:24:46 +0200

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APPENDIX B: LETTER FROM DOE FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Enquiries: M.Z. Thango
Ref: Research Permission: S. N. Mona
Tel: 051 404 8808
Email: MZ.Thango@fseducation.gov.za



Hilside Village
Starkspruit
9762

Dear Ms. S. N. Mona

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: XHARIEP DISTRICT

This letter serves to inform you that you have been granted permission to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education within the Xhariep Education District. The details in relation to your research project with the University of the Free State are as follows:

Topic: The influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District.

1. **List of schools involved:** Moolfontein Primary School, Zama Public School and Zastron Public School.
2. **Target Population:** Three principals and six teachers teaching grade 6 at the selected schools.
3. **Period of research:** From the date of signature of this letter until 30 September 2022. Please note that the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year. Should you fall behind your schedule by three months to complete your research project in the approved period, you will need to apply for an extension. The researcher is expected to request permission from the school principals to conduct research at schools.
4. The approval is subject to the following conditions:
 - 4.1 The collection of data should not interfere with the normal tuition time or teaching process.
 - 4.2 A bound copy of the research document should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 101, 1st Floor, Thuto House, St. Andrew Street, Bloemfontein or can be emailed to the above-mentioned email address.
 - 4.3 You will be expected, on completion of your research study to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.
 - 4.4 The ethics documents must be adhered to in the discourse of your study in our department.
5. Please note that costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.

Yours Sincerely,

Mr. MZAMO W. JACOBS
DIRECTOR: QUALITY ASSURANCE, M&E AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

DATE: 24/03/2022

APPENDIX C: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Letter to Free State Department of Education

Head of Department

Free State Department of Education

Dear Sir/ Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN XHARIEP DISTRICT

My name is Sandra Nontuthuzelo Mona, Masters' student doing a research project at the University of the Free State. I will be conducting research as part the requirements for the completion of my studies on the following topic:

“The influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District”

The purpose of the research is to explore the influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism. This study will identify the factors and conditions that can be influential on teacher professional development. It will examine school factors that impede the teacher professionalism. This study will provide the insight for improving the educational programs and practical behaviour that can be used to facilitate and enhance teacher professionalism.

The study will involve principal and teachers, at a time convenient to them and will be asked to:

- Be part of a 45-minute semi-structured interview at a mutually agreed upon date and venue.
- Collect relevant policies and developmental programs.

The identity of a school and participants in this study will remain confidential and no names of participants or schools shall be used in any reports about this study. Only

the principal investigator will have access to all material used for this study and data collected as part of the study.

The study selected schools within the same district. Thus, it makes it easier for a researcher to reach out in the areas of work. I received ethical clearance from the University of the Free State(UFS-HSD2022/0919/22).

My supervisor is Dr J. Hamilton. You can contact her at 0823514141 or hamiltonj@ufs.ac.za, if needed.

Thank you for your kind consideration of my request.

Yours sincerely

Mona Sandra Nontuthuzelo (Ms).

Cell: 0789888677

E-mail: 2018245478@ufs4life.ac.za

APPENDIX D: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM PRINCIPALS

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION FROM PRINCIPALS OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Letter to principals of the participating schools

The principal

.....School

Dear Sir/ Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY

My name is Sandra Nontuthuzelo Mona, a master's student doing a research project at the University of the Free State. I will be conducting research as part of the requirements for the completion of my studies on the following topic:

“The influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District”

The purpose of the research is to explore the influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism. This study will identify the factors and conditions that can be influential on teacher professional development. It will examine school factors that impede teacher professionalism. This study will provide insight for improving the educational programs and practical behaviour that can be used to facilitate and enhance teacher professionalism.

The study will involve the principal and teachers, at a time convenient to them and will be asked to:

- Be part of a 45-minute semi-structured interview at a mutually agreed-upon date and venue.
- Collect relevant policies and developmental programme documents.

The identification of a school and participants in this study will remain confidential and no names of participants or schools shall be used in any reports about this study. Only the principal investigator will have access to all material used for this study and data collected as part of the study.

If you agree to allow your school to participate in the research study, please indicate by completing and signing the consent form at the end of this letter. I received ethical clearance from the University of the Free State (UFS-HSD2022/0919/22).

My supervisor is Dr J. Hamilton. You can contact her at 082 351 4141 or hamiltonj@ufs.ac.za, if needed.

Thank you for your kind consideration of my request.

Yours sincerely

Mona Sandra Nontuthuzelo (Ms).

Cell: 078 988 8677

E-mail: 2018245478@ufs4life.ac.za

I (initials and surname) the principal of
(name of school) gives permission to the
researcher, Mona Sandra Nontuthuzelo, to conduct a study on the influence of
transformational leadership on teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the
Xhariep District at the above mentioned school.

I understand that the participation of my school in the research study is dependent on the granting of permission by the Free State Department of Education. I further declare that I understand the nature and purpose of the research as explained to me by the researcher, as well as the benefits of the school's participation. I also understand the methods of data collection and the researcher's attempt to ensure confidentiality and integrity of the information to be collected.

.....

Signature

.....

Date

APPENDIX E: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM PARTICIPANTS

INVITATION LETTERS TO PARTICIPANTS

Letter to participants

Mr. / Mrs

Dear Sir/Madam

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM OF GRADE 6 TEACHERS IN THE XHARIEP DISTRICT

My name is Sandra Nontuthuzelo Mona, a Master's student doing a research project at the University of the Free State. I will be conducting research as part of the requirements for the completion of my studies on the following topic:

“The influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District”

The purpose of the research is to explore the influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism. This study will identify the factors and conditions that can be influential on teacher professional development. It will examine school factors that impede teacher professionalism. This study will provide insight for improving the educational programs and practical behaviour that can be used to facilitate and enhance teacher professionalism.

The transformational leadership approach is a leadership style where the focus of the leader is on improving the followers' knowledge and motivation. This leader emphasises intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Aydin et al., 2013:3).

I hereby invite you to participate in this investigation. If you agree to be a participant in this study, you will be asked to participate in the following:

- Be part of a 45-minute structured interview at a mutually agreed upon date and venue.
- Collect policies and developmental programme documents.

Your identity, as a participant in this study will remain confidential and no names of participants or schools shall be used in any reports about this study. Only the principal investigator will have access to all material used for this study and data collected as part of the study.

The study selected schools within the same district. Thus, it makes it easier for the researcher to reach out in the areas of work. You are free to participate or to withdraw at any time during the study. While the responses to all questions are important to me, you may choose not to answer some of the questions in the interview should you wish.

I received ethical clearance from the University of the Free State (UFS-HSD2022/0919/22).

My supervisor is Dr J. Hamilton. You can contact her 082 351 4141 or hamiltonj@ufs.ac.za, if needed.

Thank you for your kind consideration of my request.

If you agree to participate in the research study, please complete the attached consent form.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM:

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH STUDY:

Title of the study: The influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District

Name of researcher: Mona Sandra Nontuthuzelo

Contact details of researcher: 078 988 8677

Researcher's signature:

Date:

I hereby agree to participate in the mentioned study. I have read the information given by the researcher and understand that my participation is voluntary. Furthermore, I understand that the researcher will adhere to all the rules and regulations to protect me and my identity.

Name of participant:

Participant's signature:

Date:

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

INTERVIEW TOOL

TOPIC: THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM OF GRADE 6 TEACHERS IN THE XHARIEP DISTRICT.

My name is Mona Sandra Nontuthuzelo. I am a Master's in Education student at the University of Free State. I am pursuing research in Education Management and Leadership. The focus of this research is to explore the influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District. The purpose of this interview is therefore to identify factors and conditions that enhance and impede professionalism to you, Grade 6 teachers. It is also to find out how influential is the transformational leadership approach at your school.

I would like to thank you for agreeing to partake in this interview. The interview should take about 45 minutes. Please note there are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Every response that you make would contribute positively to the success of this research. May you please feel free to say whatever you think about this topic. I will be recording the interview since I may not be able to write down everything that you say. Everything you tell me is strictly confidential and will be used only for research purposes. Should you wish to withdraw during the interview for whatever reasons, you are free to do so. Your participation in this interview is voluntary. If you withdraw from the study, it will not influence you negatively in any way.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Information about informant

Warm-up questions

Teachers' Questions

These questions focus on the interviewee's background and his/her teaching experience.

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself, where you come from, the schools you attended and where you studied your teaching profession.

2. In your teaching career, can you tell me which grades and subjects you taught and what are your teaching experience?

Teacher learning

These questions focus on how the teachers conduct themselves, their teaching and their experiences. These questions are also based on how their leaders influence them in enhancing teacher professionalism.

3. Do you presently teach Grade 6 Natural Sciences and Technology? How is teaching this grade different or similar to other grades you previously taught?
4. What are the motivational factors that keep you teaching in this grade, as we know it is an exit class in the Intermediate Phase?
5. May you please mention the professional challenges that you encountered and how you overcome them?
6. Was the principal assisting you in those challenges? If yes, how? And if no, why?
7. What is teacher professionalism to you?
8. As I mentioned and explained about the transformational leadership approach, how did you overcome those challenges you encountered? OR in which ways was it useful in overcoming the challenges you had?
9. Are the strategies the principal is uses, enhancing the teachers to behave in a professional manner?
10. How would you rate the quality of support and skills the principal impacts/ has on you as teachers?
11. In your own opinion, would you say your principal is influential in enhancing teacher professionalism?

Principals' Questions

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself, where you come from, the schools you attended and where you studied your teaching profession.
2. In your teaching career, can you tell me which grades and subjects you taught and what are your teaching experience?

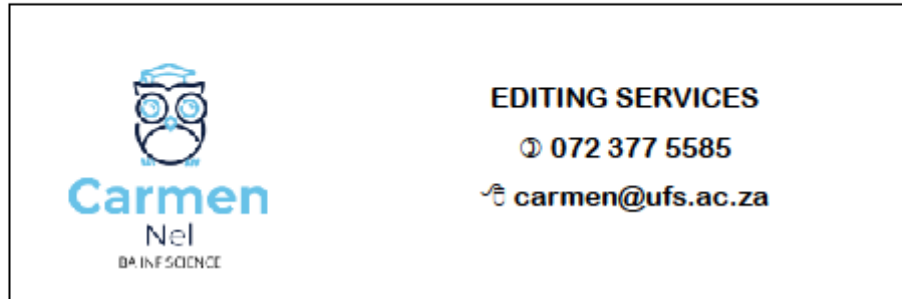
3. How are the Grade 6 Natural Sciences and Technology teachers performing in your school?
4. What challenges did they encounter that you know of and what strategies did teachers use to overcome these challenges?
5. What are the conditions and factors that impede teacher professionalism in this school?
6. Which strategies and approaches did you apply to address those factors and conditions?
7. How important or useful is transformational leadership approach in enhancing teacher professionalism?
8. Which developmental programmes do you have at this school for motivating and equipping Natural Sciences and Technology teachers to be skilled and professional?
9. Given the responses above, do you consider yourself a transformational leader?

Wrap-up questions

These questions focus on thanking the interviewee and for any additional information to be added by either the interviewer or interviewee. Inform the interviewee on what will be the next step, and if any follow-up has to be done.

10. Is there anything else regarding teacher professionalism and transformational leadership approach that you would like to add?
11. Once more, I would like to thank you for the time you took to participate in this study.

APPENDIX G: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR



CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

This certifies that I have edited the work detailed detailed below for language and technical issues.

Title:

"The influence of transformational leadership on teacher professionalism of Grade 6 teachers in the Xhariep District.

Authors:

Sandra Nontuthuzelo Mona

Regards

Carmen Nel

25 July 2023

Professional editing of articles, thesis, dissertations and books

APPENDIX H: TURNITIN REPORT

MONA SANDRA DISSERTATION Final (July 2023) turnitin.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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